

How to Help Your Children Feel Safe in an Unsafe World

Yesterday there was another school shooting. As a result of the actions of one 15-year-old male student at Marshall County High School in Benton, Kentucky, two students are dead and 17 are injured. Five of those are in critical condition.

Reports like this can be discouraging and concerning. Again, we ask, *what can we do?*

In December, 2012, a school shooting in Newtown, CT, stunned us all. I wrote the following then and I'm reposting it today in hopes someone will be positively affected.

We Must Do What We Can Do

We can't control what happens to our children. You've known that. Yesterday's trauma just drives that home.

Trying to control our children often backfires. If we have too many demands, they rebel. If we use too many boundaries, they won't know how to be free. They may not know they can be free. They may have no confidence.

Too much control can actually make children more insecure. It's the very opposite of what you want for them.

We can control how we behave toward our children. And, other children, too.

- Know them.
- Respect them.
- Interact with them.
- Comfort them.
- Like them.
- Love them.
- Honor them.

- Affirm them.
- Spend time with them.
- Embrace them.
- Listen.
- Talk.
- Do things with them.
- Help them learn, study and practice.
- Hug them.
- Help them.
- Cherish them.
- Welcome them.
- Celebrate them.

These choices and actions will help children *feel* secure and *be* secure when they're with you. This is what you want. They'll turn to you when concerned and scared. They'll seek your wisdom when not sure of what to do. They'll trust you to do your best.

We can't protect children wherever they go. We can increase their security when they're with us.

The things we can do we should do. Now.

Now.

Now.

Don't wait.

Do it now. {eoa}

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3 Spirit-Borne Steps to Understanding Your True Identity in Christ

Have you ever watched the show *Who Do You Think You Are?*

A celebrity embarks on a journey through their lineage to find out the secrets their ancestors held, in an effort to learn who they are today.

It's fascinating.

I love watching that show, even if I don't know who half of those celebrities are. Just the process they go through, the documents and stories they uncover and how they fit in with history makes it fun to watch.

But this week, we read something that should completely blow our minds: Our past doesn't have to define who we are today.

2. Understand the purpose of the law

Most people know The 10 Commandments—the most common ones being don't commit adultery, don't lie, don't steal, and don't murder. When confronted with their depravity and need for a Savior, this is what they reach for.

"I'm not a bad person. I don't steal, I don't lie and I've never killed anyone!"

Then we become saved, and two things happen, either we continue to live by the declaration of the law, "You're a sinner" or we buy into the notion that there is no use at all for the law, misinterpreting the phrase "I'm not under the law, I'm under grace."

When we understand the purpose of the law, things fall right

into place, and we realize that we are no longer sinners but saints and that the law still has a purpose today. That purpose is clearly seen in Romans 7.

Paul illustrates for us so clearly in this chapter the importance of the law to reveal our sin. It's the law that revealed to us our own depravity: Our tendency to blaspheme God, rebellion, steal, lie and covet.

But that's where the power of the law ends. All it can do is tell us how hopeless we are, how utterly sinful we are. But it can't save us from our hopeless sinful state. All it can do is lead us to Jesus.

And once we begin identifying with Jesus, we're no longer sinners, we're saints. We're free from the law—not to do what we want to do, but to live obedient devotion to Christ and His Word.

The purpose of the Law is to lead us from our old identity to our new identity in Christ.

3. Accept Your New Lineage

When you received your new identity in Christ, you didn't just receive a new name on a blank piece of paper. Your new identity comes with a new lineage.

God is your Father; you have been adopted into an entire spiritual family, and this new lineage comes with royal privileges.

Romans 8:16-17a says it this way, "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ..."

This is our new family!

And we're not just step-children in the family of God. We're

100 percent bona fide children of God and heirs of God—we have an inheritance.

The celebrities that research their ancestry on the show *Who Do You Think You Are* do so because they sense this hole in their identity.

They want to know who they are, so they go back into their ancestral background to discover who they are today.

But as Christians, our ancestral background won't answer these questions. Who our ancestors were doesn't define who we are.

