

Museum of the Bible Unlocks the Book

The Museum of the Bible, opening Nov. 2017 in Washington, D.C., will present astounding insights into the book of all books through hands-on, interactive displays. Watch as this short film explores 12 historic events exploring the Bible as a common historical thread.

The Spiritual Dimension to Trump's Election as President

Author Stephen E. Strang explores the spiritual dimension between Donald Trump's miraculous victory—and what it means for the future of our republic—in his new book, *God and Donald Trump*.

Bill Johnson: Friendship With God

The Christian life is impossible to do on our own, explains Pastor Bill Johnson in this teaching video. Watch and glean from his powerful insights on true intimacy with God.

What Does True Breakthrough Faith Look Like?

“God, what does faith look like?” Larry Sparks shares his experience with breakthrough faith on *Sid Roth's It's Supernatural*. Watch as he shares what God showed him about true Bible faith.

The One Question Every Christian Parent Should Ask Their Child

Do you believe that who you are is more important than what you do?

If you've followed me a while or heard me speak at an event, you know I feel strongly about this. Do you agree? If not, why not and what would it take for you to change your mind?

Also, I wonder if your children believe that who they are is more important than what they do. If you want them to believe it, how could you persuade them?

I communicate this truth in different ways:

- Who we are is more important than what we do because everything we do, we do because of everything we are. (I

know that's a mouthful! Read it again.)

- Children do what they do because of who they are.
- We are human beings, not human doings.
- By watching everything I do, you can learn a lot about who I am.

Think about your past 24 hours. What did you do? Do you see how your being—who you are—was present at all times? Do you see that at least some of what you did was influenced by who you are? Maybe all of it?

As you become more aware of the intersection of your being and your doing, you'll be able to see how you can improve what you're doing by changing who you are in the moment.

Kindness changes actions and words.

Patience changes actions and words.

Love changes actions and words.

Humility changes actions and words.

Joy changes actions and words.

Peace changes actions and words.

Generosity changes actions and words.

You get the idea. Who we are matters.

When we want children to understand that who they are matters, we can ask this question: "Who were you today?" They may respond with silence as they try to figure out what you mean. Some may laugh and question you.

When they answer, "I was Kathy today. I can't be anyone else!" you have your discussion starter. "Which Kathy were you today? The kind and outgoing Kathy, or the silent Kathy? Were you patient as we know you can be or were you impatient?"

“What did you do today?” is a much more common question. It emphasizes “doing” and not “being.” It’s absolutely fine to ask. But, if you value who your children are and you want them to pay more attention as well, also ask, “Who were you today?”

Will you try this? I hope so. I’d love to know how your children respond to the new question. {eoa}

[Dr. Kathy Koch](#) is the author of *Screens & Teens: Connecting with Our Kids in A Wireless World*.

This article originally appeared at drkathykoch.com.

One Mom’s Heartfelt Plea for Her Children

It wasn’t until I was in my 30s that I clued into the difference between joy and happiness. So often I, like many other people, used those two words interchangeably. But through a long process, I discovered that happiness is fleeting. It changes with my mood and my circumstance. It leaves me without any substance that can affect my outlook.

Joy, on the other hand, has weight. It’s strong enough to build on, anchor to and get me through the rough patches of life. Once I tasted the strength of true joy, nothing else would satisfy me.

Fast forward to my parenting years. I noticed early on that my kids relied more on fleeting happiness than foundational joy. That’s where this prayer comes in. Today I want to share this heartfelt plea as I cried out for God to show my boys the true meaning of joy.

Dear Lord, what an amazing Father you are. You provide us with such bounty to make it through each day. But you know I wasn't always able to see Your provision. Now, I see that blindness in my child, and I'm begging for Your help.

Give my son eyes to see the strength found only in Your joy. Help him to focus on the things that last, instead of the fleeting changeability of emotions. Teach him the limitless blessings of Your love, Your company and Your salvation.

