

Strengthen Your Faith With This Godly Advice

We are learning about faith from others every day. If we will humble ourselves, we will learn new things every day. When it comes to learning, I purpose in my heart to learn something new about faith every day.

One way to learn about faith is by observing it in the lives of others around us. And I literally confess this with the words of my own mouth. And as someone shares something I've not known, or not thought about it in that way before I confess aloud, "This is my new thing I've learned today."

I am a strong advocate for the prophetic and healing power of our words. And I purposefully work this truth into my daily life. Look to those around you, and readily learn from them, both young and old, and everyone else in between. And begin to prophesy the life lessons about the faith truths they learned into your life situations.

I learn from the experience of my elders. I grew up as the baby of the family. So I naturally was surrounded by people that were older than myself. I was raised in a rural community, and my extended family were my neighbors—practically everyone around me was a relative. I grew up listening and learning from their life experiences, both good and bad. And I witnessed how their faith in God carried them through to the victory or how their lack of faith in Jesus brought them to destruction.

But as for you, teach what is fitting of sound doctrine: Older men should be sober, serious, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience.

Likewise, older women should be reverent in behavior, and not be false accusers, not be enslaved to much wine, but teachers

of good things, that they may teach the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, and to be self-controlled, pure, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be dishonored (Titus 2:1-5)..

From the young children, I discover powerful truths about what faith actually is—trust. Trusting in another’s faithfulness. Believing without question that they have our best interest at heart. This practical life example shows us we are to live out our faith in Christ—complete trust, not doubting His faithfulness or that He has our best interest at heart.

But Jesus said, “Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 19:14).

And I observe and learn about what great faith is from the daily struggles and triumphs of others around me.

“Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, and in purity” (1 Tim. 4:12).

“In all things presenting yourself as an example of good works: in doctrine showing integrity, gravity, incorruptibility” (Titus 2:7).

“Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven” (Matt. 5:16).

The more I learn about faith, the more I clearly see how much more there is to learn. But if we will determine within our own hearts to learn something new every day about faith, our faith will continue to grow. And in return for our learning about faith, our faith in God will be observed by others, and they will learn how to walk in daily victory by our faith in

our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Next time, we will discuss growing our faith by studying God's Word. {eoa}

Becky Dvorak is a prophetic healing evangelist and the author of [DARE to Believe, Greater Than Magic and The Healing Creed](#). Visit her at authorbeckydvorak.com.

This article originally appeared at authorbeckydvorak.com.

Learn more about the power of examples in these podcasts from the Charisma Podcast Network.

Why This 'Unplanned' Actress Chooses to Lean on Matt. 6:33

To act in Hollywood or to not act in Hollywood? That was the question that concerned *Unplanned* actress Sarah Hernandez, right before she got the opportunity to star in a faith-based pro-life movie.

Although raised in a Christian home, Hernandez didn't surrender her life to Jesus until she was 21 years old. Prior to making Jesus the boss of her life, Hernandez had some bit roles on TV and feature-movies, but felt God calling her in a different direction.

"At 22, I decided, I felt God tugging on my heart to take a break from Hollywood. And God was putting on my heart, Matthew 6:33, to seek first the kingdom and His righteousness, and

everything else would be added,” Hernandez told Movieguide®.

The verse would carry significant weight in the future as well, but she didn’t know it just yet.

“[After deciding to leave Hollywood], I ended up in a small little retail job in Orange County, California, at a Christian bookstore called Family Christian Stores. I started working there and quickly got into leadership and some management and ended up working at this little bookstore for seven years total. It was during my time there that I would watch all these faith-based films that just ... blew my mind because I thought to myself, *Why would you take me out of Hollywood if these guys could have found me, and I could have worked with them and [taken] my craft and used it to glorify you? Now? I don’t have an agent. I don’t have a manager. Lord, I don’t understand.*”

The confusion continued in her heart until she talked with some wise friends.

“I had shared with them that I was struggling to see how God could take me out of somewhere and then send me back,” Hernandez recalled. “I thought maybe this could be the devil trying to mess with me, and I’m supposed to do God’s will and not my will.” They were like, ‘What about Moses? You know the Lord, let him be a son of Pharaoh, and he was in Egypt. Then, [God] chose Moses chose to suffer with his people. Then, God called him in the desert in the burning bush and then sent him back to get out his people.’”

