





ON THE COVER

The scorching sun was no match for the radiance of congregant Michlle Dirickson's smile during her photoshoot on June 21, 2025.

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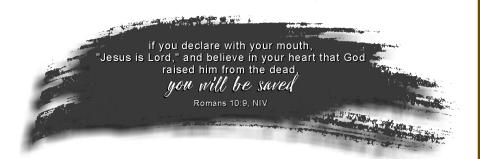
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The Encourager Magazine is a quarterly publication of Columbia Community Church

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A WORD FROMTHE WORD

thou I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil:

for thou art with me

Psalm 23:4, KJV

OUR BURDENBEARER

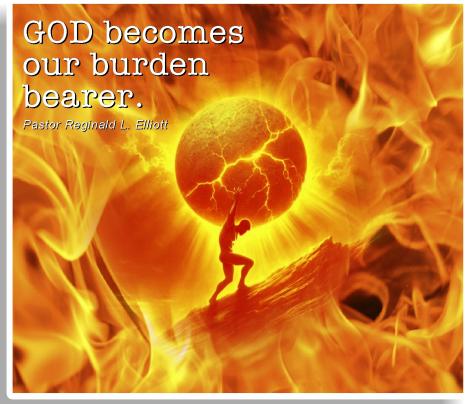
od is unchangeable, generations come and go, cultures change but God remains the same, He changes not. His character does not change, His power never wanes and His treatment of His people is always the same. The words of the hymn that

says what God does for others He'll do for you is true throughout all generations, because He changes not.

David expressed this sentiment some 3,000 years ago with this phrase from Psalm 68:19 (KJV), "Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the

God of our salvation." These words remind us that daily God provides us with benefits that enable us to cope with and be victorious in life, and that we have not earned them – but they are grace gifts. God does wonderful things for His people daily.

In a world where trouble abides and burdens sometimes seem too hard to bear, we are not alone, God becomes our burden bearer. One of the ways God helps us is by reminding us of all He has done and is presently doing for us, David called it "daily loading us with benefits" that come with our salvation. He helps us bear our burdens by



becoming our burden bearer. He enables us to say as David said, "Yea. though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death. I will fear no evil: for thou art with me..."

(Psalm 23:4) - we are not alone. God is always with us, bearing our burden so we are not overwhelmed with the issues of life, just as He helped David, because He never changes. As God has given victory to His people from generation to generation, He is with us to enable us to bear any burden and come out victorious. He is our burden bearer.

SUMMER SAFETY CAROLYNFLEMING, RN

Il four seasons have their own unique qualities and beauty given to them by the unmatchable creations of God. For many people, summer is their



spectrum protection and an SPF of at least 30.

favorite season. Increased outdoor activities, family BBQ's and reunions, and vacations seem to add some peace and comfort to lives that often move too fast and are full of the stresses of the world.

UV rays can cause skin damage even if it is cloudy or you are indoors near windows. UV rays contribute to early skin aging and

Exposure to sunlight is thought to increase the brain's release of the hormone serotonin. Serotonin is associated with boosting mood and helping a person feel calm and focused. Without enough sun exposure, serotonin levels can dip. Low levels of serotonin are associated with a higher risk of major depression (Timothy Legg, Ph.D., PsyD.).

skin cancer. Apply about one ounce for your entire body and reapply every 2 hours outdoors. Infants under 6 months should not use sunscreen. Protect them by keeping them in the shade.

We are used to hearing about how too many warm rays of the sun can be harmful to your skin, but the right balance has lots of mood lifting benefits. Here are some facts that will make your time in the sun beneficial and healthy for you:

The CDC recommends limiting outside exercise between 10am and 4pm, drinking plenty of water and wearing breathable lightweight clothing. Heat exhaustion and heat stroke are serious risks for older adults and people with medical conditions. Be aware of warning signs like dizziness, confusion, muscle cramping, or nausea during or after exercise in the heat – never ignore them.

Chemical and mineral sunscreens are

intensely you exercise. Northwestern Medicine says water is typically enough for moderate workouts and exercise lasting under an hour. Sports drinks can replenish the electrolytes lost through sweat, but many contain added sugars and high levels of sodium that aren't necessary for the average person.

