

Who's Your Hero? 3 Winning Ways to Give Your Kids and Grandkids Godly Role Models

"Therefore, since we are encompassed with such a great cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us" (Heb. 12:1).

My grandson screeches around the room, his dark blue cape flying like a flag behind him.

"Quick," he says in a flutter of little feet and hands, "on the couch."

Because of course everyone knows that it takes a couch to make one safe from the wicked beings invading our world.

"Get your feet out of the water!"

We scrunch together, our knees folded to our chests, and wait until the unseen evil passes. He pauses long enough for me to capture his little being and squeeze. No time to waste, he wiggles free from my arms and is off again, playing out images in his head only he can see.

If real superpowers looked so cute, bad people would all want to be good.

Thousands of years ago, did little Israelite children play Moses and Aaron against a bad Pharaoh at the Red Sea? Did they run through imaginary walls of churning water? Perhaps Gideon's grandchildren fought pretend wars with wicked Midian. I wonder how many generations reenacted David's slingshot victory over giant Goliath?

Heroes come in all sorts of shapes and sizes. Last week I

attended a memorial service for a 95-year-old veteran of missions. In 1956, Frank Drown led a ground search party into the jungles of Ecuador to locate five missionaries slain by the Waodani people. What he found would remain in his mind, a picture of cruelty but much more a portrayal of the faithful obedience of a group of men willing to die for Jesus.

Kids need heroes with wrinkles.

They need visuals of people who have loved Jesus long and hard.

3 Ways to Provide Kids With Godly Heroes

- **Find godly golden-aged role models.**

In today's family anemia, it's difficult to find healthy relationships running from one generation to another. Family ties are often messy and missing. Search intentional relationships with older believers. Develop in your children respect and listening skills by spending time with storytellers of past times and adventures.

- **Read stories of heroes of the faith.**

Missionary stories are a great way to introduce children to a world of imagination and deep devotion. Biographies and biblical stories provide examples of courageous men and women, people brave enough to lay down their lives for others.

- **Act out true stories.**

Like my grandson, children love to pretend. Acting involves more than hearing and seeing, it takes participation. Children like to act out real-life stories. Give them inspiring ones with people of character.

Those of us on the other bookend of life can direct children toward true heroicism. We are able to point them to a great cloud of biblical people of faith. We can tell them of others,

heroes lined with wrinkles, who have followed God well. Examples from past generations help our children run with endurance now.

As I fly around the house with my little superhero, I am grateful for superpowers. I am thankful there are men and women who have lived lives not in their own power, but in the power of Christ, faithfully serving others.

My grandson and I zoom past a mirror. Our images blaze by on a mission to save the world. One of us wears a cape; the other wears wrinkles. {eoa}

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Feeling Lonely? Heed God's Holy, Healing Response to You

Something hurtful has happened to you, and you feel like you are all alone. Perhaps you are being attacked with sickness and disease and lack the physical strength to be with people. Maybe you lost a loved one and are struggling to heal from the real pain of grief. Or you may have been betrayed by a spouse or close friend.

There are many reasons why we can feel all alone at times, and it is difficult to pick up the broken pieces and move forward

again. If this is where you are at in life right now, I encourage you to spend time with the Lord every day, and meditate upon the following Scriptures and allow the healing process to begin.

We are reminded in 1 Peter 5:7 (AMP) that we are to be “casting all your cares [all your anxieties, all your worries, and all your concerns, once and for all] on Him, for He cares about you [with deepest affection, and watches over you very carefully].”

Lord, I know that I am not to be worried, but sometimes I am, and especially now. Help me to deal with each and every one of my concerns, and to take into account all that You have promised me, and that You care for me. I ask this in your name, amen.

Isaiah 41:10 encourages us with these words. ‘Do not fear [anything], for I am with you; do not be afraid, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, be assured I will help you; I will certainly take hold of you with My righteous right hand [a hand of justice, of power, of victory, of salvation].’

Call out to the Father right now and tell Him, “*Father God, I am fearful that I will not ever feel well again, that my healing might not manifest. I feel insecure that I do not measure up to you and to others. I am afraid of being alone. Help me, Holy Spirit, to remember that I am never alone, that You will never leave me nor forsake me, in Jesus’ name I pray, amen.*

Jesus, I sense a real lack of support during this time of need in my life. Help me to see that my help comes from You. “The man of too many friends [chosen indiscriminately] will be broken in pieces and come to ruin, but there is a [true, loving] friend who [is reliable and] sticks closer than a brother” (Prov. 18:24). *Thank You, Jesus, because You are my true friend, and I desire to come into close fellowship with*

You.

