



SPAG

Single Person Approved by God

Cost: \$18/year
emailed quarterly

*Your subscription will
help support this
magazine.*

*Subscribe online at:
www.spagmag.com*

How to Make Sure You Mess Up Your Date

Same Sex Marriage and the Church

- *Inspirational People:*

Fanny Crosby – She Did
What She Could

- Have You Been Given
the Gift of Singleness?
Take the Quiz

- The Forgotten
Commandment:
Are You Guilty?

- How Married
Christians Can
Embrace Singles

- When God
Uproots Your
Life to Save You

Regular Segments: Letters to Lou ☪ Up Close & Personal ☪
Happiness Habits ☪ Words of Wisdom ☪ Tantalising Trivia

CONTENTS

- 2 Editor's Letter
- Letters to Lou

Articles:

- 4 Have You Been Given the Gift of Singleness? *Take the Quiz.*
- 7 A Little Brown Bird
- 8 Happiness Habits: *Forgiveness and Friendship*
- 9 beyondblue
- 13 How To Make Sure You Mess Up Your Date
- 16 The Forgotten Commandment: Honour Your Parents
- 18 How Married Christians Can Embrace Christian Singles
- 21 Same Sex Marriage and the Church: Differing Christian Views

Regular Items:

- 10 **Inspirational People:** Fanny Crosby – She Did What She Could
- 11 Words of Wisdom
- 12 **Rest Ministries:** When God Uproots Your Life to Save You
- 17 Tantalising Trivia
- 30 Up Close and Personal with Aussie Wildlife
- 31 Recipes
- 32 **A-Musings:** Weird Movie Titles
- 33 Puzzle Page

SPAG (Single Person Approved by God) is a quarterly, electronic magazine for single Christians across Australia. It is an inter-denominational magazine aimed at encouraging, challenging and inspiring solo Christians and hopefully providing Church leaders with some insight into the problems and needs of singles.

SUBMISSIONS AND ADVERTISING:

Please feel free to write to SPAG via our email: spagmag@yahoo.com.au.

Ensure you title your email with the relevant section of SPAG or address it to the Editor. You may feel compelled to respond to an article, or you may like to submit an article of your own for consideration. Perhaps you have a question for SPAG's Counsellor, Lou. Any item for publication must be your original work and not copied from elsewhere.^[1]

If you would like to promote your business or major Christian activity in SPAG, please either email or phone the Editor/Writer Vicki Nunn on email:

spagmag@yahoo.com.au or phone 042 44 33 772. You can find more information about advertising costs on the website: www.spagmag.com. Community or non-profit groups are advertised free, though we cannot guarantee that we will always have sufficient space.

1. By submitting your letter, item or article for inclusion in SPAG, you personally accept all legal responsibility for your submission, and acknowledge that you have not extracted nor copied written or photographic material from elsewhere that does not belong to you or whose copyright is owned by another. You hereby accept all legal responsibility and exempt SPAG and anyone associated with this magazine from any and all legal consequences and responsibilities.

Singles can often feel invisible and unwanted in the Christian community. Be assured that your needs, concerns and problems are real. You are not alone, but in fact are precisely where God wants you to be. The articles here are written to encourage, challenge and inspire you.

EDITOR'S LETTER

Welcome to the second edition of SPAG.

I hope you're enjoying this new magazine and the various articles. As both Editor and Journalist, one of the things I like to do is researching and putting together articles because I like helping, inspiring and challenging people. I hope that you feel comfortable enough to submit ideas and suggestions of your own for future articles for the magazine. Perhaps you feel you need to respond to an article – we would love to hear from you, whether it's positive or something with which you disagreed, especially if you can find Biblical support for your response.

In this issue, there's a tongue-in-cheek article "How to Make Sure You Mess Up Your Date" that will hopefully provide a laugh, and perhaps cause you to pause and ponder your own actions when it comes to dating or even considering the opposite sex.

In Happiness Habits we check out forgiveness and friendship and how both of these are essential to good mental, emotional and spiritual health.

We'll be looking at a small excerpt on the inspiring life of Fanny Crosby who was one of the most prolific lyric writers of the 19th century and whose loved words and songs are remembered and sung today.

There's also an article about the gift of singleness, including a quiz to determine if you've been given the gift. (*This is a follow-up to the article 'Where is My Soul-Mate?' from issue one.*)

Laurie Parkinson shares his true story about a very common brown bird that was anything but ordinary.

In this issue there's a very controversial topic about same-sex marriage which I'm sure will stir up people's emotions – but I hope it gets you thinking and praying as well!

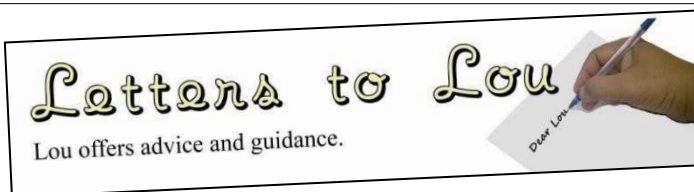
May I encourage you to support this new ministry by subscribing – the cost is just \$18 per year, which helps with the running costs. That's less than 5¢ a day or 35¢ a week! May I also encourage you to tell others about SPAG Magazine, and most importantly, pray for this ministry.

I'd like to send out a big "Thank you" also to Steve Mitchell, who did some back-up editing for me - kind of important when you're putting out a magazine to have some extra support.

Meantime, why don't you dive right in and enjoy this latest issue?



Warm regards
Vicki Nunn
SPAG Editor
(spaghetti-tor)



Letter 1 – Old Church or New Church?

I've been going to the same church for quite a few years now, and although I like the Pastor and the people, I don't feel like I'm being spiritually fed there, and while people are friendly, I haven't really made any close friends. I'm a bit shy and tend to keep to myself. Should I continue going there or find myself another church? I find the idea of going to a new church quite scary.

Therese

Dear Therese,

There are three significant facets to your question:

- The first being that you feel comfortable with the pastor and people within the church;
- The second is a lack of growing spiritually;
- The third is you are shy and this precludes you getting close to people and letting people get close to you.

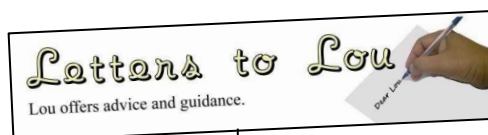
I don't believe that you are in the right frame of mind to leave your church and start again, and if you do I would anticipate a rerun of what you are currently experiencing in the area of building friendships. My encouragement to you would be to identify a couple of people in your church and make a serious effort to get to know them and them to know you. It will be a risk for you, but it will be worth it. Don't sit and wait for people to come to you but step out of your comfort zone and be surprised at how willing people are in getting involved in your life.

Regarding your sense of not being fed spiritually, this could develop as a part of wondering where you fit personally. You might go to church and allow the feeling of loneliness to affect your ability to really hear from God.

I always encourage people to look for a mentor, to be involved in a small group and be a part of a larger church family. Your personal growth and spiritual development will depend on having the first two functioning well. My suggestion to you is to:

1. find a mentor; and
2. get involved in a small group where you will get to know people better.

Regards
Lou



Letter 2 – Am I Ready to Get Married?

I've been dating my girlfriend for about two years and I'm starting to feel like everyone is pressuring me to get married. We both go to the same church. I'm only 23 and I don't think I'm ready yet. I love her, but how do I know she's the right one for me? What if we get married and then I find out we've made a terrible mistake? How do you know when you're ready to get married?

LJ

Dear LJ,

This is a question I am asked regularly. It's good that you have been together for a couple of years, but at 23 years of age, you don't have to rush in to marriage. Your questions clearly indicate to me that you are not ready for marriage, so don't allow pressure from people force you to make a decision to marry.

There are a number of women with whom you could have a perfectly happy marriage. I don't believe that there is only one person with whom you could build a happy marriage.

You look at your spiritual bonding, your personality mix, your background and a host of other issues which go in to making a happy marriage. With God's help you have a great starting place to lay the foundation for a happy marriage. You will never get a water-tight guarantee that your marriage will work, but you do need to get someone who will give you healthy pre-marriage counselling, and you will have confidence that this is the person for you.

My encouragement is to work hard at understanding your partner, to discuss issues relating to many areas of your lives together, and most of all you will have absolute peace that this is the person you would like to spend your life with in marriage.

Successful marriages are built on trust and strong commitment to making a marriage work.

I trust you enjoy the journey together, pray much together, and when the time is ready for you to make the next step you will have peace that this is what God has for you both

Regards

Lou

Letter 3 – Do I Forgive My Mother?

My mother wasn't nice to me or my brothers when we were growing up. She's married again and her new husband is horrible. They're always criticising me and how I bring up my kids and it only got worse after my husband left me. My friend said I should go to a counsellor, but I've done that before and it never really helped me. Should I just forget about my mother and concentrate on my kids? My friend said I should forgive my mum, but I don't think I can do that because I feel so angry with her.

Carmel

Dear Carmel,

Your question is one often asked today by people coming from broken families. In your situation you have experienced this brokenness from your family of origin, and later with your own marriage break up.

This is too deep a question to answer in a few short sentences as there are many facets which need to be considered for you and your children.

My encouragement to you would be to find a counsellor who you can trust, and work with this person for a considerable length of time. Issues you would need to deal with would include your family of origin, your own marriage break up, as well as understanding how blended families work together.

Your children are your highest priority, and you need to do all in your power to provide a healthy environment for them. This will mean that you as Mum, need to do some serious work on yourself to be the best you can be for them.

Does this mean you need to forgive your Mum for what happened in your past? Yes it does, because unforgiveness creates bitterness, and bitterness spoils life. Forgiveness is an act of the will and has nothing to do with feelings. You can forgive a person and know that this does not mean that you will be best friends with that person.

I would encourage you to find a counsellor and work through many of your life issues.

I could go into a lot more detail, but hope this little is helpful.

God bless.

Lou

Have You Been Given the Gift of Singleness?



by Vicki Nunn

Singleness is Part of God's Plan!

Let me start out with a statement which may shock you:

If you are a single person, it's because it's God's BEST choice for you.

Let me clarify that statement: it's not His second-best choice, it's not an accident or a punishment: the reason you are single is because God wants the *best* for you.

At this point, there may be an angry or hurt voice in your head shouting "No way! That isn't right! How can being alone be the best for me?" So let's jump into first Corinthians chapter two and see what it says about God's plan for us: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him." [NLT]

So in other words, you don't know what God's plan is for you – none of us do. So if God has planned for you to be single you have a choice to accept it, or not. But if you choose NOT to accept it, then you have to be ready to face the consequences that may well result from ignoring God's direction.

Perhaps you are trying to justify your rejection of your singleness by telling yourself something like, "This doesn't have anything to do

with me, because eventually I'm going to get married."

So let me shock you a little further: if you are single RIGHT NOW it's because you are called to be single RIGHT NOW. In fact, you have been **given** the 'Gift of Singleness' RIGHT NOW by the very fact that you are single, even if you're dating or engaged.

While it's true that at some point in the future you may marry, or if you are presently married, consider that there may come a time when you become single, *while* you are single, and whether you want to be single or not, it is a gift from God and He has given it to you for a reason.

In first Corinthians, chapter seven, Paul talked a little about the gift of singleness:

"Now regarding the questions you asked in your letter. Yes, it is good to abstain from sexual relations. But because there is so much sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman

should have her own husband... But I wish everyone were single, just as I am. Yet each person has a special gift from God, of one kind or another." [NLT]

There it is in plain words: "... *each person has a special gift from God, of one kind or another.*" Marriage is a gift. Singleness is a gift.

As I shared in issue one of SPAG, I was shocked when I first heard the term 'gift of singleness.' It suggested that singleness was a gift from God: something that God *intentionally* gave to certain Christians.

At the time, I thought to myself, "How could singleness be a gift? Wasn't it more of a curse? Didn't I deserve to be loved? Was I being punished? Did that mean

that I was to remain single for the rest of my life?"

I grew up believing society's standards that happiness, success and completeness required that I marry, and I never doubted that it would happen to me... but it

TAKE THE QUIZ

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Are you a Christian? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 2. Are you: | | |
| (a) Single (never married) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| (b) Divorced (and now single) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| (c) Widowed (and now single) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

If you answered 'Yes' to both questions 1 and 2, then **you** have been given the 'Gift of singleness.'

"Whether you want to be single or not, it is a gift from God and He has given it to you for a reason."

didn't. And it continued *not* happening into my thirties right through to my present age (fifties).

In my twenties I stopped asking "for how long," and instead began asking, "so what do I do with this gift?" I had come to understand that God wasn't going to answer that question with a definitive answer – not because He didn't love me or because He thought I didn't deserve to be loved, but because He had something in mind for me that needed my full attention which I couldn't give if I was married. Additionally in my case, part of my journey was to become a Christian singles co-ordinator, Christian radio presenter and eventually develop a Christian singles magazine, so the fact that I'm still unmarried makes more sense now.

Sure, I could have resisted God's call on my life and settled for someone, but if that wasn't part of God's plan, then it was likely to leave me unsatisfied and impact on my relationship with God. Added to the fact that I'd settled for a marriage with someone who wasn't in God's plans for me, it was also likely to lead to marital problems. It meant too that God would have to find someone else to do my work.

I came to understand that the gift of singleness wasn't a curse but in fact came to be an incredible blessing in ways that I could never have imagined: I developed skills and confidence that I might never had the chance to do had I married. Two of my blessings are two women that have become my best friends and have continued to support and encourage me and were a Godsend during times of

difficulty. God has provided freedom and opportunities for me to develop in areas that I would not have had the opportunity had I married, including my writing and creative arts, and even though I can provide a more detailed list of God's blessings, I'll stop here.