How you hydrate depends on how long and

considered safe and effective by dermatologists and the FDA. Make sure the sunscreen offers broad



CHRISTIAN COMEDY CORNER

"A merry heart doeth good like a medicine"

Proverbs 17:22 (KJV)

At our prayer meeting I asked my pastor to pray for my hearing. He placed his hands on my ears and prayed. Afterwards, he asked if my hearing was better. I said I wouldn't know until Monday when I appear before the judge at the courthouse.

How many Christians does it take to change a light bulb? We don't know. They are still standing in a circle praying for the light to come back on.



What did the donkey say to Jesus? Wow you've got the crowd in the palm of your hands this Sunday.

What's a miracle that can be done by a complainer? Turning anything into whine.

What did Jonah's family say when he told them about what happened before reaching Nineveh? "Hmm, sounds fishy."



A mother went to wake her son for church one Sunday morning. When she knocked on his door, he said, "I'm not going!" "Why not?" asked his mother. "I'll give you two good reasons," he said. "One, they don't like me. Two, I don't like them." His mother replied, "I'll give you two good reasons why YOU WILL go to church. One, you're 47 years old. Two, you're the pastor!"

LET USPRAY ANGELA HUNT BONITTO

BURDEN BEARERS:

Taking It All To God

veryone is carrying something today because of the uncertain times we are in. Some

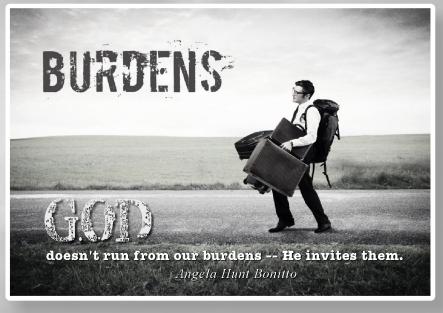
worry about family.
Some have pressure
at work. Others
worry about their
health. But here's the
truth: God never
intended for us to
worry or carry such
burdens alone.

Through prayer and intercession, we can meet God. We need

only to believe that Scripture is inspired by God and trust His Word by obeying His invitation to cast our burdens on Him.

Psalm 55:22, NIV urges us, "Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you..." That's not a suggestion—it's a promise. God is not asking us to manage our own burdens; He's asking us to release them to Him. Why? Because we weren't built to carry them. We were designed to depend on Him.

God doesn't run from our burdens—He invites them. He is the official burden bearer. 1 Peter 5:7, NIV tells us to "Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you." The word *cast* here means to throw it. That is the posture of prayer.



God isn't intimidated by the size of our struggles. He isn't overwhelmed. We are the ones overwhelmed - and that's why He steps in and says, "Give it to Me."

Isaiah 53:4, KJV reiterates this truth: "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows..."
He bore them then, and He bears them now. When we give our burdens to God (I mean truly give them), something happens – He transforms them.
Financial stress becomes an opportunity for Him to provide. Sickness becomes a stage for His healing. Fear becomes a doorway to His peace and protection.

Our God is not watching from a distance. He's in the thick of it with us – present and involved. We need only to lay them at His feet. To do this, prayer must become our first step, not our last resort. Don't wait until you're at your breaking point. Go on the offense. Build a rhythm of prayer daily. It can be as simple as starting with just five minutes a day. Talk to God about what's on your heart. And don't stop there – pray for someone else. Galatians 6:2, NIV encourages us to "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ."

When we lift others up in prayer we're not just sharing their burdens – we're reminding our own hearts that God is more than able to handle it all. That's when burdens begin to lift, healing starts to flow, and breakthroughs unfold. Columbia Community Church offers morning prayer every day – a powerful opportunity to join with others and cast your cares on the One who can do exceedingly, abundantly above all we could ask or imagine.

Let Us Pray...

Father, we thank You for the invitation to allow You to carry our burdens. Today we give You our heavy hearts. We release the burdens we were never meant to carry and place them in Your hands. Thank You for being our strength and our peace. Remind us to lift others in prayer as we walk with You. In Jesus' name, **Amen!**

page 07 the ENCOURAGER magazine MY BURDEN IS LIGHT

FAMILY FOCU

ne of the things that I love about the Lord is that He gives us the Holy Spirit and detailed instructions in His Word to help lighten the loads in our lives. For instance, Psalm 4:4-5 (BSB) states, "Be angry, yet do not sin; on your bed, search your heart and be still. Offer the sacrifices of the righteous and trust in the Lord". It is not the events in our life that overwhelms us; it is our views and feelings about them that wear us down. We can replace "be angry" with

any emotion, thought, or desire that we may have (e.g. be sad, hateful, proud, desire revenge, love, justice, validation) – the list is endless.