Holy Spirit, help me to be patient with myself and those around me, and to remember Your promise in Psalm 147:3, "He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds [healing their pain and comforting their sorrow]." I give You my brokenness, pain and sorrow. I receive Your comfort during this time of great pain. I accept Your healing balm of Gilead into my mind and emotions. And I confess with my mouth, that I may have lost someone or something very dear to me, but I am not lost. You found me. I am not someone without hope, for You are the hope of my salvation. I am not alone, because You will never leave me. I am loved by You, and Your love is unconditional towards me. You care about me and provide for my every need. You heal me and make me whole in spirit, soul and body. With Your help, I will mediate upon these promises found in Your holy Scriptures, and I will see that I am not alone, and this spirit of heaviness, this loneliness lifts off of me. In Jesus' name, I pray, amen. {eoa}

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When the Enemy Tempts You to Give Up the Good Fight

Not to give up is a decision we all have to make from time to time. And it can be one of the hardest decisions we will ever have to make. Continuing to fight the enemy is real tough, and it takes every ounce of faith within you to do so, especially

when dealing with life-and-death situations.

For Christians, we know if we die, we pass into eternity with Christ, and that is a wonderful occasion. But we need to ask ourselves if we've fulfilled God's destiny for us on this earth? And does the situation line itself up with the Word of God?

Does God take people from this earth with sickness and disease? According to the Scriptures, Jesus was whipped to heal us from all sickness and disease.

But [in fact] He has borne our griefs, and He has carried our sorrows *and* pains; yet we [ignorantly] assumed that He was stricken, struck down by God and degraded *and* humiliated [by Him]. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was crushed for our wickedness [our sin, our injustice, our wrongdoing]; The punishment [required] for our well-being *fell* on Him, and by His stripes (wounds) we are healed (Isa. 53:4-5, AMP).

Does our Lord remove people from this earth through tragedy? The following verse from John 10:10 tells us that Jesus comes to give us life and life in abundance. Tragedy is not life or life in abundance. But this verse does tell us who is responsible for such grief, "The thief comes only in order to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance [to the full, till it overflows]" (John 10:10).

Is it the Father's plan that people die while young, or prematurely? What does His Word tell us? "For I know the plans that I have for you, says the Lord, plans for peace and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope" (Jer. 29:11). Premature death robs people from their future, so it does not come from God.

So when the enemy tempts you to give up the good fight of

faith, don't listen to him. Instead call upon the strength of the Lord when you feel weak and allow His strength to take over for you. Remember, not to give up is a decision. {eoa}

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Experiencing Jesus in Your Most Terrible, Terrifying Moments

I had been calling out to the Lord for several days, telling him I felt overwhelmed by life and saying, "I can't do all of this." That was when I opened my email to find a request from the children's director. Would I be willing to teach the missions segment of Vacation Bible School? My response was something like "Ha!" and closing my laptop.

Teach VBS. Pfff.

The next day, I opened my email again and reread her question. She said the magic words, "We have curriculum, but you can do whatever you want. And also we want you to share a gospel presentation." The gospel? I loooove sharing the gospel with kids. Whatever I want? Israel came to mind, the Israel that God had been branding on my heart for a year and a half. This was a call from the Lord.

Matt said, "Do it!"

I joked that maybe God hadn't been hearing me all those days when I felt like I couldn't breathe and kept saying *toomuchtoomuchtoomuchtoomuch*. But obedience is the spice of life, so I typed out an "I would love to" and hit send.

Following God is nuts.

The weeks continued to be full, as I finished the whirlwind last month of school and then had company. VBS came, and I was not ready. Really not ready, and I like to be a teacher who has been marinating on my lessons for days, if not weeks.

Before VBS began, I spent one early morning reading about the time when Jesus and the disciples were in a boat on the Sea of Galilee. A huge storm came up, and it was enough to fill the boat faster than a man could bail and to freak out seasoned fisherman. They went to Jesus, and he calmed the storm. The next sentence came alive for me: "They were terrified" (Mark 4:41a, NIV).

What an awesome memory verse. They were terrified when they experienced what Jesus could do, and I turned that into a prayer. *Lord, I want to be terrified at how much you can help me in my life right now.*

Don't you think most of the time we feel terrified that we won't get help? Totally backwards. We should ask for help and then shake in our boots at the power that will be used on our behalf.