Who Jesus Christ Is Defines Who We Are

And even more than that!! Who Jesus Christ is sets us free from the bondage of our parent's alcoholism, our father's abusive behavior, the sexual addiction that runs in our family, the rape or sexual abuse we endured, the abortion we had or our drug abuse—all that stuff in our past and our family's past is gone. It's dead. It's buried.

And we've risen with Christ to a new life!

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Climbing Out of Your Place of Despair and Discouragement

“Does your mother know you did that?” I said, with eyes wide and jaw dropped.

There he was in the video, an ice hook in each hand and ice picks for shoes, slowly climbing a frozen Montana waterfall. He just laughed at my question and said, “It was so fun!”

No, fun is starting a new book to read next to a fireplace.

On Christmas day of last month, my son-in-law went into the emergency room and came out a week later with a diagnosis of Crohn’s disease. Circumstances have been sobering for the last two months, as we’ve watched this young couple get slammed with the word “disease” and try to absorb the idea of new and severe food restrictions and long-term treatment.

It’s a new kind of suffering that doesn’t have an end date.

But I know what to do: Thrust ice hooks of belief into the solid ice of God’s promises and slowly work my way up from the bottom.

It’s a grunt and a thrill.

“God is good,” I groan. Reach and stab.

“God is watching over this hard path we’re walking.” Toe pick.

“Jesus carried this sorrow for us.” Reach and stab.

“Jesus is a healer and cares about sick people.” Toe pick.

Pretty soon, despair is starting to look like an ant down

below, and I'm gaining a view from a higher and higher place.

There is joy in this extreme soul work, along with a good deal of sweat dripping down the middle of my back. This is what it means to "love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might" (Deut. 6:5). We love God when we refuse to submit to anxiety, discouragement and hopelessness about our trying circumstances.

What hard situation are you experiencing right now? To quote that preacher of mine, we need decide "to believe God is who He says He is and that He'll do what He says He'll do." Take time to list the promises of God and use them to climb out of your debilitating feelings. {eoa}

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Hone In on the Horror That Holds You Back From Your Destiny

It is a cold, winter day with wind chills in the minus category. I am nice and warm at home, settled in my comfy recliner in my sanctuary meeting place with God. I've learned that in order to meet with God, really be present with Him, I have to relax and quiet the noise within.

Tuning In

Even in a totally quiet environment, except for the noise of occasional cars passing by, I still have a hard time turning off the clatter inside my brain and even my body and tuning into God's frequency. It's amazing how loud my racing heart

and rapid breathing sound when I settle down and pay attention to it.

I turn off the lights, close the curtains and shut my eyes. Even then I have to put my arm over my face because even a tiny ray of sunlight streaming through a space in the curtains distracts me. I want to be totally alone with the presence of God around and within me.

I recline the chair and relax into what I know will be an amazing time in His presence if I can allow myself to be completely present with Him. Every item on my to-do list, every problem I feel only I can take care of and all the difficulties others have that I want to solve but are not mine to solve seem to tug at me like 50 2-year-olds.

Doing

These days, though, it takes less time to put these aside than in the first few days I tried this. Back then, my mind was racing from the moment I woke up until I went to bed. There was no downtime, even when I had my so-called “quiet” time. It looked more like cramming for a college final. How many chapters can I read today?

I don't miss those times at all. As a matter of fact, I have often told God how sorry I am that I didn't discover this practice now. I never knew how sitting in silence, meditating on Him and listening for His voice could transform my day and change everything about how I do life.

I realized some time ago I was a human doing instead of a human being. On the be-do-have continuum, I always used to start with do. I do things, in order to have things in order to be someone I can live with. Although I understood years ago that I should start with who I am, I couldn't quite grasp how to do that.

Being

I must be who I am. Whatever I do will come out of the “be” of me and then what I have relates to that, but it must be the least important of all. We are not born having or doing; at least most of us aren't. However, when we are born, we are probably the most in touch with God and who we are because we come directly from the comfort of His unconditional love.

“Your eyes saw me unformed, yet in Your book, all my days were written, before any of them came into being” (Ps. 139:16).