Our feelings, thoughts and desires are the burdens that God daily carries for us (Psalm 68:19). God gave us emotions, a mind, and a will, so they are good. God tells us we will have times when we are sad or angry or desire revenge, and it is okay to have these moments in our lives, but "sin not." The "sin not" is the piece that gets us. What is sinning and how do we "sin not"?

Sinning is thinking and acting in a way that is in opposition to God's Spirit, character, and His Word. Sadly, we are born with a sinful nature (Psalm 51:5) and are thus innately resistant to doing



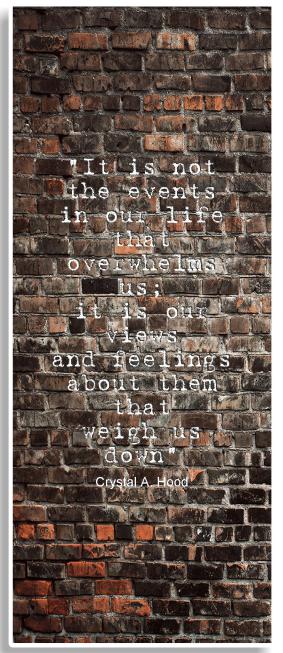
what God commands (Romans 7:15-20). We also have an enemy who presents distorted or deceptive thoughts and situations that support our hurt, anger, hate, etc. Satan uses suggestions or events to amplify our feelings until we act according to our sinful nature (Luke 22:31-34).

How do we "sin not"? God tells us on our bed search our hearts (Psalm 4:4). Look at what is going on inside of us and see if our hearts' desire is towards Him. Are we yielding to the Holy Spirit regarding how we feel, think, or act? (Galatians 5:22-23). Our Father also tells us to be still. When we are running around doing, talking, complaining, yelling, and such, we cannot hear Him. We must stop and dwell with Him to see Him, feel His spirit, and get directions.

Then God tells us to "offer the sacrifice of the righteous" (Psalm 4:5, NIV). Who is righteous and what is the sacrifice of the righteous? Jesus is righteous. He is our example of God's righteousness. We are righteous when we, through faith, believe in Jesus as the only begotten son of God, born of a virgin, died on a cross, and rose from the grave on the third day.

What is the sacrifice that we make? When we have faith in Jesus we are born again and receive the power of the Holy Spirit. We are no longer chained to every feeling, thought, or desire that comes our way. We have in us the power to follow Jesus' righteousness. Like Jesus, we must sacrifice everything to God, and give Him rule over it, which includes our fears, lusts, worries, etc. (Philippians 4:6).

God takes our burdens and becomes our umbrella of protection so the weight of our multitude of emotions, thoughts and desires do not fall on us as



we experience life events (Psalm 91).

Jesus told us, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and My burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30, NIV).

Jesus' light burden was to trust, obey, and love His Father completely. To trust in the Lord is the last direction for how to "sin not". If we take Jesus' light burden then we can say, "I lie down and sleep; I wake again, for the LORD sustains me. I will not fear the myriads set against me on

every side" and "I...sleep in peace, for You alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety" (Psalm 3:5-6, 4:8, BSB).

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esus has shown a unique type and level of love that amazes and inspires the saved and the unsaved alike. In the Bible, I Peter 5:7, we are instructed to bear one another's burdens and so fulfil the "law of Christ". In the ups and downs of Christian living we are called to help shoulder the load of others. In my recent conversation with Michelle Dirickson-Radford, you'll read how this Christian young lady seeks to transform her world by fulfilling this law of Christ.

Linwood (LC): Many of us know you as a singer and song leader. On a scale from a low of 1 to a high of 10 how much do you enjoy singing? ...(crickets, silence)

Michelle Dirickson-Radford (MDR):

...Hmm. I would give it an 8. I *really* enjoy singing, but I'm still a bit shy in front of people. But honestly, we're doing it for a purpose. Whether it's during Covid or not, it's something *God* has told me that is something I'm supposed to do. I might not like it all the time but it's what I'm supposed to be doing. Whether or not I, at that moment, feel like it, I show up, because I'm being obedient to the Lord.