The conversation made Hernandez think deeply about her calling in life. She remembered, “I was like, God sent him back to do His will. [Which made me think] *Huh, OK, I guess I could see how God could send me back into Hollywood to do something for Him.*”

[Click here to read the rest of the story from our content partners at Movieguide®.](#)

To learn more about *Unplanned*, listen to the podcast!

Practical, Spiritual Tips for Dealing With Trauma and Loss

It started out like any other ordinary day. It ended in a blaze of horror! No one saw it coming. And no one could possibly have prepared for the mass slaughter, or the wildfire, or the tornado, or the terrorists, or the abuse, or the violence, or the accident, or the aftermath of war. With every horror, lives are lost, families torn apart and millions of survivors scarred with invisible wounds will struggle 24/7 with the fallout of the trauma.

In the face of disaster, how can we best cope with trauma and loss? And how can we best help others in theirs?

No one is exempt from post-traumatic stress disorder ([PTSD](#)), a condition that can affect anyone who has been exposed to a traumatic or life-threatening event. And every new disaster, whether personally experienced or not, can re-traumatize those who already have PTSD. Similarly, those who have deeply grieved the loss of a loved one find that further loss will exhume and compound the grief they thought was buried.

Equally distressing is “anticipatory grief,” which is when we begin grieving loss before it even happens. So many of us are braced for what may or may not be coming next!

People of faith can struggle just as much as others. There is no absolute 100% cure for post-traumatic stress, and grieving for loved ones is never finished. Personally, as one who is

very familiar with grief and also PTSD as I watch my veteran husband struggle 24/7 with the wounds of war, I know it is never easy. But the good news is that no one needs to do this alone, and there are things we can do to help.

How Can We Best Cope With Trauma and Loss?

1. Stay aware of your body and emotions, and process the feelings in a healthy way.
2. Be able to recognize increased symptoms of PTSD such as anxiety, avoidance, depression, fear, flashbacks, hypervigilance, numbing, nightmares, difficulty sleeping, relationship problems, outburst of rage and other emotions, withdrawal, employment problems, increased substance abuse and suicidal thoughts.
3. Talk with a wise counselor and/or someone who is supportive.
4. Explore and utilize support resources, such as LoveOurVets.org.
5. Have the courage to call for help if you need it. 1-800-273-8255.
6. Consider taking a break from the news and maybe social media.
7. Maintain self-care via the survival checklist (see [Goodbye for Now](#)).

How Can We Best Help Others in Their Loss?

1. See that their immediate needs are met and that they are safe.
2. Offer to be there with them, but give them space if they need it.
3. Encourage them to connect with a support group and/or counselor.
4. Help them find resource options (financial, emotional support, etc.).
5. Discover what people with PTSD need ([see "10 Things People with PTSD & Their Loved Ones Need From Church](#)

[People and Ministry Leaders](#)”).

6. Show them the survival checklist and encourage them to maintain self-care (see [Goodbye for Now](#)).
6. Pray with them and for them.

As long as we are in this world, there will be trauma and loss, and painful reminders of it. But when Jesus told His followers over 2,000 years ago that in this world, we *will* have trouble, He also reminded us to take heart, because He has overcome the world! His substitutionary death for us on the cross, accented by His resurrection, is our only and solid hope. In the midst of unanswered questions, cruelty and a messed-up world, may we all find comfort in His promises.

And although people who have suffered trauma and loss may never again be the same, they can live happy and fulfilled lives in spite of it. I know. Because we do. {eoa}

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For more on dealing with grief and trauma, listen to the podcasts included with this article.

If You Feel Like a Fake, Here's Biblical Hope and Help

Do you ever feel like a fraud, and you're worried someone will find you out? Like a fake, and you're afraid other people will see right through you and know you're full of flaws? If these sentiments sound familiar, you may be dealing with imposter syndrome.

"Seventy percent of folks struggle with imposter syndrome at some point in their lives," says psychologist and life coach Dr. Barbara Lowe on the "Dr. Barbara's Whole Life" podcast on the Charisma Podcast Network. Despite her own Ph.D. and other professional credentials, she had a recurring nightmare that her doctorate was meaningless because she missed a particular high school math class.

The child of an alcoholic who also has abuse in her background, Lowe knows other trauma victims can have similar struggles. "People who had parents who were either abusive ... had really high expectations but who were also critical, judgmental—these folks can have a lot of perfectionism and a lot of imposter syndrome," she says. And the results can be devastating.