While Paul said that singleness is a gift from God, it is not included in the list of spiritual gifts in first Corinthians chapter twelve. Therefore it must be a different type of gift. For some Christians, singleness is a personal choice, and for others it is a state in which God places us, sometimes even kicking and screaming!

For Christians in both of these circumstances, singleness is a gift. So what does the 'gift of singleness' mean in actuality?

The Gift of Singleness

Further along in first Corinthians chapter seven Paul stated:

"I want you to be free from the concerns of this life. An unmarried man can spend his time doing the Lord's work and thinking how to please him. But a married man has to think about his earthly responsibilities and how to please his wife. His interests are divided."

In the same way, a woman who is no longer married or has never been married can be devoted to the Lord and holy in body and in spirit. But a married woman has to think about her earthly

responsibilities and how to please her husband.

I am saying this for your benefit, not to place restrictions on you. I want you to do whatever will help you serve the Lord best, with as few distractions as possible." [NLT]

It's quite clear here that Paul was saying that marriage will distract us from serving the Lord. As a Christian our first requirement is that we love God and part of loving Him, is obeying Him. Therefore if God has given us the gift of singleness, we have to face that doing anything other than embracing our singleness, is an act of defiance. That's a scary thought isn't it?

If we decide to ignore this gift and run off and find someone to marry, we are likely to find that it leads to all sorts of problems that will ultimately be much more difficult to live with than accepting God's gift of singleness in the first place, because:

- We'll be choosing someone that is not approved by God;



- We're likely to be settling for someone that is less suited to us and will probably lead to high levels of conflict;
- We're unlikely to be able to complete God's purpose for our life; and
- We're less likely to find the satisfaction in our marriage relationship than we would have in our single state;

Accepting the Gift

For some of us, as the years pass there may be some disappointment that we'll never know the closeness of a loving marriage relationship, or have the support of a loving partner. We also may never know the love of a child. From my own experience I can tell you that the worst of my heart-pangs and desires eased over time until all that remained was the smallest spark of an ache. Sure, I could indulge in a pity party and think of all that God has kept from me. Instead I choose to focus on what God has provided me in its place, such as a sense of satisfaction and purposefulness, and I've grown in my confidence and skills.

When I was young I was such an extreme introvert that I was nervous talking to strangers and had very little belief in myself. In the last thirty years I've grown and developed to the point where I became a radio presenter, wrote regular columns in local newspapers, sang in a church and in a regional choir at the annual town Christmas carnival, preached in a church, and created and co-ordinated a Christian singles group for fifteen years. I've developed creative arts skills and have opened several on-line stores



and I'm presently endeavouring to have the first of three of my books published.

` If somebody had told me when I was in my early twenties that I was going to benefit so much from committing myself to God and His gift of singleness, I would have laughed derisively.

Let's revisit first Corinthians chapter two and see what it says again about God's plan for us:

"No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him." [NLT]

This came about because of one thing: *my willingness to trust and follow God, no matter what.*

Living the Gift

So let me ask you a question: are you willing to accept the Gift of Singleness that God is offering you right now?

I don't know what plans God has in mind for you, but forget about that. Focus instead on following God's lead and being willing to do what He asks of you, no matter how scary or even improbable it may sound. Keep in mind that with God, anything is possible.

May I encourage you to read Psalms 139 which talks about our

relationship with God and how well He knows us and prepares for us.

If it helps you for the present time, just focus on getting through one day at a time, and committing yourself to God afresh each day. Ask God to ease the ache of emptiness or loneliness in your heart and to fill with something else. Ask Him to build your confidence, your skills and your courage, and to grow you in areas where you are at your weakest.

Your life has already begun - quit waiting for marriage and instead, eagerly receive the gift of singleness that God has given you. Yes, God may have marriage in store for you, but not right at this present time.

Ask God to show you the joys and sense of completeness that can come with this gift, and to help you to live the life and the purpose that He has planned for you.