LC: Young people are often challenged with the concept of identity: Should I belong to the Christian

community? Do I identify more with my non-Christian friends, or my Christian friends? There can be challenges belonging to a Christian community in the context of a larger post-Christian society.

MDR: For me, in terms of belonging, I really had to look at the people I was surrounding myself with. I had to pay attention to who really had my best interest at heart. There are some people who will hang around you because they want to have fun. You may have a fun personality; we can go out and have a good time. But who really cares about where your life is going, the direction your life is headed. That's how I found out where I should belong. I had to take a step back from what was just fun, look at who I could grow with and who I could help grow by us being in each other's lives.

LC: I remember long ago, as a class officer, planning events for the student body – good events, but many just wanted to have these extravagant events until it was time to plan the clean-up. Many struggled to plan for the fun and the aftermath as well. What occurred that opened your eyes?

MDR: I would sit down and talk to my friends about school, and the future, and my relationship with the Lord, and where I wanted my career to go

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remove myself completely and I LET GOD take over

Michelle Dirickson-Radford



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and things like that. But they would kind of brush it off, and say, yeah, yeah that's fine. That's tomorrow but what about now? What are you doing now to have fun? Again, I was looking for support and encouragement from the people that I surrounded myself with. I wanted to know we were all kind of going in same direction. So, if we're not, how are we helping each other, lol, *what* are we really here for?

LC, MDR: Lol.

MDR: These relationships should be reciprocal. We should help each other grow. I'm done with one-sided relationships. We all can help *each* other *grow*. I can't just support without being supported. Sometimes life has some hard lessons. There's always a lesson in what we go through. There is something that we are meant to learn in our problems. Some situations are really bad, but what you take away from them is a really important thing.

LC: Have you come across Christians that you would love to help, but you are paused with this thought, how do I really get my thought across to them?

MDR: Um hum, I have had that situation come up.



Some Christians, who talk about their relationship with the Lord and how much they love Him, but they're in a situation that I can't relate to. So, when it comes to me speaking to them, I have a difficult time. They could be dealing with anything, something that I myself have not dealt with. I find it hard to relate to those people, because I want to deliver the message in a way that the message will get through. To do that, I honestly ask God every day, "Lord let your light shine through me, so it can draw other people to me, and You give me the message that I need to give to these people that you draw". If I do it of myself, it won't translate properly. When those situations do come up, I remove myself completely and I let God take over.

LC: Yes, Amen. What are your strengths that you would like to work from to help other people? Some people are suited to handle different tasks,



LC: Whew, when God is in it!! God makes all things work together for good!

some work to build groups, or support or work on a project somewhat individually and then report back. Others step out in front and get things done.

MDR: I'm not a fan of being in front of everyone. I'm the person that'll do my job in the background, present the results and I'll fade, I'll step back (chuckle). Here's what's interesting, as much as I sing, I'm still not comfortable with it.

LC: Do you see this trend in your life, that you can no longer just stay in the background?

MDR: That is becoming very obvious and quite evident to me that I'm not meant to remain in the background, as much as I *love* to be. A friend shared a video with me on social media, saying to me, this is what my singing does for other people. It was a video of a woman who just walked up to two teenagers in the store and started singing gospel to them. He highlighted the timely impact that that had on them, and replied "That's you, and the power of your singing and you don't even know it, you just ignore it."

MDR: You know that's funny, I actually have Romans 8:28 on my arm and my cell phone.

LC: I would like to just give saints that "Ah, ha" moment of Romans 8:28. Just to move their stress out of the way, so things don't paralyze them, so they can move forward in Christ! Why? Because God is going to make good out of everything that is happening to them.

MDR: Exactly! That's why I put it in a place where I can see it and the background of my phone. I did this about 10 years ago because I asked the Lord why certain things were happening, why is this occurring? And the Lord let me know that I could never have gotten here had these things not happened. So, the string of things had to happen, so instead of questioning why, start trusting God to do what it is that He's going to do.