Show him that joy can be found in unexpected places and in unexpected ways. Open his eyes and his heart to all the good things You've placed in his path. Don't let him fall into the trap of what he doesn't have. Instead, give him Your perspective on all he encounters.

You've taught me the foundation of joy, and I'm asking you to do the same for him. You are my joy, and I look forward to the day when he also experiences that same truth in his life. Amen. {eoa}

Edie Melson—author, blogger, speaker—has written numerous books, including her most recent, [While My Child is Away](#). Married to her high school sweetheart, Kirk, she and her husband live in the upstate of South Carolina and have raised three sons. Connect with her on [EdieMelson.com](#), [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

This article originally appeared at [just18summers.com](#).

The Numbers 32:23 Solution to

Your Sin Problem

I did it again. Sigh. You'd think I would be more careful. But for several weeks, cleanup from Hurricane Irma has required us to step into overgrown areas to clear downed trees. Those overgrown spaces were also full of Brazilian pepper vines.

For those who are not familiar with Brazilian pepper plants, they're in the poison ivy family. And, as I wrote in a [blog post](#) several years ago, I am highly allergic to Brazilian pepper.

Problem is, my reaction to this plant follows a sneaky track. I'm lulled into a false sense of security because my skin doesn't react the same day. It doesn't react the next day, either. And in those two days, I convince myself that I managed to skirt disaster.

However, by the morning of the third day, a few red spots appear on my arms. A day later those spots begin to itch. With each successive day the itching increases and blisters soon appear.

What drives me especially crazy is that the spots often show up in places that never actually touched the offensive plant.

This reminds me of yet another parallel to sin. When I give in to sin in one area of life, the consequences may not be immediate. So I convince myself that it doesn't affect anyone else and no one else need ever know.

But days, weeks, months or even years later, the consequences of sin will break out. Slowly, insidiously, when I least expect it, what I thought were unrelated areas of my life will be affected. People will get hurt—people who had nothing to do with the original act of sin.

It might appear in a lack of self-control. A poor attitude.

Impatience with others. It could be revealed in my struggle with temptation because I had given in to that sin before. It may be exposed in my priorities: the people I spend time with or the way I spend my time or money.

There's an oft-quoted Bible verse in Numbers 32:23b that says "be sure your sin will find you out." Yes, indeed. Even more than Brazilian pepper or poison ivy.

Don't underestimate it—and don't think for a moment that it won't happen to you.

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.

This article originally appeared at AvaWrites.com.

On My Way to Israel—A Faith-Trip to the Holy Land

There are two suitcases on our son's bed upstairs. Come Saturday morning, they'll both have handles wrapped with airline tags reading "Tel Aviv."

The preacher and I have been planning this trip for months, but for some reason, I've been keeping this close to my chest. I keep thinking, *I need to tell my people about this*, but then I just haven't been able to.

Staging a trip to the holy land has consumed an entire room.

His clothes and my clothes. What do we need in our carry-ons? Important documents need to be copied. Gifts are piling up for my cousin's daughter who is going to school over there, including S'mores, Pop Tarts and fruit chews from Costco. (Who knew she would find those to be a special treat when far from home?)

But the staging going on in my heart, through winter, summer and now fall, has been even more consuming.

Israel.

What does a little Wyoming girl turned pastor's wife in Montana know about Israel?

We're going with a group from church for a Bible-based study tour of the country. "You'll be so moved by seeing the places Jesus' saw," they tell me. "You'll walk where Jesus walked."

"Are you so excited?" they ask.

"Isn't Israel dangerous?" they ask.

So many questions, but this is too personal. *Walk where Jesus walked?* This isn't a vacation.

Costco has Christmas decorations out already, while I'm filling suitcases to go see Bethlehem. What does that do to my heart, and what can I possibly say to you, to describe what God is doing inside of me?