"Imposter syndrome feels terrible. It can lead to a lot of anxiety symptoms including procrastination ... some obsessive-compulsive behaviors ... overcompensating, workaholism, depression ... it can lead to addictive behaviors as well," Lowe explains.

But when she looks at Scripture, she finds hope. "Most of the time, God uses imposters, misfits and outcasts to be the next big up-and-coming thing, the one that the spotlight is on, the one who transforms a nation, the one who transforms a city, the one who really brings revival."

Learn more about imposter syndrome, the many imposters in the Bible and how, as Lowe says, “being an imposter is actually a really good thing” in this podcast episode.

Follow This Simple, Powerful Step to Avoid Taking Offense, Even When You Feel Like It

What has God called you to do? Are you stepping into your destiny?

On a recent episode of “The Linda Fields Show” on the Charisma Podcast Network, life coach and business professional Linda Fields challenges listeners to do just that.

The key, she says, is to recognize the opportunities that come your way, opportunities that are often cleverly disguised as problems. “They look like criticism; they look like things that aren’t working; they look like resistance,” she says. “And can I just say you’re going to have resistance? And don’t be surprised by it.”

Sometimes resistance takes the form of an opportunity to take offense, she says, when we personalize the problems we face. “We begin to say, ‘Oh, they don’t like me; they don’t want me; there’s not room for me; they don’t see me,’” Fields says. “And those are the kinds of offenses that will literally stop you in your tracks ... and keep you from advancing in your destiny.

“Now God is a good leader, and God says, ‘In the world, you’re going to have some trouble,’” she adds. One key to not taking

offense, she says, is to follow Jesus by agreeing with what the Father says about us. “Well, what does the Father say about you?” He says you’re seated in heavenly places with Him,” she says. “Can you think of one thing you need that you couldn’t find, seated right with God in the heavenlies?”

Listen to the podcast to find out more about agreeing with God and fulfilling the destiny He has in mind for you!

Why You May Want to Ignore Those Social Media ‘Likes’

It began with a photo. An innocent photo of Lisa-Jo Baker and her daughter, then 6 years old, after her kindergarten play. A sweet photo of a tender memory.

But when Baker, social media expert, blogger and author, looked at it later, she tells Dr. Barbara Lowe on “Dr. Barbara’s Whole Life Podcast” on Charisma News, “The first thing I saw was like, ‘Ah, that was such a great moment.’”

A few seconds later, Baker’s critical eye kicked in. “I noticed that because I’m crouched down ... there’s my muffin top just peeking over my jeans in a very unflattering angle.”

That’s when she realized she had a choice to make—just like any other woman who finds herself facing a similar dilemma, so common in these days of constant social media exposure. Baker discusses this and more in her latest book, *The Middle Matters*, a collection of reflections on midlife.

“You can either delete that picture because you decided you

don't want people to see it," Baker says. "Or you can tell yourself, 'No, that's not the story of that picture. The picture is not a story about my body. The picture is a story about my relationship with my daughter.' And you get to choose ... you get to write a new narrative in your own head."

Baker adds a critical truth: "When I attach my identity to the number of likes I get on Facebook or Instagram comments, or the photo of myself, it's a dangerous place because that is sinking sand. ... What I've learned over the years is that God is the rock He promises to be, and His perspective of me is unchanging."

Hear more of Baker's insights on an abundant midlife season in the podcast.

The Extreme Makeover God Has in Mind for Your Spiritual Weight Loss

I fail a lot. There are also areas in which I have had great success. My successes only came after I'd made such a big mess of my life that I finally allowed the master designer to restore me. I had gained up to 430 pounds, and my life felt like it was beyond repair.

Thankfully, no one cleans up our monstrous messes better than God. He doesn't just straighten up the disasters we create, He restores and resets us to His original designer specifications when we allow Him to do that.

Losing 250 pounds was a monumental success, but I first had to fail greatly. The greater the fall into the depths of despair, the more joyous the victory.

Simple Solution

When my phone dies completely, the only thing that will solve the problem is to restore it to the original settings. Obviously somewhere along the way, I messed it up. Only the one who manufactured it knows how it works best.

We want a simpler solution, though. We want to discover the app we added that caused the problem in the first place. That way we can just remove it, and the problem will be fixed.

For years I was looking for the quicker way to solve my weight issue. I wanted something that would solve my problems without having to change everything about my life.

What I finally realized was I needed to allow God to restore me. All my preferences needed to be erased and overwritten with His navigational system. It's one that doesn't involve using food as my go-to source for everything.