LC: What experiences can you share

MDR: It was about the year 2012. I had just graduated from college, and I was working at Bank (Continued on Page 13)

of America. I had been in an accident, a car accident, my car was totaled and I was trying to find another car. At that time, I wasn't making much money, at least not enough to get a new car. So, my father and I had gone to a dealership and looked at a used car, about \$3000. We tried to start it but the battery was dead, so of course they said we have to get a new battery. And it had all this other stuff that needed to be looked at. The car was not in good shape. But I decided to take it. We were supposed to go back, see, and pay for the car on the following Thursday, Before Thursday, Bank of America called me and said they needed me to work at a different branch on this same Thursday. It seemed a bit random as I was normally off that day, but I said okay. While I was at work that day, the

dealership called to check what time I was coming. I set up things to go after work. While I was on that shift, I got a call from a job that I had interviewed for. And they offered me their job. Well, I got a huge salary increase. And it was enough so that I could actually put money into a car that was drivable! At the moment I'm thinking to myself I was just in an accident, and I am stressing out about the accident: what am I going to do? Why is this happening? Why is my job asking me to work at a different location on a day that I'm supposed to be off and trying to get transportation? Had I *not* been at work I would've gone to the dealership and got the first car, and I would have regretted it.

LC: People need to be able to trust God with those









situations, it is that *daily* training that we get to look to

the Lord and ask Him for His involvement that truly makes the difference.

MDR: Yes! I was sitting there stressing out, wondering, worrying – and God is saying hey I got this! Now from the outside it would have seemed as though I was very calm, but I know, even though it may not have been evident to other people, I know that I was stressing out.

LC: How important it is to be honest with ourselves and with God! While we don't want other people to live our lives for us, we want to live it successfully. Learning how to move forward is crucial. What do you see as the challenges of growing spiritually?

MDR: Me!

LC & MDR: Lol, it is me!

LC: Amen Sister, it is *me* that is the greatest challenge to growing spiritually. Helping each other bear each other's burdens requires the greatest need of all, spiritual growth and sensitivity. And it's not that you're not a "good" person, but so

many problems are addressed when we grow spiritually. The question remains how do you help people bear their burdens?

MDR: Well, that has been something that has been extremely difficult for me. So, when you asked that question, it is truly me. I get in the way. Because in my head I'm thinking "I need to take care of everything." But when I feel that way God steps in and says, "I've got this". Now what I find is that I pray that He comes through me when I speak, when I'm asked how I seemingly manage the many stresses and I can be calm, because now I truly do have peace, this gives me the opportunity to share what He's done in me. A complete peace! So, I don't worry about things. But if something is happening around me or concerning me, I really do have God's peace, whereas before I would stress out on the inside. A friend and I were out, and a physical commotion erupted near us, and I was very calm. When asked about my reaction, I stated that I really could not think of a reason to become stressed out. This is how I go through life at this point in my life.

LC: How awesome is God!

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MDR: The question that I get is, "How is it that you are so calm?" At that point I'm able to share that my peace really does come from the Lord. I know it is something that people say, but that is really how I face life now. And there are occasions where I will share more deeply personal stories and testimonies of how God bears my burdens, and how I know that God is real. I've had many friends that I bought Bibles for, to encourage them to focus on particular scriptures and verses that relate to their burdens and challenges. When people start opening up and really talking, I listen, I don't judge. I encourage people to take time for themselves to get close to God.

LC: Often our burdens are mental, we are not in the right frame of mind. Getting back to the right frame of mind may be a real challenge.

MDR: I'm reaching out to people more often now because of the place I am in spiritually. I try to support people by being there, sometimes just going out to dinner and talking. I often ask what support they think they need, trying to see what help I can provide.

LC: Looks like you realize the value of listening.

MDR: Yes, I will always listen. Often what I find

is that people just want someone to talk to. They just want to get it out. They know the answer themselves, so it's about asking the questions so they can bring out their own answers. A lot of people don't want to be told what to do. It's almost like they know what to do, they just have to do it! Helping others get to the point where they say it, "Okay now I just have to do it".

LC: Sometimes the challenges are physical sickness, and the key is learning how to support them.

MDR: Now... that's a little more personal. What I can truly tell you is that it can be easy to become discouraged when you're sick. I've learned to be encouraging and as positive as I can possibly be, acknowledging that it is a struggle. And I try to keep everyone encouraged.

LC: Keeping yourself *personally* encouraged is also a key element.

MDR: Absolutely, I go back to what I said earlier about who you surround yourself with. I know I talk to my sisters and family almost daily. And I find talking to close family members; they can often get me back to where I belong. If I have a moment of discouragement, they help me get back



to center

LC: It sounds like you're saying family is important.

MDR: Yes, I tell them if they were not my family, they would still be my friends.