Then hang on for the ride of your life!

~~~~~

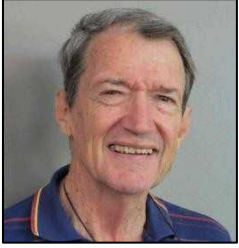
In the next issue we'll look at reasons why you may still be resisting God's gift of singleness.

[END]





## A Little Brown Bird



by Laurie  
Parkinson

My story is a simple but surprising little tale. It

had been four days since the funeral service of my beloved wife Jeanette, and as you would understand, I was very raw with deep feelings of loss, loneliness, heartbreak and pain. After forty-seven amazing years, my Jeanette had been taken from me.

I was staying with relatives on their acreage in the Sunshine Coast hinterland and had awoken quite early that morning before the others had arisen. The outdoors beckoned to me and I sat on the veranda, drinking in the natural beauty, lost in my thoughts and taking a little time to read the Bible and a beloved devotional book called, 'Streams in the Desert.'

About an hour had passed and I sat relaxed on the seat, with one leg crossed over the other, when suddenly, a small, wild brown bird darted in and alighted on my right shoe. It remained there for several minutes, chattering away to me. Placing my books on my lap, I carefully lifted up my empty



hands and apologised to the bird. "No food," I told it.

Undeterred, it continued with its chattering as it looked up into my face. A few moments later, it flicked its wings and flew closer, landing on my knee, talking all the while. I let it sit for a minute before raising my empty hands again, telling the little fellow, "Still no food!" My hands were just thirty centimetres from him, but the little bird seemed completely unafraid.

I was aware that something quite extraordinary was happening, and I was astonished at the bird's audacity. And then suddenly, with a flurry of wings, he was gone.

My heart lifted with delight at the miraculous interlude and I was still marvelling about it twenty minutes later when he returned and landed atop of my toe. This time his visit was brief. He looked into my face, chirped a few

times as if to say goodbye, and then he flew away.

By this time, my relatives had stirred and I went inside to share the remarkable incident with them. They confirmed that none of the local birds were tame and that they didn't feed them. In fact, they'd never experienced anything like it themselves in all the years they'd lived there.

I realised at that moment, that this special little visitor had been sent to me personally by God.

It reassured me of His ongoing comforting presence during that great trauma and in my deep sadness. This unexpected and amazing interlude reminded me of the reality of a loving God, and of the assurance of the resurrection that is at the heart of the Christian faith.

To this day the memory of that incident continues to give me such joy and comfort, especially the reminder that Jeanette's spirit is already there in God's loving care.

[END]





## Happiness Habits



Just because you're a Christian doesn't mean that happiness comes automatically as part of the package.

Society tells us that happiness comes from being successful, famous, young, slim and/or attract-ive, but

it's an illusion. Those things don't buy happiness. In fact, happiness is not a destination, ie you don't reach a state of happiness and stay there forever. Rather, happiness is a choice. It comes from regularly practicing mental, emotional and physical habits which you maintain for a lifetime.

There are various happiness habits that mental health professionals suggest you undertake regularly, preferably on a daily basis. They can be especially helpful during difficult times. A different happiness habit will be provided in each issue of SPAG.

*"Each morning when I open my eyes I say to myself: I, not events, have the power to make me happy or unhappy today. I can choose which it shall be. Yesterday is dead, tomorrow hasn't arrived yet. I have just one day, today, and I'm going to be happy in it."*

Groucho Marx

## FORGIVENESS AND FRIENDSHIP

By Vicki Nunn

### Fostering Forgiveness

As you can imagine, holding onto grudges and focussing on how another has treated us unfairly, affects our mental and emotional health. But scarily, it can also affect our physical health as well, because of stress, lack of sleep etc.

One way to overcome the negative effects is to foster forgiveness. This goes against the grain of human nature because we want the whole world to know how badly we were treated or how awful another person has been to us. Somehow it seems unfair that the other person should be allowed to 'get away with it.'



Holding onto grudges and anger simply increases our bitterness and hurt and oftentimes, the other person remains completely oblivious to what they did wrong. Therefore, no matter how much anger and bitterness we hold onto, that other person usually gets away scot-free anyway, and the only person that is affected badly, is us.

If we understand and accept that, then we should hopefully be able to move to the next step and try to forgive that other person. This will allow us at last, to let go of the bitterness and anger which after all, is only harming us. But how do we do that?

### How Do We Forgive?

There are several things that we can try:

1. Painful though it may be, try to recall the incidence which led to the hurt and attempt to understand what happened from the other person's point of view, eg:
  - could we have been mistaken in the identity of the culprit?
  - could the other person's actions have stemmed from something other than nastiness?
  - could what the person said or did have merely been accidental or just the result of a poor attempt at communication or a joke?

2. Ponder a time in our own life when we hurt someone and were forgiven. Consider how it made us feel to be forgiven and how it set things right between us and the other person. By offering forgiveness, the other person took the sting and the hurt out of the situation, and we could do the same.
3. Write about forgiving the person who hurt us. We can do this in our gratitude journal (which we spoke of in the last issue of SPAG). We can also write a letter to the offender (which we won't send). Writing about it can help us put the incident and our feelings into perspective and clarify the situation in our own mind. It may help us determine what we could have done to possibly change things.
4. The last step is to consciously make a choice to hold onto the forgiveness and to let go of our anger and hurt and especially the desire for revenge. Whenever negative feelings arise, talk ourselves through it:

*"Those horrible feelings have come up again. They make me feel bad and are not helpful to me. If I hold onto them, they won't affect the person who hurt me, but my pain will continue. I can let those feelings go and forgive*

*that other person. Even if they don't deserve my forgiveness, I **deserve** to feel better about this. I **deserve** to feel happy."*

### Fostering Friendship

One of the best remedies for improving our happiness, is to form one or two close friendships with some positive people. While electronically our connection with family and friends is increasing, the quality of our friendships and relationships seems to be suffering, and depression and loneliness is on the rise.

Good friends can reduce our stress levels, increase our confidence, and improve our happiness.

We need trustworthy friends with whom we can share our innermost feelings and thoughts; and friends that can make us laugh.

### Finding Friends:

For some of us, finding friends can be difficult and we may need counselling to help us overcome problems or fears from the past or to help us improve our social and other skills so that we can interact better with other people.

Perhaps we have difficulty finding friends because we have cocooned ourselves in a safe environment where we never have the chance to meet anyone new, whether out of fear or laziness. We need to be willing to have a clear look at our environment and our activities to determine if we are deliberately hiding out and to determine if we can find better avenues for finding worthwhile friends.

### Conclusion

Forgiveness can be scary because it means we have to be able to let go of something or someone that has hurt us, and somehow it doesn't seem right that while we're still hurting, nobody has been made to pay for the wrong-doing. But we must practice forgiveness so that we can move on if we are to heal and if we are to gain happiness.

Friendship is a good way to gain a healthier and happier perspective on life. Friends can help us to forgive, to let go, and to move on. Friends can make life worthwhile. [END]



*beyondblue* encourages you to actively look after your mental health and to take action if you think you or someone you know could be struggling with depression or anxiety.

Depression and anxiety are common conditions, with research showing that at least one in five Australians has experienced depression or anxiety or both in the past year. They are debilitating conditions that make it more difficult for people to manage their daily lives, by affecting what they think, feel and how they act.

The good news is that with the right treatment, most people recover from these conditions and are able to take back control of their lives. Becoming familiar with the signs and symptoms of depression and anxiety is important, as it makes it easier for people to recognise when they or someone they know may be struggling.

Common symptoms of depression include losing interest in work, hobbies and things the person would normally enjoy. A person experiencing depression may lack energy, have difficulty sleeping or sleep more than usual. Some people feel irritable and some find it hard to concentrate. People experiencing an anxiety condition often feel worried or stressed without any particular reason.

This can lead to symptoms like hot and cold flushes, a racing heart, tightening of the chest, snowballing worries and compulsive behaviour. The *beyondblue* website provides more information on the signs and symptoms of depression and anxiety, along with

the actions you can take to look after yourself, your mates and your family.

If you feel as if you or someone you know may be experiencing symptoms of depression or anxiety, talking to your doctor can be a powerful first step towards recovery. The *beyondblue* Support Service also has trained mental health professionals on hand to chat to on the phone at any time of the day or night on 1300 22 4636. Or if you would prefer, mental health professionals are available via web-chat between 3PM and 12AM (AEST) every day and via email at the *beyondblue* website.

Your own local social network of workmates, team-mates, fellow club members and friends can also be a great source of support when times get tough. Talking to a friend or neighbour in person or over the phone and sharing how you're feeling with those who have had similar experiences, can be a source of support, encouragement and hope.

The Shed Online is another way men in particular can connect with others and avoid feelings of isolation. The website ([www.theshedonline.org.au](http://www.theshedonline.org.au)) recreates the atmosphere of an actual Men's Shed and features discussion forums, chat rooms, interviews with celebrities and community leaders, community news, DIY projects, activities, information on upcoming events, health and lifestyle information and blogs.

For more information about depression and anxiety go to our website at [www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au) or phone us on 1300 22 4636. [END]



## INSPIRATIONAL PEOPLE

### Fanny Crosby – She Did What She Could

by Vicki Nunn

#### Introduction

Fanny Crosby was born in the USA on March 24, 1820, and became blind at the age of just six weeks. As an adult, she became a teacher at a blind school. She was a passionate supporter of missionary work in the USA, especially in the slums where she lived in later years. But Fanny is best remembered for her lyrics: around 9,000 of which were made into hymns and over 100 million copies of her music have been printed. By the end of the 1800s, she had become a household name.

During her lifetime, she came to be called the "Queen of Gospel Song Writers", and as the "Mother of modern congregational singing in America."

Most American hymn books and many Australian ones as well, contain hymns that Fanny wrote. While Fanny didn't write the melodies, she wrote the words. In fact, Crosby claimed that "Spring Hymn" was the only hymn for which she wrote both the words and music.

#### Other Work

In addition to the nearly 9,000 lyrics for hymns, Ms Crosby also had four books of poetry published and wrote more than 1,000 secular poems. Before she began writing hymns, Fanny co-wrote more than sixty secular

songs, some of which were huge hits in their day.

Fanny Crosby also co-wrote the very first American opera called "The Flower Queen" which was a cantata. While writing in those early years, Ms Crosby continued to teach at a blind school in North Reading.

Fanny was a strong supporter for the abolition of slavery and wrote in support of Abraham Lincoln and his fight to end slavery. She wrote quite a number of political items as well.

#### Blindness

Due to her disability, she struggled to write legibly and friends and family wrote her words down on paper for her. Oftentimes she would have several hymns floating about in her mind at the same time, and could write several in a day.

Fanny once wrote about her blindness, *"It seemed intended by the blessed providence of God that I should be blind all my life, and I thank Him for the dispensation. If perfect earthly sight were offered me tomorrow I would not accept it. I might not have sung hymns to the praise of God if I had been distracted by the beautiful and interesting things about me."*

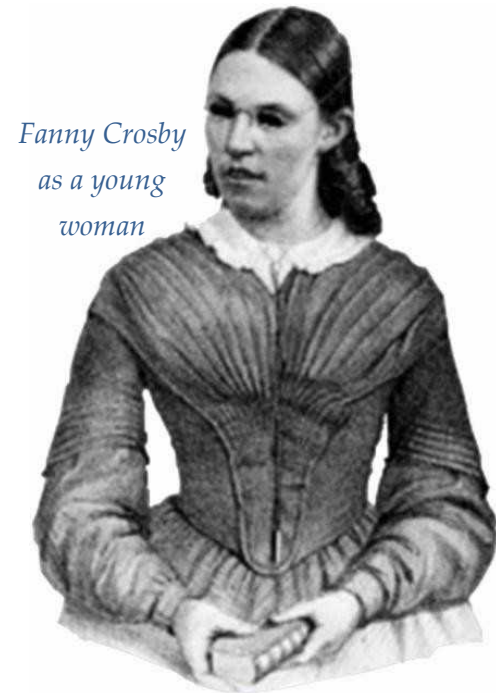
On March 5, 1858 Crosby married Alexander Van Alstyne Jr, a man who she'd met while teaching. In 1859 they had a daughter Frances who died in infancy, possibly from SIDS.

Crosby never spoke publicly about being a mother, only mentioning it in a few interviews toward the end of her life, when she said: *"I became a mother and knew a mother's love. God gave us a*

*tender babe but the angels came down and took our infant up to God and to His throne."*

It is understood that the marriage became unhappy after their daughter's death, and though they remained married, Fanny and her husband didn't live together for a couple of decades.

The only comment that Fanny ever made about their marriage came after her husband died when she said, *"He had his faults—and so have I mine, but notwithstanding these, we loved each other to the last."*



Fanny Crosby  
as a young  
woman

#### Missionary Work

Fanny was extremely passionate about supporting and helping the poor, even going so far as to live in their slums where she worked, for the last couple of decades of her life.

Though Crosby had written the lyrics to thousands of hymns, many under different names, she often struggled financially.

The financial stress was due to copyright rules at the time, which exploited poets and song-writers,

especially women, and gave the rights to hymns and other music to the composer of the music, rather than the lyricist. Crosby was paid only a fee of one or two dollars per song or poem and never anything more.

In her 1906 autobiography she said that she wrote her hymns 'in a sanctified manner', and never for financial or commercial considerations, and that she had donated her royalties to 'worthy causes.'

One of Crosby's goals was to win a million people to Christ through her hymns, and whenever she wrote her lyrics, she literally prayed it would bring women and men to Christ.

Even though Fanny Crosby is best remembered for her hymn-writing, she preferred to be remembered for her missionary work.



*Fanny Crosby  
in her later  
years.*

### Hymns

Fanny's more well known hymns included:

- All the Way My Saviour Leads Me;
- Blessed Assurance;
- Jesus Is Tenderly Calling You Home;

- Praise Him! Praise Him! Jesus, Our Blessed Redeemer!
- Redeemed, How I Love to Proclaim It!
- Rescue the Perishing;
- To God Be the Glory; and
- He Hideth My Soul

Following are some of the words to the well-known hymn "He Hideth My Soul:"

*Verse 1*

A wonderful Saviour is Jesus my Lord,

A wonderful Saviour to me;  
He hideth my soul in the cleft of the rock,

Where rivers of pleasure I see.

*Chorus*

He hideth my soul in the cleft of the rock

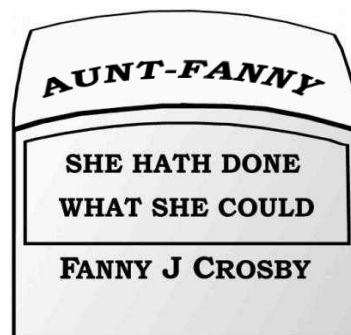
That shadows a dry, thirsty land;  
He hideth my life with the depths of His love,

And covers me there with His hand,

And covers me there with His hand.