Destiny

It's difficult for me to understand God has an individual plan for every person. That includes every person ever born throughout time and all the people alive today.

The beginning and the ending of this plan is the same. He wants to rescue us from ourselves and the evil in the world. Then, He wants to take us with Him when we pass from this life into eternity.

In between, though, is the here and now. That's where His individual plan for each of us comes into play. “We have become His poetry, a recreated people that will fulfill the destiny he has given each of us, for we are joined to Jesus, the Anointed One. Even before we were born, God planned in advance our destiny and the good works we would do to fulfill it!” (Eph. 2:10, TPT).

Having

This encompasses the “be” of our lives. We are each different. We each have a destiny He has already planned. When we step into allowing God to define who we are, we then move to the do. That's where we do the good works He has planned for us. The “have” flows out of us being in touch with God, carrying out our specific destiny plan and then, as recreated people we know the beauty of where we will spend eternity.

All of this is possible because of God's extravagant grace that translated us from death to life, a life that doesn't focus on beautiful houses, cars, the right jobs and relationships with the right people, but instead focuses on the blessings of real abundant life with Him here and now, following Him and being who He created us to be.

It is cyclical, because it brings us back to where we started—spending time with Him, turning off the stressors in our lives just long enough to connect with Him in a real way.

It's only there we discover who we really are, a unique and extravagantly made creation of God.

Overcoming

There came a time in my life when I realized, though, that I was just existing, barely breathing. I wasn't living out any destiny God had planned for me because I needed to have comfort foods, and lots of them, in order to do the work I thought God wanted me to do. That ended up with me being a super morbidly obese woman, which was far away from the whole, happy healthy woman I wanted to be.

God helped me turn that around, and I know He can do the same for whatever area in your life is holding you back from your destiny. {eoa}

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The Psalm 38:9 Reason to Pour Out Your Prayers

Circumstances can be such that we quit breathing. Fear or anxiety or pain serve us a blow and we hold our breath unwittingly—our prayers caught somewhere in our throats. We forget the oxygen of lifting our voice to the Lord. We don't always realize when we've cut off our life-source—when we've sealed off the songs and the sighing that are to the heart as breathing. And we keep moving, breathless, through the motions. I know the pattern well, and yet still get tripped by it.

It was just recently, in the normal grind of the everyday, that I was caught unaware by this subtle snare—and the prayer stopped, like breath leaving. For the past few days I had been assuring Matt that I was good, that nothing was wrong, while inwardly, I struggled with a heaviness I couldn't shake. For all my self-commanding and re-upping, I couldn't seem to get above it. So I faked it, telling myself to *just get over* whatever it was I was sulking over. And because I knew my emotions weren't as they should be, I lingered there—stuck and prayerless and unaware—until a prayer of David brought unexpected light, throwing open the air passage once again.

“Lord, all of my desire is before You; and my sighing is not hidden from You” (Ps. 38:9).

I read the words on the page unsuspectingly, yet the moment I came upon that phrase: “my sighing is not hidden from you,” I

broke. And I gulped in air like I'd been stuck underwater. And I wept.

All my sighing. Of course. I had forgotten to pour it out as prayer—all my heaviness, my groaning. *He waits for this, and even this He wants.*

Why do we stay at a distance until we can get the words tempered and more spiritual sounding? As though He'd prefer the pristine over the authentic. We fall prey to the lie that we will *fix this* first and then go to the Father. Yet we cannot ever wait to run to Him. Ever.

We can't wait to pray filtered words with right emotions. The key is not in the polishing, but in the *pouring*.

We somehow think it's right to swallow our prayers because of the "shoulds" we imagine. *I should feel joyful, and not heavy. I should be confident, and not scared. I should pray with faith, and not this anxiety.* We self-counsel. When we know we're degrees off from truth or that our emotions are a far stretch from hope and joy, we wait. And we hold words and stifle emotions because we recognize they're not quite as they should be.

Yet this waiting, it's *oxygen-less* and *life suffocating*.