LC: Family is so important and when developed properly can be a tremendous blessing. Sometimes, you can find yourself over helping someone.

MDR: I used to, I don't anymore.

LC: There's an important line where you must stop and evaluate if it's helping and healthy. You may be preventing them from making some very important decisions.

MDR: You can become their permanent crutch, leaving you exhausted.

LC: This will sound funny, but it's *hard and* frustrating trying to replace Jesus, but people try! You need a relationship with the Lord, because there are so many things that only He can do.

MDR: Amen, I can only do but so much.

LC: How do you handle non-Christian friends, in terms of supporting their burdens?

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MDR: This is more difficult – I don't have many unsaved friends. I talk so much about the Lord, and I've seen my Christian friends grow through our conversations. The changes I see you are in, how their speech has changed, and even in things they post online.

I'm an accountant-business analyst and do some childcare on the side. I also crochet, which I sell, I call that business MADR828 after Romans 8:28!

LC: Do you struggle with work and life balance?

MDR: So, what I started doing is encouraging time boundaries. I started encouraging even my boss to leave work, to end work at 5 PM. I realize that you must take time to pour into things outside of your daily job. And I am an example, I leave at 5 o'clock. Generally, whatever is not done can be worked on tomorrow. I can't put all my time into work; I have got to have a life. I start each day at 8: 30 a.m. and I sign off at 5:00 PM. My boss is also my friend, and I remind her it's time to leave work. I encourage her to go spend time with her husband,

(Continued on Page 17)

go do something at church or do something outside of this.

LC: How is it received?

knowing there are other challenges that she is facing. I was able to get her and her husband a day spa pass as a little getaway time. It's hard when you work from home like we do, because work is there, all the time. It's so easy to stay and finish things, whereas if you were in an office setting you would leave. Because she is already home it is harder to separate the two.

LC: My wife and I are "upset" with our next-door neighbor because

she didn't ask for help. She's been a caretaker for her husband who is now in assisted living, spending at least half a day or more, every day with him in the facility. Recently we noticed that her grass wasn't cut. And then before too long it was cut. And then after that it grew long again. So, we just saw another neighbor cutting our next-door



neighbor's grass and we were confused. We talk to our next-door neighbor almost every day or every other day. And she said nothing about her lawn service guy being laid up nor knowing who to get.

MDR: I just recently told my sisters I have learned to ask for help. It's okay to ask for help. I literally

had to learn that. And it was hard to do, because unfortunately, I do have an ego. LOL. I don't *have* to do *everything*, it's okay to ask for help. More often than not people actually show up to help.

LC: What a surprise! Lol. Keep Romans 8:28 on your phone. Sometimes I'll hear businesses say they are like a family. They don't know the depth of that word. True families fight dysfunction and strive to continually provide personal support for each other through everything.

MDR: If they can get rid of you it's not a family! Sometimes I am asked how I've gotten over things, or how I'm still talking to someone, I realize there is nothing worth holding on to. Things happen, we're not perfect. I'm supposed to give others the same grace that God gave me.

LC: If you could talk to your younger self, what would you say to that younger Michelle?

MDR: I would really tell her everything is going to be okay. Stop putting so much worry into these things that ultimately don't mean anything! Start trusting God *sooner*!

LC: Amen, Sister.



MDR: Even though I made those decisions, the stress that I put myself through wasn't even worth it.

Again, had I known that everything would work out I wouldn't have been stressed in the first place.

LC: So, is that the reason you put Romans 8:28 on your phone?

MDR: LOL, yes that's my reminder. Back then, it could have been the smallest thing, and I fixated on it and harped on them for days on end. But

now...I say to myself, "Oh that's unfortunate" and I move on.

LC: Michelle, the sister, how has she changed?

MDR: I have not always been the easiest to get along with, but as I have gotten older, I really realized that is not all about me. Everyone is not always out to get me. I think that I've gotten better in terms of how I show up for people. Again, we



talk and text almost every day, thereby my relationships with my family have gotten a lot better and closer.

LC: Your favorite topic of conversation?