### Conclusion

On February 12, 1915 Fanny Crosby died. At her request, her family erected a very small tombstone, which carried the following words:



[END]

## Words of Wisdom

*"One of the highest of human duties is the duty of encouragement. It is easy to laugh at man's ideals; it is easy to pour cold water on their enthusiasm; it is easy to discourage others. The world is full of discouragers. We have a Christian duty to encourage one another. Many a time a word of praise or thanks or appreciation or cheer has kept a man on his feet. Blessed is the man who speaks such a word."*

*William Barclay*

### Organisation Promotion



**Single?  
Christian?  
Looking for  
fun, friend-  
ship and fellowship?**

Club Solo is delighted to invite you to an outing or camp. Operating for more than 33 years, Club Solo is an inter-denominational ministry which serves Christian singles. You can find groups in Melbourne, Adelaide, Geelong, Sydney and Brisbane.

One of the biggest events is the annual Gold Coast camp which runs for around eight days in January. Singles from several states enjoy this friendly get-together.

For more information, contact the Director, Rev Steve Mitchell who has a real pastor's heart for singles:

**Phone:** 0417 356 072

**Email:** clubsolo@tpg.com.au

**Web:** [www.clubsolo.org.au](http://www.clubsolo.org.au)





## When God Uproots Your Life To Save You

by Lisa Copen



Have you felt like something in your life has been uprooted? Is God behind it?

Ezekial 17:9 reads *"Say to them, This is what the Sovereign Lord says, 'Will it thrive? Will it not be uprooted and stripped of its fruit so that it withers? All its new growth will wither. It will not take a strong arm or many people to pull it up by the roots'"* [NLT]

Does God ever uproot something in your life and allow it to be killed off, rather than letting it slowly die in your life - causing you to be permanently impacted by it?

At one time, my family and I drove from San Diego, California to Eugene, Oregon for my sister's wedding; a 1,000 mile trip each way. Driving the length of California we saw the depth of the drought and many farmers who were struggling to find water.

I'd previously watched a television special about the drought, and how farmers of generation-old almond trees were choosing to uproot a third of their crop and put the trees through the choppers, since there was not enough water for all of them. We saw examples of many healthy trees completely uprooted

on their sides, waiting for the wood chipper.

Evidently, it is better to choose a portion of the crop to uproot and kill off, rather than let the entire crop die a slow death.

I've seen God use this same technique in my own life and it is never pleasant.

Sometimes He comes along and uproots an area of our life that seems to be under complete control. Except, He is aware of how a forthcoming drought in our life may not be able to water all of the different areas. He is choosing to uproot a portion of it before it taints the soil in our life, causing permanent damage.

Consider for a moment where God has killed off something in your life. Perhaps it was your health, a friendship, or your career. You sat back and wondered 'Why?' It didn't seem to be doing anything destructive to your life!

And yet now looking back, you see what you experienced after this uprooting, and it makes more sense.

Maybe you were forced to retire and then later the company went bankrupt. Maybe a friend quietly disappeared and now you hear her life is in turmoil as she makes poor choices and destroys multiple relationships.

How might God be uprooting areas of your life to protect you? How can you grieve it, while not allowing your grief to block out God's blessings?

**Prayer:** Lord, being uprooted is exhausting. As we see our hopes, circumstances, or relationships being condemned to the chipper, we grieve them. Give us the ability to trust You fully and embrace the uprooting, rather than fight it.

Perhaps you are protecting us from a coming drought.

If you are having a hard time surrendering over your dreams to God (and who doesn't?) take a few minutes to listen to this song, "Empty My Hands" by Tenth Avenue North. It's a song I'll return to during those hard times of giving my life's plans and dreams over to God. Hope you are touched by it too. (Song link: <https://youtu.be/-fWUzs6kT1g>)

[END]

\*\*\*\*\*

### About the author:

Lisa Copen began Rest Ministries in 1996, a non-profit, Christian organisation for those who live with chronic illness. Their daily devotionals send out encouragement to people around the world. She has written a number of books on living with chronic illness, the most recent is 'Refresh Me, Lord.' It is a book of prayers on topics related to the everyday struggles of having a chronic illness, while praying the scriptures. Lisa has lived with rheumatoid arthritis for over 22 years and resides in San Diego, California, USA with her husband and 12-year-old son.

### Web addresses:

<http://RestMinistries.com>

<http://illnessbooks.com>

<http://LisaOnTwitter.com>

<http://facebook.com/restministries>

<http://pinterest.com/restministries>

\*\*\*\*\*

### Feeling discouraged or let down?

Then check out this video:

"Real God – Real People"

by Ian Parker

"My body may be weak but the Lord can still use me." Ian explains how God has used him and met him where he's at: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=69HT0qabS3U](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=69HT0qabS3U).



# How to Make Sure You Mess Up Your Date

Hurry please dear.  
Mother is sitting  
out in the car, and  
you know how she  
hates to be kept  
waiting.

I hope you don't mind  
paying for your own  
meal. I invested my pay  
in a horse-race again.

Shower? No!  
I thought you  
enjoyed it when I  
smelled manly.

I hope you're  
going to shave off  
that moustache  
my dear girl – it  
makes mine look  
rather feeble.

Yes, frankly you  
do look rather fat  
in that outfit.

Surely, you're not  
going to wear  
that hideous, old-  
fashioned dress  
are you?

Let's get the meal  
out of the way so  
we can get to the  
important part of  
the date: the sex.  
I am after all, an  
incredible lover!



by Vicki Nunn

**So you're going out on a date?  
Are you a bit out of practice?  
Feeling anxious?**

**To ensure you never go out  
again, or find anyone remotely  
willing to ever want to marry  
you, SPAG Magazine presents a  
collection of some of the best  
ways to make sure that you *mess  
up your date!***

**For the Men:**

- Go to a restaurant where they serve messy food, such as ribs. That way you can show your date how little you care about society's restrictive conventions such as cleanliness and good manners, by ensuring that you spill food down the front of your clothing. You might also like to lick off any sauce you drop onto your shirt. Better yet,

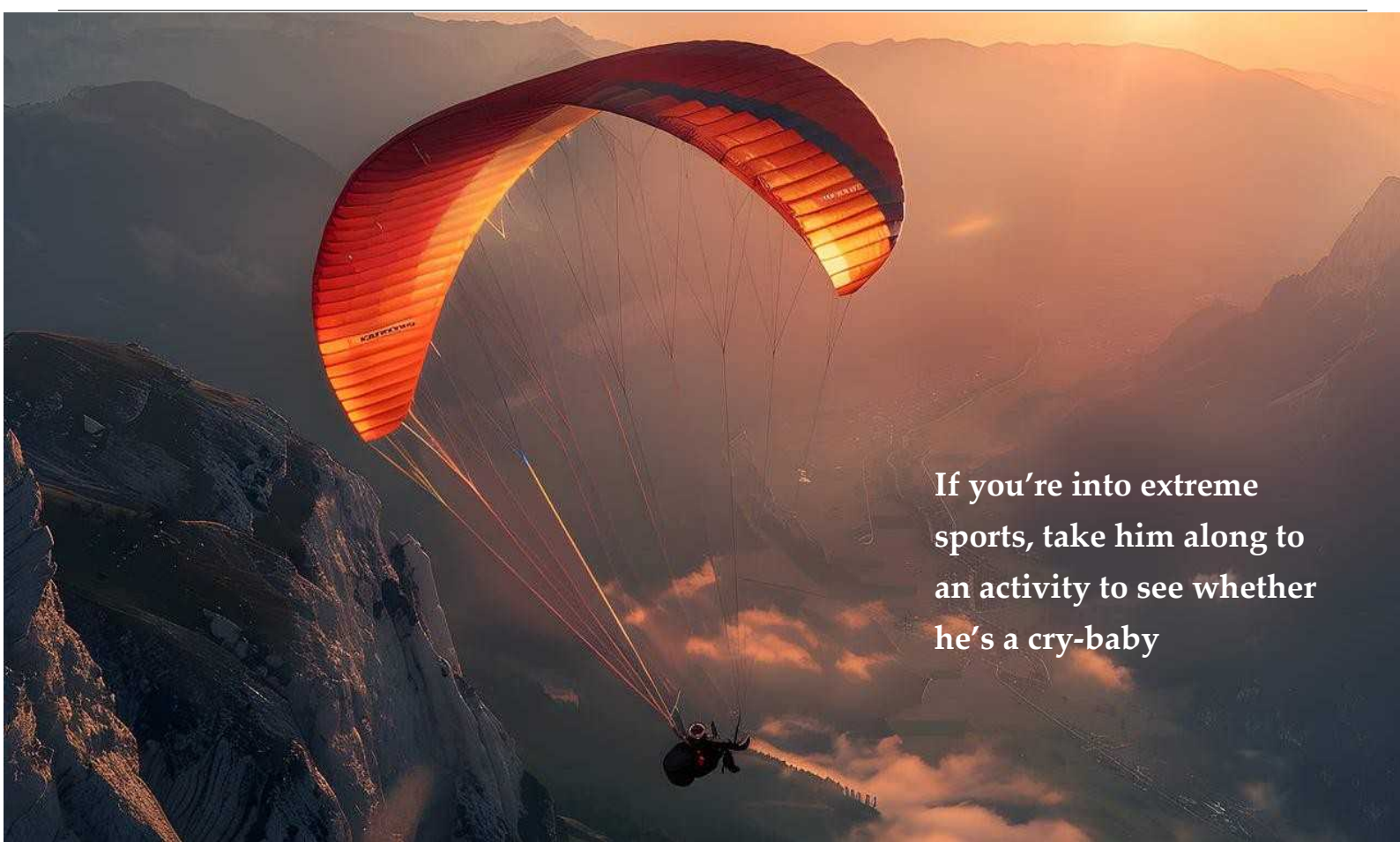
wear dirty clothing so it'll save you having to wash it twice.

- Take her to a sports bar when there's a game on, or to a live boxing match. She's going to have to get used to you being glued to the TV after you get married, so she'd better learn to accept who you are from the beginning.
- Go to a shooting range. It's never too soon to show her how manly you are.
- Take her along for an evening out with your mates. She'll need to understand how important they are to you.
- Invite her over to your apartment, and then expect her to cook and clean. She's a woman after all and that's what she'll be doing once you're married.
- Take her to an exercise class so you can flex your muscles, and she can appreciate your manly sweat and odour.
- Wherever you go, make sure you comment about every other woman you see. That way she'll know what she has to measure up to, to know that she deserves you.

**For the Ladies:**

- Take him shopping. At some point he's got to accept how important shopping is to a girl, and if he hasn't the stamina for it, than he's not the man for you.
- At every opportunity, ask him to hold your handbag. In fact, really test him by bringing along your girliest, most glamorous bag. Eventually he's





**If you're into extreme sports, take him along to an activity to see whether he's a cry-baby**

going to have to overcome his stupid, manly pride anyway.

- Take him to look at the babies in a hospital. One day he may be the father of your children and you want to know how he feels about kids.
- If you're into extreme sports, take him along to an activity to see whether he's a cry-baby, and of course don't date him again if he wets his pants or runs away. If he does run off, phone or text him later and tell him he's a 'sissy!'

#### **For First Dates:**

- Take them to meet your parents or your own children (if you're older.) You might as well get that one over as quickly as possible, and if they survive the encounter they'll prove they're worth putting more effort into.
- Go to a night-club. That way you won't have to think of

something to talk about because of the noise levels and the added bonus is you can show off your incredible dancing skills!

- Have your meal at a fast-food restaurant. This could work out even better if you have a 'two for one' coupon and expect your date to have the exact same meal as you. How wonderful it would be to share the same taste experience, and all for half price! And imagine, it'll be a special first date that you can tell your grandchildren about.
- If you know very little about the other person, go to a restaurant because you can spend the entire time trying to fill the awkward silences, and wishing that the uncomfortable night was over. Wouldn't that be a delightful way to start your relationship?

- Invite the other person to go camping:

- there'll be lots of awkward silences;
- you'll get to see the other person at their worst: dirty, uncomfortable; and bitten by mosquitoes or something even nastier, and
- you can secretly enjoy yourself by letting the other person worry all weekend that you'll suddenly turn into a crazed serial killer.

- If you're feeling particularly lazy and couldn't really be bothered putting in the effort of making conversation, go to a movie where you'll hardly get the chance to talk at all. Then before you know it, the movie will be over and you can go home without having put together more than a dozen sentences.



Take  
along  
your  
mother....  
or your  
invisible  
friend.

- Don't bother getting dressed up: wear your thongs or your favourite shirt which shows off your delightful beer gut, because this is who you are, so they can take it or leave it.
- Be as fake as possible because you don't want them to see the real you:
  - If you're a man, ensure you open doors for her and treat her with respect and courtesy, so that you can lull her into believing you're a good bloke. Once you've hooked her, you can drop all that garbage;
  - If you're a woman, let the man choose the meal and lead the conversation, because you don't want him to think you're too pushy or domineering;
  - Pretend you are a genuinely caring and considerate person, but show your true colours in the way you treat others, such as the waiter;
- Expect sex on a first date. In fact, talk about sex as often as possible and share the way you view men/women in relation to sex. You are an incredible lover so they should know they're in for a remarkable experience.
- Talk incessantly about yourself, and if your date does manage to get a word in, belittle each one of their comments.
- Take along your mother, or your invisible friend.
- Finally, if all else fails: complain, criticize and boast, snort, pick your nose, and scratch your crotch and if by the end of the evening your date is still there, try to squeeze out a fart or two. If they hang around after that, they're a keeper!

### Seriously though...

#### My Dates Never Work Out! What Should I Do?

So not every date you've ever been on has been wonderful. In fact some of them may have been excruciatingly painful, awkward or embarrassing, but don't give up. It's kind of like eating something that doesn't agree with you – after it's over, you'll feel better, and realise that not

everything you eat is going to make you feel ill!

And consider also that if you're last date was seriously awful, then the next one surely has got to be an improvement.

#### Where Should We REALLY Go On Our Date?

Consider a comedy club, as long as the acts aren't tacky or vulgar. That way you can avoid long awkward silences which both parties will feel that they have to fill. Instead you'll both have a laugh, and in between sets you'll have something to share and talk about. What a positive way to start off your relationship.

Ten-pin bowling might sound nerdy and old-fashioned, but it's a relaxed way to get to know each other without any pressure. You'll have breaks in between playing to talk so it's likely to be less awkward. Just keep the boasting about your scoring to a minimum!

Attend a jazz show, or a museum, a rock concert, a musical, an art show, or a play. If it's not something you usually attend, explain that to your date, expressing your desire to try something different. It will make the other person feel special, and show that you are brave enough to grow and try new experiences, which is always the mark of a more mature adult.

Or ask the other person what some of their favourite activities are before you go out, so you can organise to attend something you know they'll definitely enjoy.

Good luck!

[END]





# The Forgotten Commandment: Honour Your Parents

by Vicki Nunn

If we look at the ten commandments in Exodus chapter twenty, it begins with a reminder about who God is, especially in relation to us. This is the foundation of the ten commandments. The first four commandments then are about our relationship with God and how we are to show respect to Him.

The remaining six commandments are about our relationship with people, and the very first of these is about respecting our parents: "Honour your father and mother. Then you will live a long, full life in the land the Lord your God is giving you." [NLT]

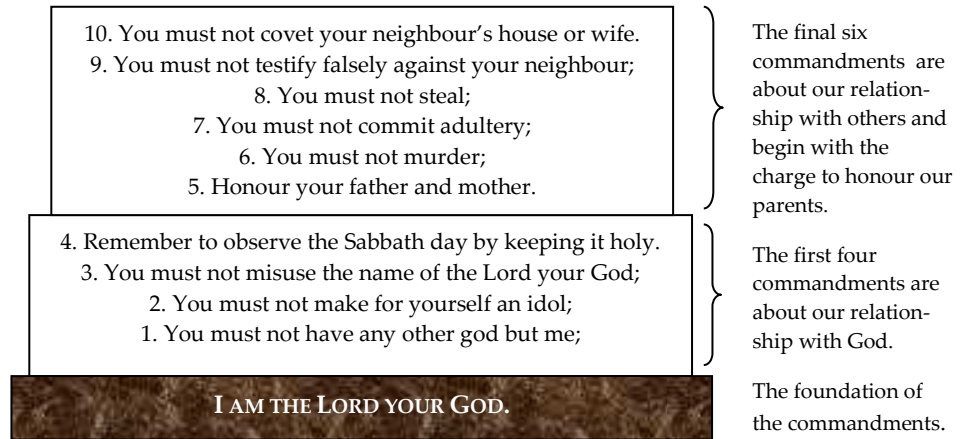
Because of their importance, the first commandment in each section is about honour and respect. In the first section the command is to honour God by making Him our only God.

In the second section, the command is to honour our parents, who in a way are our Godly representatives on earth.

We often think of the command to honour our parents as something relating only to children, but the reality is, these commandments were written for grown-ups, so this commandment is talking to us as adults.

For those of us with annoying, hurtful or downright rotten parents, it can be one that we consciously overlook or consider irrelevant. How can we respect parents like that, and how is that respect translated into real life? Does this commandment require that we obey our parents as well, because

## Ten Commandments



Ephesians chapter six verse one to three mentions obeying our parents:

*"Children, obey your parents because you belong to the Lord, for this is the right thing to do. "Honour your father and mother." This is the first commandment with a promise: If you honour your father and mother, "things will go well for you, and you will have a long life on the earth.""* [NLT]

## Honour Vs Obey

First, let us determine what difference there is between 'honour' and 'obey.'

Both the Merriam/Webster and the Oxford dictionaries suggest that obedience is submission, while honouring is more about treating with respect.

The definitions, in reference to a person, are as follows:

|        | Merriam/ Webster                               | Oxford                     |
|--------|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Obey   | to follow the commands or guidance of          | submit to the authority of |
| Honour | to regard or treat with admiration and respect | regard with great respect  |

The original commandment says that we are to honour our parents as does Ephesians chapter six. But the verse in Ephesians includes an additional sentence which says that we are to **obey** our parents because we belong to the Lord.

Why did Paul add the extra phrase for children to obey their parents?



When one reads it in context, it becomes clear that Paul was specifically referring to younger offspring because in verse four he encouraged fathers not to provoke their children to anger which is less likely to occur when the children are adults. He was probably addressing children in the church at Ephesus.

Therefore while Paul encourages children to obey, the original commandment in Exodus chapter twenty specifically addresses adults and focuses on honouring and respecting one's parents, and not on obeying them. Phew! Feel better now?