Restoration Beyond Imagination

It reminds me of all the home makeover shows. The flippers have the vision of what the dilapidated house can become. Then the contractors take out all unnecessary walls, cabinets, flooring, fixtures and anything else standing in the way of the house becoming a home for the waiting family.

In some cases, the entire house has to be gutted, foundation rebuilt, walls moved and rooms rearranged. Cosmetic changes like paint, wallpaper, tile and flooring are added to make the home an entirely new and renovated space.

It is not like it was 50 years ago. It is better, more glorious and grand than the original owners ever imagined.

Restoration beyond our wildest imagination is what God has in mind for us. He sees in us raw material He can use to make us brand-new. He can restore the years the locust has eaten, the plagues have devastated and the armies have destroyed. We might feel like a wreck now, but just wait until we allow God to take over completely.

Too Deep to Climb Out

The disasters we make of our lives don't have to come in the form of extreme weight gain like mine did. It can be overwork, control, stress, overspending, failed relationships, trying to fix everyone else's problems, divorce, emotional traumas, alcohol, pornography, drugs and so many other things that cause us to feel like we are falling deeper and deeper into the abyss.

We are falling into an endless cavern so deep we will never be able to dig our way out. So we just surrender to our whims and go with our selfish desires which never completely satisfy, but keep us in our downward spiral.

Jesus had a different answer, though. He said, "If anyone wishes to follow Me [as My disciple], he must deny himself [set aside selfish interests], and take up his cross daily [expressing a willingness to endure whatever may come] and follow Me [believing in Me, conforming to My example in living]" (Luke 9:23a, AMP).

Master Designer

We look for solutions in all the wrong places. The answer is not to fill our emptiness with more of things we crave like more food, more money, more sexual exploits.

Our schemes to fill the ache inside always fail because God is our Master Designer. He is the one with the vision. His Holy Spirit is the only one who can work on rebuilding, remaking, redesigning us into what God meant us to be from the beginning

of time.

Every person on earth has been created to step into their destiny as a child of the most high God, heir to the King of kings, made in His image and stamped with His approval. The only caveat is we have to surrender our wills to Him. That's the only way we will become true children of God.

Allow Him to begin working that process in you. Hand Him your mess and watch Him make a masterful message out of your life. Let Him to show you what you need to learn to become all He has in store for you.

Easiest Hard Thing I've Ever Done

I'm not saying it will be easy. As a matter of fact, it may be the most difficult thing you've ever done. Allowing God to rip out all the trappings of this life that you've come to rely on won't be easy.

I always say, though, that losing 250 pounds has been the easiest hard thing I've ever done. That's because God gave me the strength, and still gives me the strength daily, to say, yes to Him and no to the foods that created my mess in the first place.

Surrendering the things we have come to rely on does seem hard. It is the only way, though, to step into the fullness of that beautiful, new, more functional and purposeful design that He has in mind for each of us.

Are you ready to begin? What walls need to come down in your life today? {eoa}

Teresa Shields Parker is the author of five books and two study guides, including her latest, [Sweet Journey to Transformation: Practical Steps to Lose Weight and Live Healthy](#), and her No. 1 best-seller, [Sweet Grace: How I Lost 250 Pounds](#). She is also a blogger, spiritual weight loss coach

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

Christian Singles, Allow God to Teach You About Yourself Through the Dating Process

Dating will cause you to find out so much more about yourself. As I stated in my last two posts (read them [here](#) and [here](#)), you find out your patience levels, your boundaries and so much more.

I had to ask myself if dating was even worth it. Dating can be fun, challenging and at some points, disappointing. I am a 50-year-old Christian. Trust me, waiting a long time on God to send the man or the woman He created for you. can really get on your last nerve.

For those of you who can relate to this, sisters and brothers, I get it. However, we are strong enough to get through the days with peace while trusting the Father. I took some time off from the dating sites and focused on myself. This year, I started the dating sites again.

I met some amazing men. They were all handsome believers. They were professional men and willing to put themselves out there. It was awesome meeting every last one of them. I especially loved the meet and greets, where you met someone for 10 minutes at a coffee house or a quick lunch. Maybe even a short dinner. Our conversations were great.

I managed to narrow my choices down to three men whom I truly connected with. Out of these three, there was one I focused

on.

What a connection! Our smiles were electrifying, and we connected on our professions and conversation. *Could this be real?* I thought.