MDR: No favorite, I like to

ramble. I can tell you what I don't like to talk about, but I'm working on it. I don't like to talk about how I feel a lot of the time, but I'm working on it. It makes me uncomfortable. But I learned that by not talking about those things I was not giving people a chance to show up for me. I can't sit and complain that nobody is showing up when I don't give them the opportunity. So, I'm learning to be more transparent, which has been a struggle. But I'm working on it.



right into her, a bad collision. Just after the collision I jumped out to see if the lady driver was okay. Someone else quickly came and asked me to check

LC: I pray for many a Christian to be transparent with God.

MDR: I'm learning that in my transparency, it helps others to be transparent with me, in things they may not have originally wanted to talk about but needed to. Now they are freer to discuss the things needed.

LC: How richer our church experiences would be if many didn't pretend to be seated right next to Apostle Paul, or two seats away from Peter: acknowledging that things are a struggle, not just a cake walk. For it is God who gives us the victory!

MDR: I was thinking about how things are related. I got into this car accident during a time when I was struggling financially. A lady was stopped on Rt. 29, her lights were off, and I didn't see her and ran

on the other driver. I told them I am the other driver. She looked at me with amazement, like how could *you* be the other driver? Everyone was pretty shaken up. But we got through it. I was listening to the song, "Pass Me Not O Gentle Savior" moments before the collision. For quite a while I could not listen to that song as it reminded me of the awful accident. One day as I drove past that very spot, I intentionally played the song just so I could get pass the trauma memory, Tearfully, I got through it. Finally, to my surprise, I got more from the insurance than I ever expected. My newer car cost me \$115/mo. *less* than what I was paying for the older wrecked car!

Closing Thoughts: The name Michelle is derived from a Hebrew name, meaning "Who is like God?" indicating strength and closeness to God. Who but Him makes us willing and able to indeed bear each other's burdens?

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od wants us to come to Him with our burdens. We aren't meant to carry this weight on our own. In exchange for giving up our burdens to Him, God gives us rest, relief, and restoration for our souls (Matthew 11:28-30). He's our Comforter and Provider, and through Him we can have faith in knowing that our needs will be met (2 Corinthians 1:3-4, Philippians 4:19). Consider the following books as guides and sources of encouragement as you work to unburden yourself and cast your cares to the Lord

FOR ADULTS:

Fearless: Imagine Your Life Without Fear

Fear may fill the world but does not have to fill your heart. Each sunrise seems to bring fresh reasons for fear. Layoffs at work. Slowdowns in the economy. Health scares. Division. Oversized and rude, fear herds us into the prison of our anxious minds and keeps us from the freedom Christ offers. New York Times bestselling author and pastor Max Lucado invites us to turn to faith, not fear, as our default reaction to the threats of life. In this book, Max will help you:

Find freedom from the fear of insignificance.

Take comfort that the Lord will never leave your side.

Unleash your worries and become filled with peace.

Today, learn to trust more and fear less.

Healing the Wounded Soul

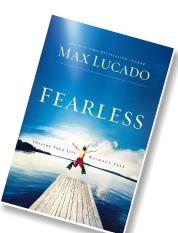
The eidetic memories of our traumatic experiences remain recorded like unresolved "videos" in our conscious and unconscious memory. These memories of traumatic experiences influence our lives and families by projecting their pain onto our daily experiences.

No parents can fully meet

No parents can fully meet their children's basic need to receive love, pardon, protection and praise.

This book shows that Jesus came not only to carry sin, but also the griefs and sorrows of our experiences to the cross.

Using vignettes from her counseling practice, Dr. Westmeier deals with the effects of such problems as dysfunctional families, sexual abuse and rape, abortion guilt, being an unwanted child and much more. When we open these memories to Jesus, He who came to carry our sins to the cross also carries

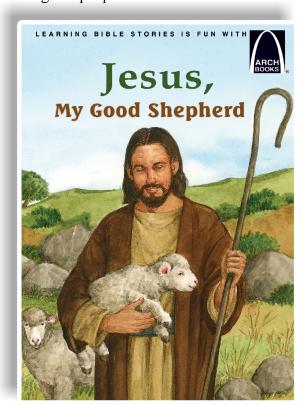


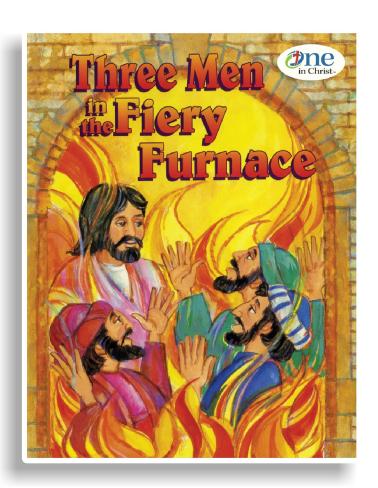
our fears, anxieties, griefs and sorrows to the cross, giving us a new ending to the "videos" in our memories. By giving us His forgiveness, the "unforgivable" can be forgiven. "Prayer guides" lead the readers through this process.