### Honouring One's Parents

So let's focus on the command in Exodus which states that we must honour our mother and our father. In Hebrew, it means 'to weigh' or 'to make heavy' in our judgement. So if we honour our parents, we will value their opinion more highly than we do other people.

Honour is linked to other words in the Bible such as kindness and love (see Proverbs 21:21), grace (Proverbs 11:16) and humility (Proverbs 15:33, 18:12, 22:4; and 29:23). According to Deuteronomy 5:16, by honouring our parents, we'll live longer, fuller lives!

So how do we honour our parents? How about considering that they've got a few years on us and may know something! We should listen to them and thank them when they offer advice, even if it's not something we asked for. When people offer advice, it's because they think we have an issue or a question that needs to be solved, and they offer advice because they love us and want to help us. For that alone we should honour them!

It's about our attitude towards our parents:

- are the words we use with them respectful;
- do we listen to them and not interrupt;
- do we provide help when they need it;
- do they know they can rely on us;
- are we honest with them;
- do they know we love them

It's interesting that God chose to use the name 'Heavenly Father,' in His role with us. As our Father, He is our nurturer and our provider. He supports, guides and reprimands us when we need it, and He loves us unconditionally.

God understands the importance of our bond and connection with our parents, but there's more to it than that: there's an intimacy and an acceptance that is different to that of the relationship between spouses, friends and siblings.

Providing earthly parents then, can enable us to gain a better understanding of how our relationship should be with God.

### But My Parents are Crazy!

So how then can we honour our parents if they're crazy, messed up, drugged up, boozy, angry or don't know God?

As much as we can, we should treat them with kindness, grace and love. BUT it doesn't mean that we have to put up with their behaviours if they are unhealthy or harmful. Sometimes it may be necessary to even remove ourselves from them so that we have a chance at normality.

### Conclusion

As much as we can, we should respect our parents, keeping in mind that their actions towards us are usually based upon their love for us and the desire to help us, even when they drive us crazy.

If our parents are unable to

function properly as our parents, it is acceptable to keep our distance, and to love them as best as we can.

[END]



## Tantalising Trivia

There is a rather unusual frog called the Southern Darwin Frog (*Rhinoderma darwinii*) or the mouth-breeding frog. Found in Chili and Argentina, the female lays her eggs in the leaf litter and then goes away. The male guards the fertilised eggs for three to four weeks until the young begin to move.



Southern Darwin Frog

"*Rhinoderma darwinii*" by Mono Andes - Flickr. Licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0 via Wikimedia Commons - [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rhinoderma\\_darwinii.jpg#mediaviewer/File:Rhinoderma\\_darwinii.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rhinoderma_darwinii.jpg#mediaviewer/File:Rhinoderma_darwinii.jpg)

At that point, the male scoops up the eggs, swallows them, and then holds them in his vocal sac. They hatch as tadpoles a couple of days later and he continues to carry them around in his vocal sac until they metamorphose.

At that time, the young ones leave through their father's mouth and begin their own life. This is the+++ only frog in the world that breeds this way.

Another unusual frog was the gastric-brooding frog or platypus frog (*Rheobatrachus*) which was found in two locations in Queensland.

For a portion of their development, before they became juveniles, the mother incubated the young in her stomach.

These frogs are now extinct, although scientists are making efforts to clone them.

[END]



## Singled Out: How Married Christians Can Embrace Single Adults

by Christena Cleveland



A couple of summers ago I visited a church in the Dallas area. It was a hot day and the temperature in the church building was almost unbearable. But I wasn't distracted by the heat because the pastor (who is quite the scholar) gave a profound, rousing sermon on the beauty and holiness of marriage. Even as a single person, I was inspired by his sophisticated, lovely depiction of a Christ-centred marriage. It was that good!

At the end of the 40 minute sermon, the pastor looked up from his notes and began to ad lib:

*"I know that over forty percent of you are single, so I should probably say something about singleness as well."*

My ears perked up. Since this pastor was such a scholarly guy and since he had just given an exceptionally thoughtful sermon on marriage, I just knew that his brief thoughts on singleness would be equally profound. I leaned forward.

*"Here's what I want to say to all you single people: Don't have sex before you get married. Then when you get married, make up for lost time." (wink, wink)*

Once the laughter died down, the pastor gave a benediction and returned to the pew where his wife awaited him.

### On Being an Afterthought

Married people inhabit most of the pulpits and leadership positions in the Christian world, despite the fact that forty-four percent of adults in the U.S. are single.<sup>[1]</sup>

It's unclear what percentage of pastors are married, but one guy assessed his own denomination and found that ninety-eight percent were married.

Further, a senior vice president of a well-known, enormous parachurch organisation recently admitted to me that every single of the 60+ 'middle management' staff member he oversees is married. Every. Single. One. And, after doing extensive interdenominational research, Dennis Franck, the national director of single adult ministries for the Assemblies of God denomination, concluded:

*"The vast majority of evangelical and Pentecostal churches of any denomination are 'marriage and family focused.' That in itself is not a bad posture. Most Christian leaders understand the importance of marriage and the church's role in strengthening the family unit. The unfortunate reality, however, is that our marriage and family emphasis many times does not include single adults."*

*"This is not necessarily by design but is often by ignorance and neglect."*

Since married people are the ones calling the shots, they remain central to the life of the church. Meanwhile, single people are relegated to the margins.<sup>[ii]</sup>

Whether this is intentional or not, this 'married people monopoly' results in a Christian world in which single people are often misunderstood,

ignored, over-looked for leadership positions, caricatured, equated with immaturity, and little more than a punchline or an after-thought.

To me it makes sense that churches and Christian organisations have a poor track record when it comes to honouring single people. How can pastors/leaders who married in their early-to-mid-twenties possibly understand the complexities of singleness or how to honour the image of God in single people?

After interacting with the church, many singles start to wonder: Is there something wrong with me? Is God working in my life? Am I as valuable (to God, to the church) as married people?

Does God love me as much as He loves married people? Does God have good things in store for me as a single person? The church has done such a number on single people that one singles minister knew that before he could even begin to address God's call to single adults in his book 'God's Call to the Single Adult,' he needed to debunk the widely-believed myth that 'singles are half a cookie.'

In a Church that was founded by a single guy, singles are terribly marginalised. There's something wrong with this picture.

So without further ado, here are my tips on how church people (pastors, leaders and other influencers) can turn



<sup>[1]</sup> Frank, D., *Reaching Single Adults: An Essential Guide for Ministry*; <sup>[ii]</sup> It's worth noting that this is also a problem outside the church, as social psychologist Bella DePaulo describes in her wonderful book *Singled Out: How Singles are Stereotyped, Stigmatized, and Ignored, and Still Live Happily Ever After*;

this barge around and begin to create communities that honour the image of God in single adults.

### Six Tips on How Married Christian Can Embrace Single Adults

#### 1. ADMIT THAT SINGLENES IS COMPLEX AND THAT YOU KNOW LITTLE TO NOTHING ABOUT IT

A lot of people seem to think that singleness is to marriage as high school is to university. As a result, married people sometimes mistakenly believe that they know something about singleness when in fact they don't.

Singleness isn't a high school version of marriage. It's an entirely different sport – and if you haven't played it, you haven't mastered it. The average marrying age is 29.8 years for men and 26.9 for women (USA). If you got married before these ages, then it makes sense to acknowledge that your experience as a single adult is below average. In other words, you don't know a lot about singleness. This calls for humility.

Like marriage, singleness is complex. The challenges and joys of singleness are equal to but different than the challenges and joys of marriage.

I talk regularly with a white pastor who got married when he was twenty-one. Most of the time, we talk about our racial differences and how we can build bridges across them. But recently we struck up a conversation about how my experience as a single person in the church differs from his experience as a married person. As I was sharing my experiences, it occurred to him that my singleness is just as foreign to him as my blackness is.

He said, "Wow! Our conversation about singleness and marriage is just as cross-cultural as our conversations about being black and white."

Yep.

Treat singleness like you would treat any other cross-cultural exploration. Listen. Read some books.

Don't even think about preaching about singleness if you don't actually have

substantial and meaningful experience with it. Or, if you do choose to preach on the topic, enlist the help of an actual single person.

#### 2. RECOGNIZE THAT AS A MARRIED PERSON, YOU ARE PRIVILEGED.

Married people run the Christian world, eg since many pastors, board members, and organisational leaders are married, the married perspective is well-represented in the Church in ways that the single perspective is not.

Married people are much more likely to get hired as pastors.

A quick search at amazon.com reveals that for every one Christian book on singleness, there are two hundred and ninety-eight Christian books on marriage.

Just for getting married, friends and family members buy married people expensive gifts like Kitchen Aid mixers (a mark of privilege if there ever was one!)

Marriage is the norm - the gold standard. If you don't adhere to it, people ask questions. Case in point: I'm out-and-about in the Christian world a lot these days. As a result, I meet new people all of the time. The fact that we've just met doesn't stop Christians from asking me why I'm not married. Out of the blue, and with a quizzical look, they're like, "How come you're not married?" It's my most frequently asked question. Seriously.

When married people recognise their privilege, they can work to restore balance by:

- Listening well;
- Being an advocate and raising questions, eg, "How can we make our 'family camp' relevant and inclusive for singles?";
- Inviting single people to the table (hiring, boards, preaching, conference speakers, etc.);
- Making sure that issues that are pertinent to singles are raised in meetings, from the pulpit, while vision casting, at retreats, at conferences, etc; and



- Reframing policy, values, and expectations so that married people are no longer the gold standard.

#### 3. AFFIRM THAT MARITAL STATUS ISN'T CORRELATED WITH GODLINESS OR MATURITY.

Many single people feel that they are often automatically stereotyped as spiritually immature, morally dangerous, and unsuitable for leadership simply because they're single.

I've even heard pastors unapologetically and explicitly discriminate against single people:

*I don't want to hire a single woman to direct the worship arts ministry because she'll probably end up sleeping with all of the guys in the band."*

This is both hurtful and wrong.

Some time ago, I wrote that financial independence is not a fruit of the Spirit. Well, marriage isn't a fruit of the Spirit either. Married people aren't more holy or godly or mature than single people. Married people haven't 'arrived' in a way that single people haven't. Married people aren't even 'on track' in a way that single people aren't. I can see why people are confused about this though.

There are plenty of (married) Christian leaders who teach that married people are better candidates for holiness than single people. For example:

<sup>[iii]</sup> Pinel, E., Long, A., Landau, M., Alexander, K., & Pyszczynski, T. (2006). Seeing I to I: A pathway to interpersonal connectedness. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 90, 243-



*"In heaven, is the crucible of our saint-making going to have been through our jobs? I don't think so. The Scripture makes clear that it will be done largely through our marriages."*

Dr Albert Mohler

I disagree with Dr Mohler. I don't believe that Scripture makes it clear that marriage is the primary route to holiness (and Dr Mohler doesn't offer any scriptural basis for his assertion.) But, I can see why married people (like Dr Mohler) who run the Church are more inclined to believe that God makes saints exclusively/primarily through marriage. Research shows that humans intuitively trust people who share their life experiences.<sup>[iii]</sup>

When I meet another single Christian woman in her thirties, I automatically envision how God has used her singleness to teach her wisdom, selflessness, self-control, joy, patience, and faith because that's what God has done in my own life. I can't easily envision the same for someone who is married, so I'm less inclined to trust that God has used marriage to produce similar fruit in her life. But I can't let my inadequate imagination limit my view of the Holy Spirit's work in her.

The Holy Spirit isn't boring; it doesn't have a cookie cutter plan for how it brings forth fruit in people's lives. Marital status isn't correlated with godliness or maturity. John 15:5 says that we bear fruit when we are connected to God. Period.

#### 4. CELEBRATE SINGLE PEOPLE.

If you get married and/or have a baby, Christians will pull out all the stops to celebrate you. That's a good thing! But Christians should also recognize that many single adults never get celebrated with such fanfare. We might not be walking down the aisle or gestating a baby, but God is doing some amazing things in our lives — from the 'monumental' (such as helping us obtain degrees, launch ministries/businesses, pay off college loans) to the 'mundane' (such as helping us serve our neighbourhoods, and pray for each other).

We must celebrate what God's doing in people's lives, whether it's similar to what God's done in our own lives or not. So, find reasons to throw big parties for the single people in your community. And if you have the resources, feel free to buy them expensive gifts as well. Single people use Kitchen Aid mixers too!

#### 5. RECOGNIZE THAT YOU NEED SINGLE PEOPLE TO SHOW YOU WHAT THE RESURRECTION IS REALLY ALL ABOUT.

Rodney Clapp (and Stanley Hauerwas) said it best<sup>[iv]</sup>:

*"Without children, the Israelite fears the single's name will burn out, sift to ashes and be scattered and forgotten in the winds of time. But Paul has seen the arrival of a new hope. Jesus has risen from the land of death and forgetfulness, and so someday shall all who have died. And Jesus has inaugurated the kingdom, a kingdom most fundamentally known and seen not among brothers and sisters in kin, but among brothers and sisters in Christ."*

Thus Hauerwas says of singles, 'There can be no more radical act than [singleness], as it is the clearest institutional expression that one's future is not guaranteed by the family, but by the church. The church, the harbinger of the Kingdom of God is now the source of our primary loyalty.'

#### 6. INVEST IN THE SINGLE PEOPLE AROUND YOU.

If you want to know how to honour the image of God in single adults, get to know the single adults around you. The singles/marrieds divide in many churches is just as powerful as other cultural divides. Be intentional about crossing that divide. It's only then that you'll begin to understand how to love single people well.