I tackled VBS, and every day of preparation was a heavy burden and stressful drudgery, if I can be honest. The afternoons felt like water swamping the boat, and I couldn't bail fast enough. Some people work well under stress, but I'm not one of those people, especially coming into the week already worn out from a long, hard season. Then I would get up to teach each day, and it was the most amazing, rich week with the kids. I could feel Jesus helping me while I was teaching. It was incredible, like telling a storm to be quiet and it listens.

You need help, too. I know you do. Ask Jesus for help and then employ your imagination to be completely terrified at what he can bring to your problems and needy places. {eoa}

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Why Your Marriage Will Never Be an Equal Partnership

June is traditionally the month for weddings. All the planning and expenses come together for a grand beginning as two people join their lives together.

If only we put as much effort into preparing for the *marriage* as we do preparing for the wedding.

For most of my adult life, I've heard various definitions of marriage.

I've heard it described as an equal partnership. A 50-50 partnership. A contract between two consenting adults who agree to mingle their assets and their lives. And, if you happen to be a Hallmark movie fan, a guarantee of life lived happily ever after.

But after 40 years of marriage, I can say with assurance that marriage is *not* an equal partnership.

It is *not* 50-50.

It is *not* merely a contract.

And it is not a guarantee of life “happily ever after.”

So, what is marriage?

For the Christian, marriage is not simply the union of two people. In a Christian marriage, Christ is the center of the relationship, because Christ is the center of the life of each individual.

For the Christian, the goal of marriage is Christlikeness. Of course, that’s our goal in all of life, including each of our relationships. However, marriage, unlike other relationships, provides daily opportunities to become more like Christ by putting the other person’s needs before our own. Did I say daily? More like minute by minute, even in the best of marriages.

Marriage is also a covenant, not a contract. Contracts can be broken with the help of skilled attorneys. But consider the traditional marriage vows: “Till death do us part ... so help me, God.” Regardless of what our culture tells us, marriage is meant to be a lifelong commitment.

Marriage is also a partnership. But not an equal one, nor a 50-50 one. Marriage is a dynamic relationship in which both parties give 100 percent (or more!). Depending on the circumstances, it may seem as if one person is giving more than the other. Still, life is in a constant state of change. Children. Physical health. Finances. Mental health. Career. But if each party is committed to give 100 percent, then even if the other does not or can not, Christ is still at work, reproducing His image in us.

Finally, marriage is an exercise in submission. The apostle Paul wrote, “Submit to one another out of reverence for

Christ” (Eph. 5:21, NIV). What does that look like? Yes, the wife is called to submit to her husband (Eph. 5:22). But the husband is called to love his wife as Christ loved the church (Eph. 5:25)—a sacrificial love that holds nothing back, including his own life.

Yes, marriage is a lot of things, but one more thing it’s not is easy. Not easy, but definitely worth it.

What advice would you give to a couple getting married today?
{eoa}

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Your Supernatural Keys to Overcoming Soul-Rending Fear and Loneliness

Do you feel like no one understands what you are going through? Trials make us feel this way.

Do you sometimes feel like God doesn’t understand? The enemy wants us to feel like this, but this is when we need to encourage ourselves in the faith that God does care; He understands what we are going through. Hebrews 4:15-16 (AMP) tells us, “For we do not have a High Priest who is unable to sympathize and understand our weaknesses and temptations, but

One who has been tempted [knowing exactly how it feels to be human] in every respect as we are, yet without [committing any] sin. Therefore let us [with privilege] approach the throne of grace [that is, the throne of God's gracious favor] with confidence and without fear, so that we may receive mercy [for our failures] and find [His amazing] grace to help in time of need [an appropriate blessing, coming just at the right moment]".

Sickness oftentimes causes great fear, and fear is very real; it is an actual spirit. 1 Timothy 1:7 (NKJV) says, "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." I have found during years of healing ministry that a spirit of fear travels with sickness and disease. It is often the forerunner of a spirit of premature death. It takes a decision on the part of the one who is gravely ill to not give into this spirit and force themselves into the arena of faith where power, love and a sound mind exist. And Jesus, more than anyone else, understands this battle. In the garden of Gethsemane, He knew He was about to be slaughtered for all people and that the suffering would be so torturous that He would battle fear and sweat great drops of blood (see Luke 22:41-44). He was tempted to give up, but He overcame this fear by faith and prayer. And this is how you will too.