If the Word of God gives a prescription for which state to pray in, it's *whichever state we are in*. We are to pray always. At all times, we are to pour out our hearts to Him. This isn't because we have pure water to pour out, but because He is our refuge. It's not because our emotions are sanctified and right, but because He is our salvation and strength.

The Lord does not say, "pray right words" but, "pray at all times" (see Eph. 6:18, 1 Thess. 5:17).

David knew this and spared nothing in vulnerable prayers. And David had it right. He lifted his soul to the Lord in every

circumstance, in every emotion (see Ps. 55:4, 69:2-5, 130:1, 142:1-2).

Transformation of emotion and words *do* happen but not by waiting to pray. Change comes as we see Him. As we hear Him. As we talk to Him.

Here in the pouring, the drawing near to the one who is truth and who gives joy for mourning, we are changed. He is the only one who brings us out of heaviness, fear, shame, and condemnation and into confidence, trust, and hope. Yet these conversions cannot happen in isolation from Him, but only in fellowship with Him.

Thus, whatever I wake up with in the morning, my first order of business is not to wait for words more truthful or emotions more godly, but to rush in before the throne of grace, words and emotions *as they are*.

The Lord is actually after the rawest parts of us, not the filtered. He's after the bleeding prayers, not the bandaged. When we pour out our fears unqualified and our anxiety undiluted, we actually offer a truer prayer than what we'd imagine we'd give when we've pulled ourselves together.

It is right to pray our tears, our groans, our sighings and our confusion. This brings the deepest parts of our hearts face to face with the truth of the Lord. We forget that He's not after prayers without sighing, but sighing that is set upon the One who will one day bring all sorrows and sighing to an end (Rev. 21:4). We think we must get over the heaviness, but what is truer is that we must lift our heaviness to the only One who will ultimately give everlasting joy in exchange for it (Isa. 35:10).

We pray the raw that He already sees and pour out the *sighing* that is never hidden from Him.

Only here do we begin to breathe. {eoa}

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It's Time to Take Down This Stronghold About Your Supernatural Healing

It's a decision, and a quality one, to take down the stronghold of unbelief. A Christian family did just that. They came to a recent healing seminar in Folsom, California, and each family member had a physical disease or ailment. They decided that enough was enough. No longer were they going to suffer at the hands of Satan and his wicked works of sickness and disease. They were coming to be trained in the Word and receive their miracles from the Lord.

The 80- to 90-year-old grandmother had been told if she did not have immediate surgery, she would die from kidney failure. And there were no guarantees with this surgery. This woman said no to surgery and told her daughter she would come to a healing seminar where I was ministering and receive her healing from God. She came and received. Her 90-plus-year-old husband was not born again and had severe back and hip pain. There was probably about a three-inch difference between one

hip and another; his spine was hunched over; and he was frail and weak from the pain. He told his daughter who brought them that if he was healed, he would receive the Lord. Well, he came forward and received instant healing, kept true to his promise and asked Jesus to forgive him of his sins and become his Savior. The daughter's husband was being attacked with diabetes, and after the healing word, he came forward to receive a healing touch from God. The daughter of the elderly couple and wife of the man was fighting breast cancer and said to the devil, "No more!" And their teenage son was dealing with great depression; he was set free and declared Jesus as his Savior too.

It took a lot for this family to come to the meetings and admit that it was time to deal with a stronghold of doubt, unbelief, sickness and disease in every area of life, but they humbled themselves and are no longer bound to the suffering of doubt and unbelief. Each has received a healing touch from the Almighty God. Some healings and miracles in their family were immediate and evident to the natural eye, and they reaped spiritual fruit as well. And the others know that they know they are healed and now have the tools they need to harvest the manifestation of their physical healings.