[END]

#### About the author:

Christena Cleveland is a social psychologist with a passion for reconciling across cultural divisions. She's the first Associate Professor of the Practice of Reconciliation at Duke University's Divinity School where she's also the faculty director of Duke's Centre for Reconciliation. Christena earned a B.A. from Dartmouth College and a Ph.D. from the University of California.

A fifth generation minister, Christena comes from a long tradition of leadership in the Church of God in Christ (COGIC) denomination, ranging from bishops to pastors to laypeople. She currently ministers in various ecumenical settings.

Christena lives in Durham, North Carolina and holds a quality cup of tea in high regard.



## Same-sex Marriage and the Church: Differing Christian Views



### INTRODUCTION

Dear Reader,

With the recent decision in the USA to legalise same-sex marriage, and with this topic very much in the minds of Australians and our politicians, it seemed an appropriate time to look at this very divisive topic.

There are four items included in this article, presented from four writers with varying Christian perspectives.

I'm not asking you to blindly accept any one or all of these viewpoints, but I do earnestly encourage you to prayerfully read them, seeking God's guidance through His Holy Spirit, and being open always to God's truth.

When I was growing up, the only time I ever heard about gay people was when someone made fun of them. We were told how homosexuality was a sin, but nobody ever told us how to respond to gay people in real life.

My recent research into this subject has caused me to carefully examine my own heart, mind and spirit to see if I was harbouring beliefs that were not Biblical

or were legalistic.

It also forced me to determine in what capacity I act as a loving Christian sister towards gay people and how I can compassionately interact with them without compromising my faith.

I have come to understand that for some people including Christians, same-sex attraction is real, and whether it was something they were born with or caused by abuse is not relevant. We have people who want to love God and are drawn to people of their own sex. What then is our reaction? Do we judge or accept them? How do we live that out in our Christian walk?

In this issue of SPAG Magazine, I have endeavoured to provide views which I believe are mature and balanced, even though they are from varying viewpoints. There are four articles:

1. Ways to respond to the USA Supreme Court's decision on same-sex marriage;
2. What C.S. Lewis' Marriage can tell us about the gay marriage controversy;
3. A Pastor's struggle with same-sex attraction; and

4. How to truly love a gay person.

I would like to sincerely thank Brian Orme, Pastor Ken Wilson, Justin Lee and Pastor Tom Brock for their contributions.

If you would like to find out more about each writer and their beliefs, websites are provided with each article. Another website you may find helpful is [www.christiantoday.com.au](http://www.christiantoday.com.au).

For your information, following is the website which contains the full text of USA Supreme Court's decision: [www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/14pdf/14-556\\_3204.pdf](http://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/14pdf/14-556_3204.pdf)

I'd like to finish with two questions and my responses:

*"Do I support the choices people make?"*

My response is, "Not always."

*"Do I support people?"*

My answer is "Always!"



With warm regards,

Vicki Nunn

Editor

SPAG Magazine

\*\*\*\*\*



## 1. Ways to Respond to the USA Supreme Court's Decision on Same-Sex Marriage



by Brian Orme

The Supreme Court's ruling on same-sex marriage is a milestone that will change the

USA forever. But how should Christians respond?

By now you've heard the news: The USA Supreme Court ruled in a 5-4 decision that same-sex couples must be permitted to marry. This decision will no doubt reshape America in radical ways over the next decade. It will change our society, our families and our churches. It's a heavy decision, but how should we respond to it? What should we do in the next few days, weeks and months?

Here are five things I want to commit to—and I hope you will, too.

### 1. Pray.

Before you or I rant about the decision on social media or start griping about it our friends or co-workers, we should pray.

When I say 'pray,' I don't mean to pray against the 'gays' or to pray for judgment on the Supreme Court justices; but to pray with a heart of thanks to Christ for the Gospel; to pray for the healing of our nation; and to pray for the same-sex couples who are celebrating this milestone for their community. Yes, even them.

Pray generously, pray confidently and pray with thanks during this tumultuous time.

Ann Voskamp says the cure for worry is deeper adoration for Christ - and I completely agree. Let's go deep in prayer and make much of Christ.

### 2. Listen.

It's easy to open our mouths in a knee-jerk reaction to this monumental decision, but I really think it's time for us to listen. To sit quietly and listen to God and his Word. To let it wash over us with waves of grace and mercy and confidence in his promises.

I think we also need to listen to people in the homosexual community. To step across the boundaries and have a meal with them - not with the purpose of convincing them we're right, but to love them in the ways of Christ and build friendships.

### 3. Remember.

Remember the goodness of God. Remember the sovereignty of God. And remember the grace of God extended to all humanity.

God is not surprised or taken aback by this decision. The hearts of the leaders are in God's hands. He can do as he pleases. At times like this, it's critical for us to remember





the power and plan of God - something much higher than ours - and simply trust.

We are not a people called to fret and rant - we are a called-out people to sacrifice, love and live out the boldness of God's scandalous grace to everyone in our path. Remember this.

#### 4. Prepare.

God calls his people to have an answer for the grace within us. Instead of responding with the tired arguments against same-sex marriage, why not form a grace-filled response pointing people to the work God has done in your own life to deal with your sin. Or remind people that God's grace isn't held back for the 'holy' but extended to every person. Or just simply point people to Christ.

Be ready to respond with grace, humility and truth. It's not necessary to share our opinion about every matter under the sun - sometimes it's better to answer with surprising grace. After all, our mission is not to legislate morality; our mission is to stand as witnesses to the work of the cross.

#### 5. Persevere.

Don't let your love grow cold. Let this decision cultivate a deeper trust in a God who knows all things, holds all things together and is returning soon.

Pour heaping scoops of hot grace on your heart for the lost and broken, and remember we were not called to a life of comfort and ease ... we were called to follow the one whom the world hated. But let's not make them hate us because we're jerks - if they hate us, let it be because our passion for God and others is so strong it cannot be ignored or overlooked. [End]

\*\*\*\*\*

Brian Orme is the executive and founding editor of [Faithit.com](http://Faithit.com) and [Churchleaders.com](http://Churchleaders.com). He works for Outreach, Inc, and lives in Dayton, Ohio (USA) with his wife, Jenna, and four boys.

*"... remind people that God's grace isn't held back for the 'holy' but extended to every person."*

Brian Orme



*"Why was I willing to let divorced and remarried couples know that they are welcome and wanted while refusing that same welcome to gay and lesbian couples?" Ken Wilson*

## 2. What C.S. Lewis' Marriage Can Tell Us About the Gay Marriage Controversy

- Why "welcome and wanted" is a biblical response to gay and lesbian couples in evangelical churches.

by Ken Wilson



I'm an evangelical pastor (founding pastor of Vineyard Church of Ann Arbor) who has publicly stated that I can no longer enforce

any exclusionary practices aimed at men and women in gay partnerships. I know many evangelical pastors who are privately troubled by the current approach to gay people. These pastors are in a state of conflicted conscience, looking for a way to honour both their evangelical faith and the gay and lesbian people who are coming to their churches, or are loved by people in their churches.

Many pastors counsel conflicted parents of evangelical faith who are in a psychological torture device: forced to choose between accepting their child who is gay or honouring the faith that saved them.

I have proposed a path for these pastors that allows them to embrace people who are gay, lesbian, and transgender and to accept them fully — welcome and wanted — into the company of Jesus. I wrote "A Letter to My Congregation" when I realised my views had changed and I needed to communicate the intense theological, biblical, pastoral, and spiritual process that I had been through to get to this new place.

Why was I willing to let divorced and remarried couples know that they are welcome and wanted while refusing that same welcome to gay and lesbian couples?

It began with a burr beneath the saddle of my conscience: why was I willing to let so many divorced and remarried couples know that they are welcome and wanted while refusing that same welcome to gay and lesbian couples? How could I say to the remarried couples, whose second



marriage was clearly condemned by the plain meaning of scripture, "You are welcome and wanted," while saying to the two mothers raising their adopted child together, "I love you, but I hate your sin"?

A story from C.S. Lewis' life helps point the way "A priest going against the grain"

C.S. Lewis, author of the Chronicles of Narnia and the greatest apologist for the Christian faith in the 20th century, fell in love with a divorced woman, Joy Davidman. Her husband was an alcoholic (and not a Christian) and their marriage fell apart. Lewis had never been married. His beloved Church of England, hewing to the biblical teaching that marriage is between one man and one woman for life, refused to sanction this union on the grounds that in marrying Joy, Lewis would be marrying another man's wife, making them both adulterers.

But there was one priest who was willing to go against the grain, Father Peter Bide. Lewis turned to Bide, a former pupil who had become an Anglican priest,

after the bishop of Oxford refused to marry Lewis and Davidman. Bide knew that Lewis was asking for something that wasn't consistent with the teaching of the Church of England. But this naive priest prayed about it. That's right. He asked Jesus what he should do. What a concept! As if Jesus were alive and might talk back! And he felt led by the Spirit to perform the wedding.

During the ceremony, which took place in the hospital room where the bride was battling cancer, he placed his hands on her and prayed for her healing. She went into an unexpected remission almost immediately and Lewis and Davidman had a blessed reprieve in which to enjoy their union. They had what so many of us long for, including people who are gay, lesbian, and transgender: someone to pair bond with, someone to cuddle with at night, someone committed to care for the other should the other — as so many of us eventually do — get sick and die.

Most evangelical churches have remarried leaders. No one speaks of loving these remarried people but hating their sin.

That was then, over 50 years ago. This is now. The most theologically conservative expressions of Christian faith in the 21st century — Roman Catholicism and evangelicalism — wouldn't blink at the thought of blessing the union of C.S. Lewis and Joy Davidman. The Catholic Church would do so by annulling Davidman's first marriage. Most evangelical churches would ask her a few questions (if that) and determine that God was surely blessing this new marriage.

### **A third way for evangelicals on same-sex marriage**

I studied the scriptures on divorce and remarriage extensively as a younger pastor. I studied the early church fathers and the Protestant Reformers. Their grounds for allowing remarriage were extremely strict, based on a plain reading of scripture. This older consensus held sway in the church — Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox — until it was flooded with remarried couples after World War II.

Today, most evangelical churches have remarried lay leaders and board members. Some have remarried pastors. No one speaks of loving these remarried people but hating their sin. Instead, they are fully accepted into the life of the church. A veritable cottage industry of evangelical books exists to help the conscientious Bible reader make sense of the biblical prohibitions in light of their historical context and apply their teaching in light of the experience of the remarried people we know, love, and often, are.

As I reflected on this issue, the thought hit me like a punch in the gut: if we gave the same considerate reading to the handful of texts condemning same-sex sexual practices that we give to passages on divorce (what did they mean in their historical context and how should we apply them today?), we would likely come up with a very different approach to gay, lesbian, and transgender people. We

*"Most evangelical churches have remarried leaders. No one speaks of loving these remarried people but hating their sin."*



might even find a way to fully include them in the life of the church as we have done for so many remarried people.

And I wondered: are we reluctant to consider this possibility because it's virtually impossible to finance an evangelical congregation without remarried people, while it's easy enough to do so without gay, lesbian, and transgender people simply because there are fewer of them?

Then, the knock-out blow occurred to me: how would that square with the good shepherd who leaves the 99 sheep to go after the one which has wandered from (or been driven out by) the rest of the flock?

With much trepidation and a sometimes paralysing dose of fear, I opened myself to the possibility that my received tradition on this subject might be wrong.

So I have proposed what I am calling a 'third way' between the longstanding and polarised binary — either 'love the sinner, hate the sin' or 'open and affirming.'

#### **Why Christians can agree to disagree on gay marriage**

Some have objected that this 'third way' is just 'open and affirming' in disguise. But I maintain that this 'third way' — I call it 'welcome and wanted' — is not equivalent to 'open and affirming' for two important reasons.

First, it grounds the full acceptance of gay, lesbian, and transgender people in a much-ignored portion of scripture: Romans 14-15, in which Paul introduces a category he calls 'disputable matters.' The upshot is this: the church in Rome was splitting over disputes about first order

moral issues — like whether or not eating meat sacrificed to idols constituted idolatry (one could make the case!), or whether ignoring the command to rest on the seventh day was a sin against one of the Ten Commandments, even a sin against nature, since God himself rested on the seventh day in the Genesis creation account.

If how the biblical prohibitions of same-sex sexual practices apply to modern same-sex couples is an example of a 'disputable matter,' then it follows that the church can 'agree to disagree' on this question, while practicing full acceptance of gay, lesbian, and transgender people, not to mention full acceptance of those

who disagree with whether such people sin by having sex with their covenanted partners.

The biblical 'ideal,' if there is such a thing, is not marriage, but celibacy.

I realise that in the current climate of intense controversy over this issue, that would be hard to pull off in many local churches, but that, too, seems to be Paul's point: Jesus is more powerful than other lords (like Caesar) precisely because he is risen from the dead, and can empower those who follow him to do improbable things — like remain in a unity of the Spirit despite sharp disagreement over important questions. In fact, this demonstrates his resurrection power: he can do what mere religion can't — keep people together who watch different cable news-entertainment networks.

Second, the 'third way' questions why people who accept the gospel of Jesus