Now the challenge was to trust the process. How long does it take a man to know if he wants to make the emotional investment? We're both in our 50s! What does dating look like at this age? I knew I could not act like a teenager, but I didn't want to be an old prude, stuck in her ways of singleness.

Oh my! The challenge here for me was to just calm down. As the Bible says, be anxious for nothing (see Phil. 4:6-7). So I prayed a lot for my thoughts to stop racing. It was hard because this man met every one of the prayers I had made to God. But I had to trust the process. Remain steadfast and allow the Father to do it (1 Cor. 15:58). Often, that's easier said than done.

Stay tune for the next blog and podcast to read and hear what I had to do in my wait while dating. You don't want to miss this.

Trust God with every step you take. Your steps are ordered by Him (see Ps. 37:23).

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How You Can Hold Onto Peace in an Out-of-Control World

God tells us in His Word, "If it is possible, as much as it depends on you, live peaceably with all men" (Rom. 12:18). In other words, live as peacefully as possible with other people.

This can be a challenge, especially if we have daily contact with very stressful people. Seriously, how do we set out to accomplish such a goal? How do we stay at peace when our boss is unrealistic with his or her demands? Or our neighbor is so over the top, emotionally speaking? Or our spouse or child is sick and suffering? How do we hold our peace when life around us is out of control? Let's look to the Scriptures for realistic daily steps to put into practice in our everyday lives to maintain our peace.

1. One way to maintain our peace is to guard our hearts and minds. And Philippians 4:6-7 tells us how to guard them. It says, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with gratitude, make your requests known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will protect your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." We guard our hearts and minds by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving. While we remember to pray and supplicate, we often forget to do so with thanksgiving on our tongues. And forgetting to be thankful can lead us into whining and complaining, or even into the realm of fear, a stressful mode. On the other hand, being thankful is a positive attribute, and it does add to our level of peace by helping us focus on the right things. Let's look to step No. 2 to find out why it is important to have our hearts and minds filled with positive things.

2. "Finally, brothers, whatever things are true, whatever things are honest, whatever things are just, whatever things

are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue, and if there is any praise, think on these things. ... And the God of peace will be with you" (Phil. 4:8-9). Allowing our minds to wander into ungodly thoughts and conversations zaps our peace. Our souls, minds and emotions get bent out of shape. These ungodly thoughts and conversations create an atmosphere that is uninviting for the Holy Spirit, our Comforter, to inhabit. Knowing this we all ought to guard our thoughts and conversations with all sincerity and focus on things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent and praiseworthy. If we will do this, the God of peace will be with us.

Peace is important to our everyday lives. And God desires us to have His peace, spiritually, emotionally, mentally and physically too. Since He provides us with these keys to maintaining our peace, He obviously holds us responsible to guard our hearts and minds by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving on our minds and tongues. And even tells us what to think about so we can maintain our level of peace.

And let's end today's message of peace with these words of Jesus from John 14:27, "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." {eoa}

Becky Dvorak is a prophetic healing evangelist and the author of [DARE to Believe, Greater Than Magic, The Healing Creed, and The Prophetic and Healing Power of Your Words](#). Visit her at authorbeckydvorak.com.

This article originally appeared at authorbeckydvorak.com.

For more information on biblical peace, listen to the podcasts included here.

'Auntie Anne's Pretzels' Founder Shares Her Story of Redemption

Rape. Abuse. Loss of a child. Startling success. Anne Beiler's testimony is one marked by significant pain, but joy, grace and forgiveness triumph over devastation. At 70 years old, the founder of Auntie Anne's Pretzels says one of her ultimate dreams is to see her life turned into a movie.

"If Auntie Anne's wouldn't have been what it would be, I wouldn't be able to share my story," Beiler told Movieguide®. "I'm grateful for the pretzel first and then the platform, and to transition from all of the grief and pain which did happen before I was 18 is a modern-day business miracle."

Much of her testimony is chronicled in her book, *The Secret Lies Within*.

Beiler was raised in the Amish Mennonite tradition. After marrying her husband, Jonas, she slowly began to seek a life in the Mennonite church, and the couple eventually planted a congregation that grew out of a small group.

The couple welcomed not one, but two daughters, and their joy overflowed.

Then, in 1975, tragedy struck.

[Click here to read the rest of this story from our content partners at Movieguide.®.](#)

For more stories of redemption after abuse, listen to the podcasts included with this article.