Illness often makes people feel like they are all alone. Jesus experienced loneliness the night He was arrested and during the suffering of Calvary when those closest to Him deserted Him because they feared being seen with Him would cause them harm, even possible death. And when He transformed into the curse to redeem us from it He felt the ultimate loneliness—separation from His heavenly Father so we would never have to know this loneliness. "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matt 27:46, MEV). If you feel lonely now, call upon the name of Jesus. He understands the pain of what you are suffering. Jesus is a friend who sticks closer than a

brother (see Prov. 18:24). He promises to never leave us or forsake us (see Heb. 13:5).

Jesus is our Lord and high priest, and He understands the fear and loneliness that we can pass through at times. And if you are facing these types of difficulties in your life now, take comfort in knowing that He loves and cares about you; He has not left you alone. He's right by your side. Call out to Him by faith and let Him hold you tight until the fear and loneliness pass. {eoa}

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Lee Strobel: Making the Case for Miracles

Author Lee Strobel shares about his research for his new book, *The Case for Miracles*, in this appearance on *The 700 Club*. Have you experienced miracles in your life? Let us know!

Pastor Rich Wilkerson Opens

Up About Kim, Kanye and Authentic Faith

In this appearance on *The 700 Club*, pastor Rich Wilkerson shares about his experiences ministering to the rich and famous, but he also emphasizes the significance of sharing the genuine message of Christ. Watch, and let us know your thoughts!

Has Satan Hacked Into Your Spiritual Bank Account? Part 4

In Part 1, Part 2 and Part 3 we've seen how the enemy can hack into our spiritual bank account in the areas of forgiveness, healing, redemption and stealing lovingkindness and tender mercies, and the good things God desires to satisfy us with. We have one last area to examine, "Your youth is renewed like the eagle's."

Read Psalm 103:2-5 to find out. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies, who satisfies your mouth with good things, so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's."

We are all growing older. This is a fact of life that we cannot change, but does this mean we have to fall apart?

According to the Scriptures, no, we do not. Amazing claim, yes, but we need to examine what Jesus redeemed us from: the curse.

The moment Adam and Eve willingly chose to disobey God, corruption moved in. Corruption in the spiritual realm and in the physical realm as well. But since then, Jesus came and redeemed us from the curse and its consequences. Part of the consequence was sickness and disease—corruption of the physical body. But Jesus paid the ultimate price with His blood at the whipping post where He was whipped for all sickness and disease, as shown in Isaiah 53:5.

If we will believe and receive the power of His blood shed for us at the whipping post our physical healings will manifest, and our youth will be renewed like the eagle's. According to Strong's H2318, the Hebrew word of "renewed" is *chadash*, and it means "to make new, to renew, rebuild or to repair." These are words about restoring something that has worn out. And in this case, it is referring to our youth. We do not have to follow in the ways of the world and fall apart.

Isaiah 40:31 tells us, "But those who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." Renewing our strength goes hand in hand with waiting on the Lord. The Amplified Version says it this way, "But those who wait for the Lord [who expect, look for, and hope in Him] will gain new strength and renew their power; They will lift up their wings [and rise up close to God] like eagles [rising toward the sun]; they will run and not become weary, they will walk and not grow tired."

If we will expect. Expect what? If we will expect God to make good on His promises to heal, to renew, to repair what is sick and worn down, our strength will be renewed. If we will look for Him, put Him first in every area of our lives, we will find Him and be rewarded with His benefits, such as our youth

being renewed like the eagle's strength. If we will put our hope in Jesus and all of His healing promises, that which we need and desire will come to pass, and our healings and recreated body parts will manifest.

God's benefits are not difficult to obtain; they come to pass as we bless Him and take time to remember what His Word says and begin to activate all of His promises one by one.

Dear Lord Jesus,

Help me to bless You with my daily life. Holy Spirit, remind me about His benefits and teach me how to activate them every day. I thank You that even when my body is getting older, You long to give to me healing for sick and weak body parts, and to even recreate those that have worn down. What a treasure it is to wait upon You.

In Jesus' name I pray, amen. {eoa}

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Documentary Explains Venezuela's Maduro's Impossible Victory

Subsidized eggs and frozen chickens? They may both help to explain why President Nicolas Maduro stayed in power. This *New York Times* documentary explores the seemingly impossible

victory and why it may have occurred.