Christ think they have any business assuming that our acceptance of one another 'in Christ' is contingent on granting each other our moral approval. The 'affirming' in 'open and affirming' implies that the congregation so tagged offers its moral approval to gay couples. But what does that have to do with the gospel? Isn't the whole point of the gospel that God accepts us thanks to the faithfulness of Jesus and not because he approves of all our moral choices? And that we are to do likewise with each other? Where does this insistence that our unity depends on granting each other moral approval come from?

In any event, the biblical 'ideal,' if there is such a thing, is not marriage, but celibacy, according to the teachings of Jesus and Paul. Marriage, according to both, is a concession to human weakness. "If you can't remain celibate, it's better to marry than to burn," said Paul. Hardly a ringing endorsement of marriage. This business of granting marriage some privileged moral status is far from the New Testament ideal.

Call me naive, but I think there's a third way for evangelicals in the gay marriage debate, and it's a way that honours the Bible and the power of the gospel better than 'love the sinner, hate the sin' or 'open and affirming.' Whether or not it works is another matter. But I think it's time to give it a try, especially if it could bear witness to a risen Lord better than the current rehashed moralism that we're calling the gospel.

If you are an evangelical pastor who has felt the same troubled conscience that I have over your exclusion of gay, lesbian, and transgender people, you might try what the pastor who married C.S. Lewis and Joy Davidman did: ask Jesus what you should do and do that, come what may. [End]

\*\*\*\*\*

Ken Wilson, co-pastor of Blue Ocean Faith, Ann Arbor, founded a church in 1975 which grew to an average attendance of 600. A national leader in Vineyard Churches, he was disaffiliated for pioneering a fully inclusive "Third Way" approach to LGBT people. Author of *A Letter to My Congregation* (ReadTheSpirit, 2014).

Web: [www.faithstreet.com/onfaith](http://www.faithstreet.com/onfaith)

*The biblical 'ideal,' if there is such a thing, is not marriage, but celibacy.*





### 3. A Pastor's Struggle with Same-Sex Attraction

by Pastor Tom Brock



I have struggled with homosexual temptation most of my life. By the grace of God I have always been celibate but the

struggle for me has been intense. Sadly, the battle was also with my own denomination. In my 22 years as a pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America I spoke at church conventions for the Biblical standard of celibacy for those with same sex attraction.

Sadly in 2009 the ELCA adopted a more liberal view and began ordaining practicing homosexuals. I have left the ELCA but I continue in my television ministry to uphold the truth that homosexual behaviour is sin, and the fact that I struggle with this temptation does not give me license to practice the behaviour.

This summer I testified before a hearing at the convention of the Presbyterian Church USA as they debated whether to change the definition of marriage to include homosexual couples. I explained that I am a person who struggles with same sex attraction but the last thing I want to see is the Church endorse a behavior that hurts people in this life and which excludes them from the Kingdom in the next (I Corinthians 6:9-11). I stated "Is it not arrogant to think that we are somehow more enlightened than all the Christians who came before us?" I believe it is safest to interpret Scripture the way Christians have understood it for 2000 years and the solid testimony of

church history is against homosexual behaviour.

The Biblical interpretation that has led some denominations astray - notably the ELCA, Presbyterian Church USA, the Episcopal Church in America, and the United Church of Christ - maintains that the Bible does not condemn homosexual behaviour per se, but only promiscuous homosexual behaviour. As much as part of me - my flesh - would like to believe I can legitimately engage in homosexual behaviour, the Bible remains a permanent obstacle. An objective reading of Leviticus 18:22, 20:13, Deuteronomy 22:5, Romans 1:26-27, I Corinthians 6:9-11, I Timothy 1:8-10, Jude 6,7 makes clear that the Bible's condemnation of homosexual

behaviour is a blanket one. There is never the added caveat: *But it is okay if you love each other.*

*"They are nicing people right into hell."*

At the Presbyterian convention, one pastor testified that the denomination should allow her to marry lesbians in her congregation because "If I don't I will hurt them." I responded "No, to encourage them to engage in a behaviour which will rob them of salvation, that is what will hurt them."

I was interviewed on Minneapolis radio about my struggle and the interviewer asked "Pastor Brock, why don't you just go with this orientation as who you are?"

I responded "I'm glad I didn't. I'd be dead. Many men my age who went into this lifestyle are dead."

Some liberal Lutheran bishops I know believe they are being loving by affirming homosexual behaviour. The truth is they are hurting people. As one old Lutheran pastor said *"They are nicing people right into hell."*

I can't tell you how grievous it was for me with my struggle to hear bishops endorse something that I knew was evil.

So what does one do if one suffers from same sex attraction? I believe the answer is: fight. Nowhere are we told the Christian life will be easy. I once heard someone say "But God would never ask you to deny something so central to your make-up as homosexuality". I thought "Why not?" If we believe in the doctrine of original sin---that we are all born sinners because of Adam's fall (Romans 5)—then indeed every Christian is called to battle the sin that is so central to our make-up.

One often hears "But I didn't choose this." I can relate. I never consciously asked to have these temptations. But most alcoholics do not wake up one morning and say "I think I'll have a drinking problem." Kleptomaniacs do not say "I think I'll have a problem with shoplifting." We may not choose our temptations in life, but we do choose what we do with our temptations. To be tempted is not sin. Jesus was tempted in Matthew four. What we do with temptation shows whether we are endeavouring to follow Christ. And, praise God, even if we do fall under



temptation, there is forgiveness when we repent and turn to Christ.

What will help people who struggle with same sex attraction? Of course, regular prayer, Bible reading and being in a good church, a church that has not compromised on this issue. But for most people struggling with same sex attraction, the crucial key is accountability. I have been part of a Christian support group for those who struggle with same sex attraction...Also very important for me are the weekly phone calls I make to my accountability partner who helps keep me on the straight and narrow.

Lastly, where does homosexuality come from? Is it nature (in the genes) or nurture (in one's upbringing)? I lean toward the latter but ultimately it does not matter. Wherever it comes from, we are called upon to follow Christ and say "no" to it. As our Lord Himself stated "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me" (Luke 9:23).

[End]

\*\*\*\*\*

Tom Brock was ordained a Lutheran pastor in 1979 and served Hope Lutheran Church in Minneapolis for 29 years.

He served on the board of reform groups attempting to bring Biblical renewal to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America before he left that denomination over their position on issues such as abortion, homosexuality and universalism.

Additionally, Pastor Brock has had a television ministry for more than 24 years.

Web: <http://pastorsstudy.org/>

\*\*\*\*\*

*"For most people struggling with same sex attraction, the crucial key is accountability."*  
Pastor Tom Brock



*"I was crying myself to sleep, night after night, begging God to take away these feelings."* Justin Lee

## 4. How to Truly Love a Gay Person

by Justin Lee



*I am a Christian.  
I'm single.  
And I'm also gay.*

That last sentence is what causes many of my fellow Christians to raise their eyebrows. I can't blame them. Growing up, I, too, thought there was no such thing as a gay Christian, and I would have been quick to debate against anyone who said otherwise.

As a young, devout Christian from an evangelical home, I didn't think I knew any gay people. I was certain that the Bible condemned homosexuality, though, and I wasn't afraid to say so.

My view of homosexuality was this: God created male and female for each other. Our bodies were designed to fit together in that way, and the Bible made it clear that while sexuality was a gift from God, using our sexuality in ways that were outside of God's design for it was a sin - whether that meant premarital sex, adultery, or homo-sexuality. My pro-gay friends called me a 'homophobe' for this view, but I didn't hate or fear gay people; I simply believed that they were making a sinful choice with their lives, and that by speaking out in a loving way, I could call their attention to it and help bring them back to God. That's what we're supposed to do as Christians, right?

I, of course, wasn't gay; at least, that's what I thought. But I did have a secret I was going to take to my grave.

Like other guys my age, when I'd hit puberty, I had begun to experience sexual attractions. No surprise there. But one thing was different: while all of my guy friends were starting to notice girls for the first time, I was starting to notice guys.

At first, I didn't worry about it. I assumed this was just part of the process and that my attractions would eventually switch to girls. But they didn't. Instead, the feelings just kept getting stronger and stronger. Even if I could make it through the school day without thinking about guys, I'd go to bed at night and dream about guys. I'd wake up each morning



feeling dirty and disgusted with myself.

As you might expect, I was horrified by this. I couldn't tell anyone, and I didn't know what was wrong with me. It got to the point that I was crying myself to sleep, night after night, begging God to take away these feelings.

It wasn't until I was eighteen (and dating a beautiful girl I had no attraction to whatsoever) that I finally realised there was a word for people like me: 'gay.'

Even then, though, I was convinced it was a phase. I was sure that God didn't design me to be gay, so I looked into every Christian ministry I could find that offered to help gay people become straight. I was completely convinced that an 'ex-gay' ministry, combined with therapy and prayer, would help me become attracted to women and put these other feelings behind me. After all, God can do anything!

The hard truth was that it doesn't work that way. Yes, God can do anything, but that doesn't mean God does do what we expect. I met so many people who had faith to move mountains and who had prayed and struggled their whole lives to become straight, but their attractions had still never changed. Even the leaders and success stories of these change ministries privately admitted to me that they hadn't become straight. Yes, some of them had married a member of the opposite sex, but the 'happily heterosexual' face they showed to the world was not the reality. I heard more tragic stories behind closed doors than I can possibly convey. Eventually, I had to accept that in all likelihood, I would always be gay, whether or not I ever acted on my feelings.

But this left me uncertain what to do next! As I turned to my church and the Christians I respected most to get their support, I began to realise that many churches don't know how to respond to a gay person. Christian groups kicked me out or turned their backs on me when they learned that I was gay, and many fellow Christians were quick to offer lectures but slow to take an interest in me or my journey.

*"I realised that many churches don't know how to respond to a gay person."*

I also discovered that there were millions of gay Christians around the world who were struggling with the ramifications of being honest with their churches and families. I decided to create a network for support and understanding, The Gay Christian Network, which today has tens of thousands of members working to make the church a more gracious and loving place for everyone. Some of our members support same-sex marriage, while others believe it is contrary to Scripture. We all agree, however, that we as Christians need to do a better job of showing the love of Christ to people who have too often felt like outcasts.

So what does it mean to really show love to a gay person - especially if you don't agree with them on everything?

Most of the Christians I know would argue that they're already showing love to gay people. "I know gay people think Christians hate them, but we don't," they say. "I love gay people. I may not agree with them, but I love them."

So if that's true, why do so many gay people feel so unloved by Christians?

Part of the problem is that so many Christians have used the word 'love' to justify behaviours that don't feel very loving.

If these Christians treat me disapprovingly, it's because they 'love the

sinner and hate the sin.' If they preach at me, they're 'speaking the truth in love.' If they distance themselves from me, it's because they're showing 'tough love.'

But how loved would you feel if people distanced themselves from you, preached at you, treated you disapprovingly, and failed to take an interest in your life and story? The people doing these things may very well intend them in love, but these same acts can be done just as easily by someone who doesn't love me at all. Telling me that it's 'in love' doesn't make me feel loved. Real love requires something extra.

It reminds me of a scene from the 1960s musical film "My Fair Lady." Eliza Doolittle, a poor flower girl, has worked hard to overcome her Cockney accent and pass as a proper English lady, but she eventually tires of being treated as a trophy by her diction teacher and others. So when a young suitor named Freddy - who barely knows anything about her - begins to sing a song professing his love, she humorously interrupts him with a song called "Show Me," arguing that his words of love are meaningless if he doesn't show his love through action.

As a gay man, the song "Show Me" resonates in a powerful way. Do you love me? Don't talk about it. Show me!

You know why gay people have such a bad impression of Christians? It's not because of protesters with "God hates fags" signs. We know they're extremists. It's because of daily being dehumanised by the Christians who lecture and preach at us, treating us as issues instead of as human beings - and because of the Christians we know who stand idly by,



thinking that if they're not actively hating us, that counts as loving us. But that's not love.

Talk is cheap. Telling me your opinion on my life is easy. Real love takes more than that. If you're really serious when you say you love me, you're going to have to prove it. Show me!

#### How Can You Show Me You Love Me?

- Support my rights. Okay, maybe we don't agree on the definition of marriage, but can we at least agree that people shouldn't be able to fire me or kick me out of my home just because they found out I'm gay? If you agree, help me make those legal protections a reality. If you don't agree, it's hard to believe you really care that much about my well-being.
- Stick up for me, even when I'm not around. Don't let people make gay jokes or speak derisively about LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) people. You never know who might be listening. I was, before you knew I was gay.
- Invite me to dinner. Or a party. Or a movie. Or a game night. Or to hang out at the mall. Make it something I enjoy, and don't use it as a pretext for

anything other than having a good time together.

- Take an interest in my life and relationships. Ask about the person I'm seeing, or the person I'd like to be seeing. (No need to tell me how much you disapprove.) Find out about my hobbies, favourite movies, favourite music, and other things I'm passionate about. Learn to see me as a multifaceted human being.
- Ask about my experiences as a gay person. Don't comment. Just listen.
- Learn the language I use for myself, and use it. For instance, I don't call myself 'homosexual'; I call myself gay. If you call me 'homosexual' in spite of my disdain for that term, it doesn't feel very loving to me.
- Get involved in causes LGBT people care about. Join the fight against LGBT bullying in schools. Learn about the homeless LGBT youth population in your city. Volunteer at a charity serving people with AIDS. Don't bring attention to what a good Christian you're being; just do it because it's the right thing to do.