My Grandma Willenbrecht, a woman of energy packed into a four-foot-nine frame and dressed in pastels, loved to travel. But it was always the people she enjoyed. Her family letters would describe her encounters with the airline lady or the man who helped her with her luggage. Although I'm a little taller than she was, I carry the same passion for the stories of people.

I'm going to a place where an entire country is required to serve in the military after high school. Where AK-47s aren't

strange outerwear. Where every home carries a story of Holocaust. Where there's an influx of immigration because of antisemitism around the globe.

Where the people haven't met their own Messiah.

This isn't a vacation.

"Are you so excited?" they say. I look at *Jerusalem* on our itinerary, and blood comes to mind. The blood of Jesus in exchange for my life.

"When He came near, He beheld the city and wept over it" (Luke 9:41).

Excited?

How do I write down words to describe the weight on my heart at the thought of going to the headwaters of my faith?

I'm going to Israel.

This article originally appeared at christyfitzwater.com.

Finding Contentment When God Leaves You Hanging

It's really difficult to pray without having expectations. Lots of expectations. I should know—we recently came through months of prayer for healing for my husband's cancer.

Those expectations create a disconnect when God's answer does not match our prayer.

Even when the answered prayer partially grants our request, often, we're still not satisfied. It's human nature to focus, not on what we have, but on what we want.

From the first days of my husband's diagnosis, I threw myself into prayer. Looking for answers. Pleading for healing. Hoping for the best. Preparing for the worst.

However, in those early days, my perspective underwent a significant change. My request morphed into seeking God's heart instead of His hand. As His child, I knew nothing happens to us by chance. He is always at work for the ultimate good of His children and for His eternal glory.

But there's a significant difference between knowing something intellectually and living it out. It's much easier to quote biblical truth when it's someone *else's* problem.

So I prayed, not just for healing, but for God to use this experience in our life and marriage to help transform us into all the Lord intended for us to be. A light in a dark world. More like Christ. Less self-centered. More of an encouragement to others. Less self-pity.

No, it was not easy. Let me rephrase that. It *is* not easy. For this is an ongoing process, not a done deal.

We received our answer this week. And the answer was what we prayed for: cancer-free. As I shared the good news, hundreds of people rejoiced with us. God is so good!

Still, even if we had not received the gift of healing from this cancer, God would still be good. He would still be at work, accomplishing His purposes for our good and His glory. And I'm glad we both reached that point before the answer came. Because spiritual growth is not about receiving from God's hand. It's about maintaining intimacy with our heavenly Father when His hand is hidden. When we seek His face and His heart instead.

Contentment is not easy. Even the apostle Paul had to learn it, as we read:

“I do not speak because I have need, for I have learned in whatever state I am to be content” (Phil. 4:11).

And the prophet Habakkuk showed us what contentment looks like when he wrote:

“Though the fig tree does not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines; though the yield of the olive fails, and the fields produce no food; though the flocks are cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls—yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will exult in the God of my salvation” (Hab. 3:17-18).

We can release our expectations and be content in whatever the Lord allows because, as a wise person once said: “We don’t know the future, but we belong to the One who is already there!

What troubling circumstance are you facing today?

What are you praying for—even pleading for?

If God reserves His hand, but reveals His heart, will that be enough? {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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Wisdom for the Painful Paradoxes of Pregnancy Loss

October is National Infant and Pregnancy Loss Awareness Month, a time set aside by former President Ronald Reagan to recognize families affected by the loss of a child and to advocate and provide resources about topics such as miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy, molar pregnancy and stillbirth.

Did you know that 1 in 4 pregnancies end in miscarriage? 1 in 160 pregnancies end in stillbirth. But these aren't just statistics. Behind these numbers are real families. Families who must go home and be greeted with the deafening silence of an already-decorated nursery. Families who receive hospital bills for childbirth that ended with the saddest of circumstances. Families who mourn the loss of their child.