FOR KIDS:

Jesus, My Good Shepherd

This book is the story of Jesus, the Good Shepherd (Mark 6:34; John 10:1-18), who cares for His "sheep" in all circumstances of life by faithfully and lovingly leading, teaching, providing for, and protecting His people.





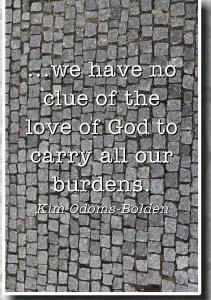
The Fiery Furnace: The story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego

A re-telling of Daniel 3 for children. Arch Books tells popular Bible stories through fun-to-read rhymes and bright illustrations. This well-loved series captures the attention of children, telling scripturally sound stories that are enjoyable and easy to remember.



itting and waiting I observed a father walking and carrying his son. The young boy, very small in stature did not appear to be more than 18 or 19 months old. Moments later the father gently placed his young son's anxious legs on the cobblestone ground. Very quickly the young boy looked as if given the opportunity he was imminently seeking to "run Forest, run." The father anticipating his son's immediacy desire to have his feet on

the ground kept a secure grip on his son's left hand. Excitedly, the son's feet did a pitty-patter on the ground, almost sounding like the beat of a heart. With every step the dad took, the son's pattering steps measured about four steps to his dad's one step. With a smile as big as the state of Texas, the young boy seemed ecstatic when his father was holding his hand. Soon after touching the ground he became what appeared to be a bit frustrated when his dad would not let go of his hand. What captured my interest was at 18 or 19 months his legs were still a bit frail and, albeit able to stand and walk; his legs did not appear to be very strong, especially on unpaved and wobbly cobblestones. The father's strong stature and a tall man, nearly bent down to keep a strong grip on his son's hands.



Seeing this small adventure I was reminded how our Father, Abba Father, someone of the "greatest stature" in Heaven tries to protect us and keep us from burdening cobblestones, dangers seen and unseen in our lives, and just like the gorgeous little boy we have no clue of the love of God to carry all our burdens. Often we are misguided; believing our help will come from man. Jesus spoke to people who claim to help people stating, "...you

experts in the law, woe to you, because you load people down with **burdens** they can hardly carry, and you yourselves will not lift one finger to help them" (Luke 11:46, NIV).

God told us His yoke is easy and His burden is light. Like the father of the little boy who recognized his son's frailties, God, who created us knows who we are and what we can bear. Bent over, the father held his son's left hand with the boy smiling until they were out of my sight range. The Father's grip with his strong right hand holds our weakest strength hand (left or right) because when we are weak He is strong.

It's time...the time is now...let go and let God be God!!! Hallelujah, Praise Jesus!!!



COLUMBIA COMMUNITY CHURCH

8516 Thomas Williams Way P.O. Box 2292 Columbia, MD 21045

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

EVERY SHNDAY

10:00 AM Church School (All Ages)11:00 AM Meditation & Prayer11:15 AM Morning Worship

COMMUNION SERVICE:

1st Sunday of Every Month

EVERY WEDNESDAY

Noon-Day Prayer 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Noon-Day Bible Study 12:00 PM - 01:00 PM
Evening Prayer 07:30 PM - 08:00 PM
Evening Bible Study 08:00 PM - 09:00 PM
1st & 3rd WEDNESDAYS

Youth Bible Study 07:00 PM - 08:00 PM

GENERAL INFORMATION

CARE & COMFORT MINISTRY

Sis. Linda M. Byrd: 410-313-9673 / Sis. Donna Givhan / 410-997-3276 columbiamdcareandcomfort@gmail.com

CHURCH CONTACTS

Phone: 410-465-7040 / Fax: 410-465-0943 Church Website: www.columbiaccmd.org

CHURCH LIBRARY

Open every 1st & 3rd Sunday after service until 1:00 PM Library Website: https://columbiacommunity.library.site