It's time to take down the stronghold of doubt and unbelief concerning your supernatural healing. No longer allow yourself to be controlled by the unbelief of others around you. Stand on the Word of God and believe in Him and in His healing power only. But how do we do this? How do we overcome a stronghold of unbelief and doubt in our lives? Here are steps to take in Jesus' name:

1. **Acknowledge that you are in doubt and unbelief to God's healing promises.** The Bible is clear that the truth sets us free. "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).
2. **Ask for God's forgiveness.** He is faithful and just to forgive us of all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9 promises

us that, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

3. **Turn completely from your doubt and unbelief.** 2 Chronicles 7:14 tells us, "if My people, who are called by My name, will humble themselves and pray, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and will heal their land." We must accept the fact that doubt and unbelief about God's healing promise is sinful behavior.
4. **Build up your faith in the most holy faith.** Jude 20-21 lovingly instructs us this way, "But you, beloved, build yourselves up in your most holy faith. Pray in the Holy Spirit. Keep yourselves in the love of God while you are waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, which leads to eternal life." All too often, God's people wait for Him to do everything for us, but His Word is clearly telling us that we are to do this for ourselves, build up our own faith. Why is this so important? Because according to the words of Jesus, it is our own faith that heals and makes us whole. For example, He said to the woman with an issue of blood for 12 years in Luke 8:48, "And He said to her, "Daughter, be of good cheer. Your faith has made you well. Go in peace." Again we see in Luke 17:17-19, "Jesus said, "Were not the ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Were there not any found to return and give glory to God except this foreigner?" Then He said to him, "Rise, go your way. Your faith has made you well."

Here's how to build up your faith for healing:

- **Stay in the healing Word.** Romans 10:17 tells us that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. And faith for healing comes by remaining in the healing Scriptures.
- **Call forth healing.** Romans 4:17 says we are to call

things that are not as though they already were. Instead of saying, “I am waiting for my healing to manifest,” you are to confess by faith in the redemptive blood of Jesus to heal that you are already healed.

- **Speak life, health and healing.** Proverbs 18:21 tells us that we have the power of life and death in our tongue. If you need healing, you do not speak about the sickness or the disease or its symptoms, you speak life, health and healing only. If you will speak this way, your healing will manifest. If you are not consistent with your words, then the manifestation of your healing will not be, either.
- **Act out your healing.** James 2:26 clearly states that, “*As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead.*” Again, like your words, your actions must declare healing. If you are not consistently acting upon faith with your healing, it will not manifest as you desire. {eoa}

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The Apostle Paul’s Advice on Why Christians Aren’t Better Than Anyone Else

There is a flaw that all mankind possesses.

For some, this flaw is more pronounced than it is for others; but the older I get and the more I associate with people, the more I see this flaw in both them and in me.

The flaw is this:

For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith, in His blood, for a demonstration of His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins previously committed, to prove His righteousness at this present time so that He might be just and be the justifier of him who has faith in Jesus.

Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith (Rom. 3:23-27).

The moment I find something that works for me (a health benefit, an exercise program, a personal conviction to abstain from something, a financial investment, a work-from-home opportunity), everyone else must do it, and those who don't are less fortunate than I am.

I don't know if it is the abundance of multi-level-marketing opportunities out there (and I am not against them at all) that operate on the premise of you encouraging friends and family to join you in your venture, or if it is that social media enables us to know a wider audience of people than before...

it just seems that this part of human nature is more prevalent now than before.

But it's always been there—and we know that because Paul addressed it in the first five chapters of Romans.

He opens the book of Romans by laying the foundation for exposing this human flaw by first addressing the utter

wickedness of those who refused to glorify God as God.

He says that God gave them over to their wickedness and goes on to list 25 deeds that span all areas of sin.

And just about the time when you would find yourself nodding, giving a side-eye to that picture of the Hollywood star in the newspaper lying next to you on the table, Paul says this:

who know the righteous requirement of God, that those who commit such things are worthy of death. They not only do them, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.

Therefore you are without excuse, O man, whoever you are who judges, for when you judge another, you condemn yourself, for you who judge do the same things. But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who commit such things. Do you think, O man, who judges those who do such things, and who does the same thing, that you will escape the judgment of God? (Rom. 1:32 – 2:3).

Paul doesn't mince words at all; he gets right to the point.

Just when you think you're somehow better than that girl selling herself on the corner, better than Harvey Weinstein, better than Matt Lauer, better than the guy who's done too much heroin ...don't get too comfortable there!

As a matter of fact, if you find yourself in the seat of self-righteousness, you had better be uncomfortable, because no one escapes the judgment of God.