- Instead of asking me to join you in settings where you're most

comfortable, look for opportunities to join me in settings where I'm most comfortable. Maybe I have a favourite coffee house, or I love to hike a local trail, or I go bowling with friends every Friday night. And hey, maybe you could get to know my friends instead of expecting me to fit in with yours.

- Be the conservative Christian in my life who doesn't quote the Bible at me. I know; you're worried that not expressing disapproval will make me think you approve of all my decisions. It won't. It just shows me that you care more about me than about our differences.
- Most importantly, don't do any of these things with a hidden agenda. Do them because you love me. You said you love me, right? Okay, then. Show me.

[END]

Justin Lee is the author of *"TORN: Rescuing the Gospel from the Gays-vs.-Christians Debate,"* from Jericho Books and Executive Director of The Gay Christian Network.

<http://gcjustin.tumblr.com>

[www.TornBook.com](http://www.TornBook.com)

<https://www.gaychristian.net/>





# Up Close and Personal with Aussie Wildlife

## Bearded Dragon (*Pogona*)

There are eight species of bearded dragon and they can be found in every state in Australia, though not in the extreme north of the continent. While they can sometimes be seen basking on rocks, they spend most of their time in bushes or trees, and even burrow underground if it's too hot.

While both sexes have beards, the male displays his more often, especially during their mating rituals. The beard is also used to show aggression as adult dragons are very territorial.

While bearded dragons eat insects, vegetation also makes up part of their diet.

Bearded dragons are a popular pet in Australia, especially for children as they are quite placid creatures.

### Suggestions for Electronic Daily Devotions:

#### **Adults:**

- <http://www.worthydevotions.com>
- <http://www.crosswalk.com/devotionals/encouragement>
- <http://www.insight.org/resources/devotionals>

#### **Women:**

- <http://www.joycemeyer.org/Articles/Devotional.aspx>
- <http://www.crosswalk.com/devotionals/girlfriends>
- <http://www.justbetweenus.org/dailydevotionsforchristianwomen>

#### **Men:**

- <https://www.biblegateway.com/devotionals/mens-devotional-bible>
- <http://powertochange.com/blogs/experience/devotional>
- <http://www.crosswalk.com/devotionals/harvestdaily>

#### **Seniors:**

- <http://www.crosswalk.com/devotionals/seniors>
- <http://www.lightsource.com/devotionals/daily-living-for-seniors>
- <http://www.christianity.com/devotionals/daily-living-for-seniors>
- <http://www.hope-fulldevos.com>

NB: these links are provided as a suggested resource only. Provision of these in no way suggests that SPAG Magazine endorses these sites or their products, or other materials connected with them, nor does SPAG Magazine vouch for the content on these sites.



## RECIPES FOR ONE OR TWO

Don't you loath those supposedly everyday recipes which list exotic-sounding ingredients like rappini or edamame that when you finally track them down, discover will cost \$84/kg? Fear not! Here at SPAG Magazine you'll find easyish low-carb recipes for one or two people, with simple and easy to find ingredients. These have all been tested and tried right in the SPAG Magazine kitchen!

### MAIN COURSE:

#### Creamy Baked Cod (serves 1-2)

##### Ingredients:

1-2 tbs parmesan or extra tasty cheese, grated  
1-2 fresh (or defrosted) cod fillets  
½ cup thick cream  
1-2 slices of fresh lemon per fish fillet

##### Directions:

Preheat oven to 200°C.

Wipe off any excess moisture from the fish using a paper towel. Oil a baking tray, then lay each piece of fish onto a lemon slice. You may omit the lemon or slice it very thinly if you don't like a strong lemon flavour. Over the top of the fish, spoon a layer of thick cream, then sprinkle the cheese over the cream.

Cook for 30 minutes or until nicely browned, or cook for longer if the fish fillets are thick.

This recipe while surprisingly easy, is quite delicious!



#### Savoury Scones (makes 4)

##### Ingredients:

½ cup sifted coconut flour    2 eggs  
⅛ tspn garlic powder    ¼ tspn baking powder  
50-75g tasty cheese, grated  
½ or 50g of a small block of butter, melted and slightly cooled

##### Directions:

Preheat oven to 200°C and line a baking tray with baking paper.

Whisk the eggs, then add the melted butter and garlic powder. Once mixed, then add the sifted coconut flour and baking powder and whisk thoroughly. Then fold the cheese through the mixture.

Form balls (about an ice-cream scoop size) and place onto the cooking tray.

Bake for 13-15 minutes or until lightly browned. Serve with butter or as an accompaniment to your main meal.

Allow scones to cool completely before storing or they won't stay crisp.

*Optional:* add bacon/ham and/or onion and keep refrigerated, especially during hot weather or they'll spoil.



### DESSERT:

#### Baked Custard (serves 2)

##### Ingredients:

|                 |                     |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| 2 large eggs    | 300ml bottle cream  |
| ½ tsp vanilla   | Pinch of salt       |
| ¼ cup sweetener | Cinnamon (optional) |

##### Directions:

Preheat oven to 165°C.

Whisk eggs, then slowly pour in cream whilst mixing. Then stir through the remainder of the ingredients.

Pour into a small pyrex type dish and sprinkle a little cinnamon across the top. Place inside a larger dish and pour boiling water into the outside dish to halfway up the outside of the custard container. Bake for 35-45 minutes.

To check if it's cooked, stick in a skewer or shake the container a little to check if the top is still too liquidy.

This classic custard is lovely and rich on its own, but you may like to add a tiny splash of sauce such as sugar-free caramel or sugar-free maple syrup, or serve with berries.





# A-Musings: Weird Movie Titles

by Vicki Nunn

I heard that Reece Witherspoon and Brad Pitt once signed up for a movie called *"Important Artefacts and Personal Property From the Collection of Lenore Doolan and Harold Morris, Including Books, Street Fashion and Jewelry."* You can tell by its title that it was probably a dramatic and insightful exploration of human nature ... or perhaps not.

And continuing on our theme of weird movie titles, following you will find a good assortment, though not an exhaustive list of real movie titles. While it may encourage you to rush out and buy them all, note please that a number of these are also included in the top 100 worst movies of all time. You have been warned:

- Sssssss;
- Hawmps!
- Phfff!
- Eegah!
- Dr Strangelove, Or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb;
- Dr Goldfoot and the Bikini Machine;
- Can Hieronymus Merkin Ever Forget Mercy Humppe and Find True Happiness?
- The Persecution and Ass0.32assination of Jean-Paul Marat as Performed by the Inmates of the Asylum of Charenton Under the Direction of the Marquis de Sade (AKA: Marat/ Sade);
- The Incredibly Strange Creatures Who Stopped Living and Became Mixed-Up Zombies!!?
- Bela Lugosi Meets a Brooklyn Gorilla;
- Smiling Fish and Goat on Fire;

- Quackser Fortune Has a Cousin in the Bronx;
- Class of Nuke 'Em High 3: The Good, the Bad and the Sub-humanoid;
- Cannibal Women in the Avocado Jungle of Death;
- The Great Scout and Cathouse Thursday;
- Surf Nazis Must Die;
- Sh! The Octopus;
- Shoot Loud, Louder... I Don't Understand;
- Six Heads in a Duffel Bag;
- Cannibal, The Musical;
- Johnny Skidmarks;
- The Garbage Picking Field-Goal Kicking Philadelphia Phenomenon;
- Don't Be a Menace to South Central While Drinking Your Juice in the Hood;
- Zaat;
- The Avenging Disco Godfather;
- Rabid Grannies;
- Yeti: A Love Story;
- Hick Trek 2: The Next Aggravation;
- Poultrygeist: Night of the Chicken Dead; ... and lastly
- The Killer Bra



Let's just hope that archaeologists of the future won't judge our society based on our movie titles. [END]

## Kooky Corner



by Miss Terry Woman

### Advertising Promotion

#### ~ Miss Terry Woman ~

Original images on an enormous variety of products - **graphic designs** are created by Australian Christian artist Vicki Nunn.

- Clothing;
- Kitchenware;
- Phone covers;
- Clocks;
- Canvases;
- Stationery;
- and so much more!

Creative designs by Miss Terry Woman from classic to quirky.

You can find links to the four international shops at:

[www.missterrywoman.com](http://www.missterrywoman.com)

with over 25,000 items in the Australian shop alone.

[www.missterrywoman.com](http://www.missterrywoman.com)



# PUZZLE PAGE

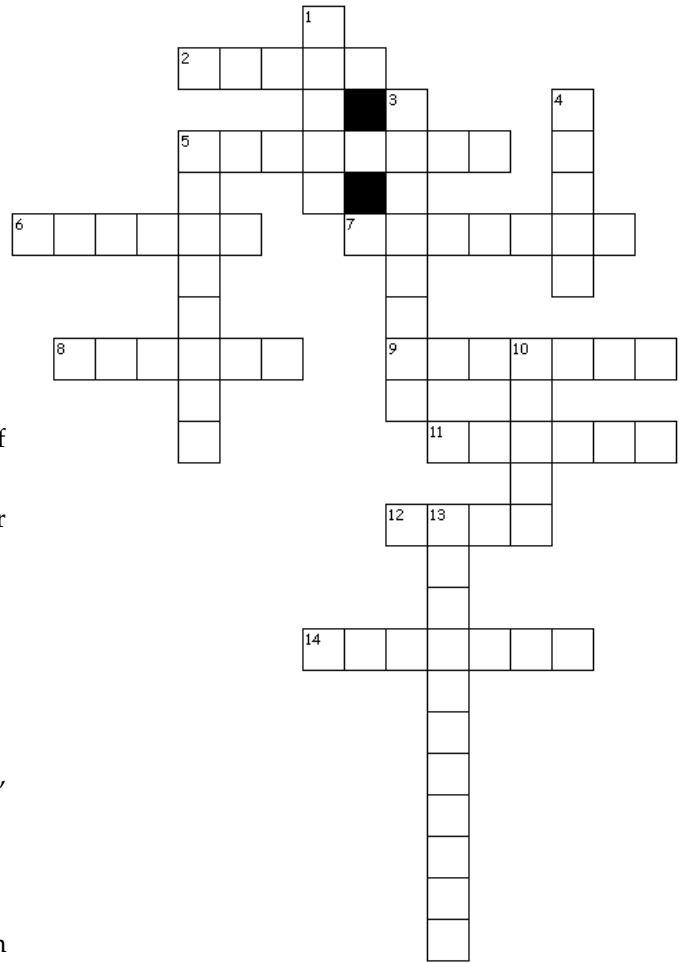
# Jonah and Amos Criss-Cross

*Across*

2. From which place did Amos come?
5. What was Amos' original occupation?
6. Jonah told the sailors that he was what nationality?
7. God gave Amos a vision of what insect?
8. What was the name of the King of Judah in the book of Amos?
9. From which place did Jonah come?
11. After hearing Jonah's message, what did the king dress himself in?
12. God gave Amos a vision of what element which was to devour the land of Israel?
14. Where did God want to send Jonah?

*Down*

1. In which place did Jonah find a ship?
3. What was the name of the King of Israel in the book of Amos?
4. Jonah warned the people of Nineveh they had how many days, before God was going to destroy them?
5. What was Jonah doing when the boat sailed into the storm?
10. How many days and nights was Jonah inside the great fish?
13. How quickly did the storm cease once Jonah was thrown overboard?



## Double Puzzle: Abraham

Step 1: Unscramble each of the clue words or names relating to the story of Abraham.

Step 2: Copy the letters in the numbered clue word cells to the cells at the bottom with the same number, to find a phrase that God spoke to Abraham.

RAAHS

|  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|

21

RAMAB

|  |    |  |  |   |
|--|----|--|--|---|
|  |    |  |  |   |
|  | 27 |  |  | 9 |

RABHAAAM 

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

  
18

OLT 

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|

NAANAC 

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|

 16

TAALR 

|  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|

BELTEH

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|

5    26    28

MOD50

|    |  |    |    |  |
|----|--|----|----|--|
|    |  |    |    |  |
| 14 |  | 33 | 37 |  |

HOMROGRA

|    |    |  |  |    |  |  |    |
|----|----|--|--|----|--|--|----|
|    |    |  |  |    |  |  |    |
| 39 | 15 |  |  | 36 |  |  | 40 |

HENBOR 

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|

  
13

RAHGA 

|  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|

HAIMELS 

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

SEGLAN 

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|

|      |  |  |  |  |
|------|--|--|--|--|
| TASL |  |  |  |  |
|------|--|--|--|--|

[illegible]

|       |    |    |  |  |
|-------|----|----|--|--|
| SAICA |    |    |  |  |
|       | 10 | 30 |  |  |

NAOCTEVN

|  |    |  |    |  |  |  |  |
|--|----|--|----|--|--|--|--|
|  |    |  |    |  |  |  |  |
|  | 41 |  | 17 |  |  |  |  |

SEBHERAEB 

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

CAERIFCIS 

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

ROFEGIFN 

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

MAR 

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|

UHTAEKR

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
|   |   |   |
| 4 | 5 | 6 |

|   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |
|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|
|   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |
| 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |

|    |    |
|----|----|
|    |    |
| 15 | 16 |

|    |    |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|----|----|
|    |    |    |    |    |
| 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |

|   |    |    |    |
|---|----|----|----|
| W |    |    |    |
|   | 22 | 23 | 24 |

|    |    |
|----|----|
|    |    |
| 25 | 26 |

|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 33 |

|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| 34 | 35 | 36 | 37 | 38 | 39 | 40 |

|   |    |    |
|---|----|----|
| y |    |    |
|   | 41 | 38 |

*A: All the families on earth will be blessed through you.*



## The Whole Armour of God Ephesian 6:21-24

A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on all of God's armour so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.

Therefore, put on every piece of God's armour so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm. Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armour of God's righteousness. For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared. In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil. Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere. [NLT]

### BIBLIOGRAPHY:

#### Online Resources:

- Copen, Lisa "RestMinistries.com" <http://restministries.com/2014/11/uproots/> © 2015. Web 01/05/15  
 "12 Worst Date Ideas" <http://likes.com/relationships/12-worst-date-ideas?page=1> Web 02/05/15  
 Feters, K. Aleisha "Men's Health" <http://www.menshealth.com/sex-women/worst-date-ideas-ever> © 2014 Web 02/05/15  
 Gagnog, Tiffany "Men's Fitness" <http://www.mensfitness.com/women/dating-advice/the-best-and-worst-dates-to-take-her-on?page=1> Web 02/05/15  
 Yeung, Lorraine "This Pilgrims' Progress" <http://lorraineYeung.com/2011/11/why-you-are-struggling-with-singleness/> © 2011 Web 05/05/15  
 Smith, Lori "Lifeway Articles" <http://www.lifeway.com/Article/Single-Truths> Web 05/05/15  
 McCoy, Katie "Girls Gone Wise" <http://www.girlsgonewise.com/waiting-for-life-to-start/> © 2015 Web 05/05/15  
 Bubar, Sarah "Girls Gone Wise" <http://www.girlsgonewise.com/honor-obey-the-dividing-line-for-adult-children/> ©2011 Web: 25/05/15  
 Kuiper, Rev Douglas "Protestant Reformed Churches in America" <http://www.prc.org/sermons/ephesians6.1.html> Web 25/05/15  
 Cleveland, Christena "ChrisenaCleveland.com" <http://www.christenacleveland.com/2013/12/singled-out/> © 2013 Web: 31/05/15  
 Orme, Brian "Faithit.com" <http://www.faithit.com/5-ways-to-respond-to-the-supreme-courts-decision-on-same-sex-marriage/> Web 02/06/15  
 Wilson, Ken "On Faith" <http://www.faithstreet.com/onfaith/2014/03/31/what-c-s-lewis-marriage-can-tell-us-about-the-gay-marriage-controversy/31512> Web 05/06/15  
 Brock, Pastor Tom "The Pastor's Study" <http://pastorsstudy.org/news/my-struggle-with-same-sex-attraction.html> Web 02/06/15  
 Lee, Justin "Crumbs from the Communion Table" <http://gcjustin.tumblr.com/post/83553224973/homosexuality-its-not-what-you-think> © 2014. Web 02/06/15  
 Lee, Justin "Crumbs from the Communion Table" <http://gcjustin.tumblr.com/post/79064007802/you-love-gay-people-thats-great-prove-it> © 2014. Web 02/06/15  
 Baked Cod "Active Low-Carber forums" <http://forum.lowcarber.org/archive/index.php/t-53992.html> © 2002  
<http://www.discoveryeducation.com/free-puzzlemaker/>  
<http://www.taste.com.au/recipes/>

NB: any internet addresses, books or other written materials referenced in SPAG Magazine are provided as a resource only. Use of these in no way suggests that SPAG Magazine endorses these sites or their products, or other written materials connected with them, nor does SPAG vouch for the content on these sites.

[NLT] Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2007 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, IL 60188. All rights reserved.

## SUBSCRIPTIONS:

Your subscription will help keep this ministry going which will provide articles that will encourage and inspire you and other Christian singles.

Please feel free to share a copy of SPAG with someone you feel may benefit and encourage them to subscribe for their own copy. May I suggest that you give out no more than two or three copies, being mindful that the more you gift freely to others, the more difficult it becomes to obtain funding for this ministry.

You can subscribe directly from the website at [spagmag.com](http://spagmag.com), through a protected debit/credit card and PayPal facility. Alternately you can send payment directly from your account to:

Account No: xxxxx

BSB: xxxx

Name: xxx

If you do pay directly, please ensure that you **email** your name, address and account details and advise that you have subscribed. That way, we can be sure you are added to our subscription list!

Thank you!

Scatter kindness along the way  
and you will never walk alone.

Next quarter's issue (Summer 2015):





*Old wrought-iron home near Marmor, Central Queensland,  
Australia*