Our immediate reaction is to think of mothers. However, as Scott says, "Pregnancy loss is the story of two people's loss." He further says, I understand that the mother, in this horrific event, goes through more than most people understand, but the father of the lost baby goes through the very same emotions. Plus, we need to take care of our wives at the same time."

Men face this paradox of grieving the loss of their child and trying to support their wife. Unfortunately, this often progresses into a marital battle based on simple misunderstandings. Grief can make even the best of relationships rocky. As women, we must realize that pregnancy loss can affect all of our relationships. Here are five suggestions that can help you and your spouse face this time

of grief together.

1) Realize your spouse might not know how to act post-loss.

Often, men don't know how to navigate this grief-stricken journey. Many of them try to guess how we want them to grieve and then follow suit. This often transpires into them thinking we want them to be strong, when really we just want them to hold us and listen. Is your spouse trying to put on a macho front? Tell him what you need. It's okay to speak your needs. Gently say, "I just really need you to sit alongside me while I cry. I need you to listen. I need you to take care of household chores. I need you to_____." Realize he is confused. Instead of making him guess, tell him what you need.

2) Realize your spouse might grieve differently. We must give grace.

Men often do grieve differently than women—especially in the situation of pregnancy loss. Your husband might be angry at God and express his disdain. He might grieve right alongside with you in a period of deep mourning. He might feel no emotional distress. He might grieve privately or alongside you.

You must realize that God made each of us unique. This also manifests into the way we grieve. There is no right or wrong way to process grief. You shouldn't or can't force him to change his intrinsic emotional reaction; however, you can be honest with what you need from him. The most important step we can take is to pour out grace and forgiveness. Give grace that allows him to grieve in his own manner and forgiveness when he inadvertently does something that is hurtful to your heart (and he will). Tell him it hurts, but don't hold a grudge.

3) Realize we must cultivate our marriages even when we are deep in grief.

Our marriages are ordained by God. As we move further away

from the point of loss, we must spend energy making investments in our marriage. Even if it is hard to get out of bed, you should make some simple plans to show love to your husband. Has a friend offered to babysit your other children? Set up a date with your spouse. What is a movie you both enjoy? Watch it. Grab his hand while you are walking. What is something you've always wanted to do together? Create new connections. Express your gratitude when he does something that makes your heart smile. This is a time in our relationships that connections might not naturally occur—we must put in effort.

4) Realize your spouse might be fighting fear.

Many women face critical conditions while going through pregnancy loss. Ectopic pregnancy is one such situation. Internal bleeding can threaten the life of the mother. Spouses not only grieve the loss of a child, but they were faced with the possibility of losing their wife as well. Understand that he might be reluctant to talk about “trying again.” Talk to him about your own fears.

5) Realize communication matters. It is not time for mind-reading.

Do you want him to go to your follow-up exam with you, but when the time comes, he asks, and you say, “Whatever you want to do.” This type of response isn't fair for either of you. You can't expect him to be a mind reader. Remember: He is just as confused as you about how to walk this journey. Gently speak your needs. Make your requests, and realize he might even utter a complaint. Communicate to him that this is important to you.

6) Realize the true bearer of comfort: God. Don't give your spouse more than he was meant to shoulder.

Our heavenly Father is the only one who can bear our pains. We should rely on our spouses but realize they are imperfect. The

only true source of comfort is God.

Pregnancy loss is complex and multi-layered. If you feel as if you need extra support, please do not hesitate to reach out to a counselor or minister. And pray that your marriage will grow stronger in this valley. Seek times to mourn together and times to seek joy together. And set your heart on the knowledge that your child was rooted in your womb but now blooms in heaven.

“And be kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you” (Eph. 4:32).
{eoa}

Sarah Philpott, Ph.D., *lives on a cattle farm in the south with her hard-workin' husband and three small children. Her book, Loved Baby: 31 Devotions Helping You Grieve and Cherish Your Child After Pregnancy Loss, is available at bookstores everywhere. Connect with Sarah at allamericanmom.net.*