3 Reasons Christians Aren't Better Than Everyone Else

1. We still break the law.

Just because you are saved doesn't mean you are perfect.

Yes, Jesus' blood justifies us, making us just as if we've never sinned. But this is a miraculous work of God in our hearts, this has nothing to do with how good we are or how well we keep God's law.

Because let's face it, on our own, there is no way we could even get through a day without breaking one of the Ten Commandments.

And James says that if you break one of them, you've broken the whole Law.

Paul reminds us that it wasn't our own awesome-ness that so blew God away that He decided to save us, it was the goodness of God that lead us to repentance.

And if we're not careful, we will come under judgement ourselves.

2. We approve of those who habitually break God's Law.

We must ask ourselves, "In the midst of all of these allegations coming out in the #MeToo movement, do I have a habit of watching movies that portray violence, show nudity, use sexual innuendo and glorify immorality, adultery, perversion and homosexuality?"

If the answer is yes, then we are approving of those who sin.

This approval of sin hardens our hearts, and Paul says that because of this, we are inexcusable and God will "render to each according to his conduct" (2 Chron. 6:30b).

This means He will give us what we're owed. That's a scary thought!

Grace has been given to us freely, but we must not misuse it. We must not mistreat that which was so costly. That same God who daily gives us unlimited grace paid for that grace by the blood of His Son.

It was because of sin that He shed His blood.

That same sin that we passively participate in by our approval, the approval we give by allowing ourselves to be entertained by its portrayal.

3. There is no partiality with God.

You cannot buy God's approval with how good you are, how rich you are, what a great Christian you are, what spiritual gifts you possess, whether you speak in tongues or not—not even if you are a well-known Christian speaker or televangelist.

None of this impresses God.

You will still be rewarded eternal life or the indignation of God.

We are all judged equally: by the blood of Jesus or by our refusal to glorify Him as God. Money, power, our personal moral code, our good Christian deeds, our notoriety—none of this will influence God's hand on that day.

The same grace that reached Billy Graham reaches down into San Quentin to save the worst sinner.

We're all equally lost and sentenced to hell without God's grace.

Perhaps without God you wouldn't be selling yourself on some corner or strung out on meth in some drug house, but you'd still be lost.

You'd still be sentenced to hell.

We're all equally without hope in this world apart from God's grace!

Rosilind Jukic, a Pacific Northwest native, is a missionary married to her Bosnian hero. Together they live in Croatia with their two active boys, where she enjoys fruity candles, good coffee and a hot cup of herbal tea on a blustery fall evening. Her passion for writing led her to author her best-selling book *The Missional Handbook*. At [A Little R & R](#) she encourages women to find contentment in what God created them to be. You can also find her at [Missional Call](#) where she shares her passion for local and global missions. You can follow her on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Pinterest](#) and [Google +](#).

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The Place of Warfare: Where You Find Your Psalm 2 Inheritance

“Your greatest places of warfare will become your greatest places of inheritance!”

This is the phrase the Holy Spirit spoke to me in the fall of 2014 while I was meditating on [Psalm 2:7-8](#). In Psalm 2, we join David in witnessing a day when nations will rage, kings will plot and a generation will declare open war on God, His Word and His plan. David calls it vain. The Father laughs and confidently declares that no devil, nation or conspiracy of nations will be able to overthrow His eternal plan to give all nations to His Son from His Mount Zion. Then we are drawn far from the chaos, confusion and craziness of the day into the

place of intimate intercession between the Father and the Son. The Father declares His affection over His Son and in essence says, "You see those nations raging out there? Ask Me for them, and I'll make them Your inheritance."

Right when I read this phrase and connected these dots, the Holy Spirit made it so clear that in the same place the enemy released the greatest assault (namely, Jesus' eternal destiny of ruling from Mount Zion) will come the deepest inheritance that He will receive from the Father. "Our greatest places of warfare will become our greatest places of inheritance."

On March 16, 2013, our family experienced the greatest assault on our inheritance in the sudden death of our son, Josiah Nash Russell. We called him "Nash" after the intercessor Daniel Nash, who co-labored with Charles Finney during the Second Great Awakening. After having three beautiful daughters, my wife and I had received several prophetic promises that we would have a son. On June 26, 2012, that promise became a reality when he was born.

After nine and a half months of experiencing unprecedented happiness over our son of promise and three stunning daughters, and doing life and ministry with my amazing wife and best friend, the floor fell out from under us. While I was on a ministry trip in London, England, and my wife and children were in Arkansas seeing family, my wife put our son down for a nap, but he didn't wake up; he passed away in his sleep. After three hours of being unable to reach me, she finally did, and I was on the next flight home to begin the most gut-wrenching and painful season we've ever walked through.

Over these last five years, there have been times I did not know if our marriage was going to make it, or our family for that matter, but God in His kindness and faithfulness has kept us. In addition to His own faithfulness, He has given us five life rafts—five psalms of David that have helped us interpret

pain and sorrow through the Word of God. One of these is Psalm 2, which strengthened me to believe for inheritance when everything around told me differently.

The enemy sought to steal, kill and destroy us, yet I clung to two things: I'm His beloved son in whom He is well pleased, and this is not the end of our story—God has an inheritance for my family and me. As I made the daily decision to come out of the chaos and confusion of what was surrounding us, lock eyes with Father and cling to His affection and dream for our lives, we were strengthened to survive another day.

Here we are five years later, still clinging to God and each other, believing that the promises that He has declared will come to pass. He has carried us on eagle's wings through an intense season. Though we aren't there yet, we choose to wake up every day and believe that "what God had promised, He was able also to perform" (Rom. 4:21). It's been a messy journey, but we have chosen to not quit, and we truly believe that if we don't quit, we win.

I believe many people can identify with some kind of loss or trial that has shaken you, your marriage or your family to the core, and it has changed you. We need more testimonies of people who are clinging to God as they walk through intense seasons, to give courage and hope to others to keep going, because if God can carry my family and me through such great pain, He can carry anyone. {eoa{

*To learn more about his journey and the hope he received, read [Inheritance: Clinging to God's Promises in the Midst of Tragedy](#), by **Corey Russell**, available now from Forerunner Publishing. Corey's honest journey through these five psalms will help readers discover how the Good Shepherd heals His people, makes us into shepherds after His own heart and calls us to believe in a God who turns the worst circumstances into a profound and eternal inheritance.*

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4 Hindrances That May Be Blocking Your Hoped-for Healing

You believe it's God's will to heal you. You've been prayed for, and the church elders have anointed you with oil. You've done all that you know to do. Now what? What could possibly hinder your healing from manifesting? Let's come up with a checklist to see what might possibly be hindering your healing.

1. Lack of true revelation concerning healing could hinder your healing from manifesting. What do I mean by lack of true revelation? For instance, you've heard amazing testimonies of others being healed, so you know God heals today. But even still, you are not fully convinced that He wills to heal all people, all the time, of all sickness and disease. And you're even more unsure if He wills to heal you personally. Until this true revelation comes, you will lack the confidence to believe without a shadow of a doubt. James 1:6 tells us, "But let him ask in faith, without wavering. For he who wavers is like a wave of the sea, driven and tossed with the wind." Let's continue with this point about hindrance. And just how does this true revelation come? This question leads us to our next point of study.

2. Another hindrance could be a lack of the healing word. So often God's people do not read and study the Word of God, or they are not focused in their study, so their faith is weak. I find Satan is a mastermind at distracting God's people from what they need to focus on. If you want healing to manifest, you need to zero in on His healing word. Now is not the time to study finances, but healing and healing only. Stay on target until you hit the bullseye—healing. The Bible is clear about how faith comes. It tells us in Romans 10:17, “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”
3. More often than not, you block your own healing by the faithless words that you speak. And you often speak these faithless confessions without realizing it. You need to change the way in which you speak. You must speak faith for healing, no matter what the circumstance looks like. Proverbs 18:21 teaches us that, “Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit.”
4. Another common hindrance would be your actions, or lack of them. If your actions do not line up with faith, you will stop your miracle from manifesting. Faith without works is dead, and dead faith is no faith. Your actions must line up with the Word of God. “So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead” (James 2:17).

These are four major hindrances that will block your healing from manifesting. And they need our constant attention when activating our faith for a miracle. {eoa}

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This article originally appeared at [authorbeckydvorak.com](#).

The Shocking Double Standard Many Christians Support

Our society is critical of hypocrites in general, and especially judgmental of perceived hypocrisy within the Christian community. Yet, consider the double standards espoused by our culture. And nowhere are they more obvious than in the area of protecting life.

Think of the convoluted logic that passes laws to protect unborn eagles but not unborn human babies. Or social mores that advocate protecting women from physical and sexual abuse, but have no problem ending the lives of females inside the womb—the ultimate physical abuse.

How is a Christian to respond to this double standard when it comes to valuing life?

Throw a pity party at the injustice of it all?

I've talked to many believers who figuratively and (literally) throw up their hands at the unfair way our culture treats Christians. Citing the adage, "You can't fight City Hall," they give up. They stop voting, they stop serving, they stop interacting with society. After all, if the culture is against you, what's the point in trying?

Gloat over those who disagree with us?

Other Christians appear to rejoice in the coming judgment of those who stand against God. They gloat about the hell and damnation unbelievers will face. Their message seems to be, "You're making life miserable for Christians and killing babies now, but you'll get yours!"

Shred our opponents with intellectual arguments?

I recently saw a post on social media titled, "Intellectually Shredded!" It celebrated the debate victory won by a believer over his unbelieving opponent.

Christians mock the illogical presumptions of those who live as if God doesn't exist and claim pre-born babies aren't really alive. They cite facts with the goal of chalking up a decisive victory against unbelieving opponents. The problem is, our motivation may deteriorate into winning the argument instead of the person.

While these options are practiced all too often, there's a better way. The way of living with integrity, loving well and serving humbly. The way modeled by hundreds of thousands of employees and volunteers in crisis pregnancy centers across the United States.

Living With Integrity

The world is watching how Christians live. Yes, they may be watching us to catch hypocrisy, but many are watching because they want to know if Christianity is real. Do we put our money where our mouth is? We say we believe certain things, but do we live consistent with those beliefs? For example, we say we're pro-life, but how do we support the ministries that work to protect life? Do we give of our finances? Our talents? Our time? We need to walk our talk if we're to have any credibility with those who don't share our beliefs.

Loving Well

When Jesus told His followers to love their enemies and pray for their persecutors (Matt. 5:44), He wasn't speaking theoretically. Jesus prayed for His executioners when He said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

Today, when we speak of unbelievers and abortionists going to

hell, we ought to remember what D.L. Moody has been quoted as saying: "When we preach on hell, we must do it with tears in our eyes."

Serving Humbly

One of the best examples of humble service I have ever witnessed is the work done day in and day out in crisis pregnancy centers around the country.

The work of employees and volunteers on the front lines of the pro-life effort is often unnoticed. Men and women who support those responding to an unplanned pregnancy provide counsel, support and material resources. Clients may receive services such as pregnancy tests, ultrasounds, STD/HIV testing and parenting classes. They offer these services without pressure in a safe, non-judgmental environment.

Equally important are the abortion recovery services offered to those who have chosen to terminate life, but then live with the physical, emotional and spiritual consequences of their choice. Clients never hear, "I told you so." What they do experience is love, and lots of it.

The Sanctity of Human Life is marked annually on the third Sunday in January. This year, we'll observe it this Sunday, Jan. 21, 2018. As you learn of the work being done in the crisis pregnancy center near you, will you do more than just listen? Will you live with integrity, love well and then find a way to serve humbly with your time, talents and resources?

The difference you make will last for eternity. {eoa}

Ava Pennington is a writer, speaker and Bible teacher. She writes for nationally circulated magazines and is published in 32 anthologies, including 25 *Chicken Soup for the Soul* books. She also authored *Daily Reflections on the Names of God: A Devotional*, endorsed by Kay Arthur. Learn more at AvaWrites.com.

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