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ON THE GOVER

Congregation members Min. Dannie & Rosa Paige enjoy the brisk air of a sunny winter's day outside of their Ellicott City home during their photoshoot on February 5, 2018..

Photography By: Michael R. Spry © 2018

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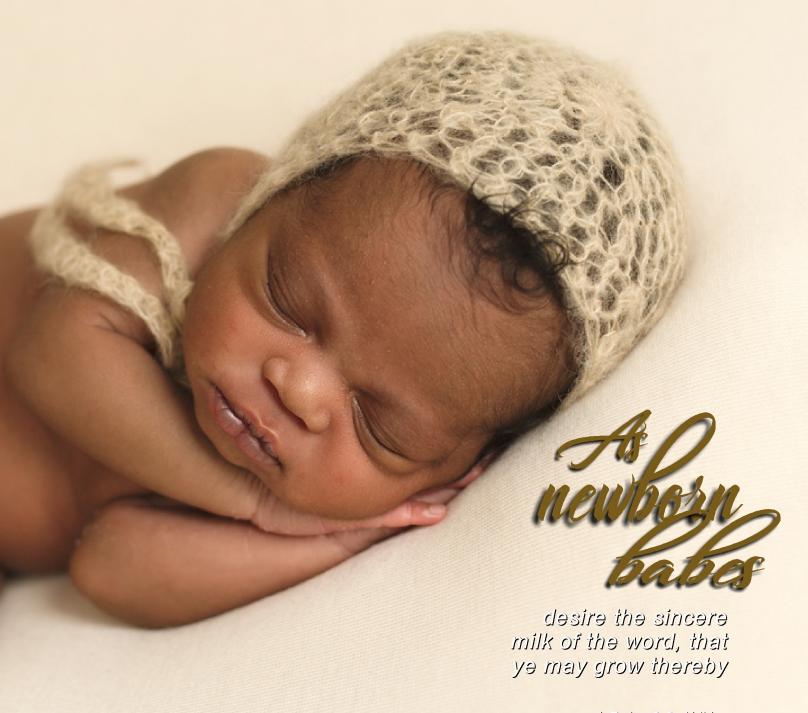
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A WORD FROM THE WORD PASTOR REGINALD L.ELLIOTT



-- 1 Peter 2:2, KJV --

SPIRITUALGROWTH

n a conversation with Nicodemus recorded in John 3:3, Jesus spoke of the need to be born again to see the kingdom of God. In this conversation Nicodemus wrongly related the concept of being born again to the natural birth process that produces human life. He did not know Jesus was talking of a spiritual experience. Now while we know that Jesus was not talking about the natural birth process, what He was talking about

does have similarities to natural life.

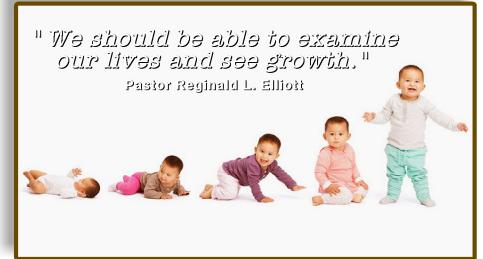
Just as in the natural birth process, one comes into the world as children; our spiritual relationship

with God begins in a state of infancy. In fact 1
Peter 2:2 refers to new believers as babes needing to grow up. Children grow into adults; new believers grow into mature Christians. Just as natural growth is a necessary reality of natural life, spiritual growth is a necessary reality of our spiritual life. To become what God desires believers to become, one must grow spiritually.

Spiritual growth involves learning about Jesus and walking in that knowledge. The Christian life is a life of witnessing of the good news of Jesus Christ primarily through our lives. Jesus called believers the light of the world, meaning that our lives show others how God desires His followers to live in the world.

We should be able to examine our lives and see

growth. Growth should manifest itself in our knowledge of the Word, our willingness to commit our lives to Christ, and unashamedly promote the cause of Christ



in the world. Jesus beckoned us to take His yoke upon us and learn of Him, i.e. grow up in me. Grow by studying the Word, being diligent in prayer, and daily seeking to be filled with and led by the Holy Spirit.

Spiritual growth is as necessary as natural growth. Grow in grace and in knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

CHRISTIAN COMEDYCORNER CAROLYNJACKSON CYNTHIA FLOYD-JOHNSON

"A merry heart doeth good like a medicine"

Proverbs 17:22 (KJV)

Praying for your enemies: Little Johnny was acting up and his mother finally said, "If you don't stop misbehaving you will eat supper alone."



Well the child continued doing things his way. Dinner time came and the mother prepared his plate, put it

on a tray and placed the tray in the next room. The rest of the family ate in the dining room. After a few minutes, the family heard Johnny in the next room praying. This is what they overhead. "Father, I thank you for preparing a table before me in the presence of my enemies."

Innocence is priceless: One Sunday morning, the Pastor noticed little Alex standing in the foyer of the church staring up at a large plaque. It was covered with names and small American flags mounted on either side of it. The six-year old had been staring at the plaque for some time, so the Pastor walked up, stood beside the little boy, and said quietly, "Good morning Alex."

"Good morning Pastor," he replied, still focused on the plaque, "Pastor, what is this?" The Pastor said, "Well son, it's a memorial to all the young men and women who died in the service."

Soberly, they just stood together, staring at the large plaque.

Finally, little Alex's voice, barely audible and trembling with fear asked, "Which service, the 8:00 or the 11:00?"



Shirley & Marcy: A mom was concerned about Timmy, her kindergarten son, walking to school. She wanted to give hima feeling of independence, but she also wanted to know that he was safe. When she expressed her concern to her neighbor, Shirley offered to follow him to school in the mornings. All week long, Shirley and her daughter followed Timmy as he walked to school with another neighborhood girl. As the two children walked and chatted, Timmy's friend said, "Have you noticed that lady following us to school all week? Do you know her?"

Timmy replied, "Yes, I know who she is. That's my mom's friend Shirley Goodnest and her little girl Marcy...Well," Timmy explained, "every night my mom makes me say the 23rd Psalm with my prayers, cuz she worries about me so much. And in the Psalm, it says, 'Shirley Goodnest and Marcy shall follow me all the days of my life'. I guess I'll just have to get used to it!"

B Happy, B Blessed

Sis. Carolyn Jackson

THELIBRARIAN'S DESK

Tired of Drinking Spiritual Milk? Spiritual Growth is the Key!

hat exactly is "Spiritual Growth", it is simply the process of being more and more like Christ. When we turn it "ALL" over to Jesus, the Holy Spirit, if allowed, begins the process of making us more like Him. The process of spiritual maturity is perhaps best described in 2 Peter 1:3-8, which tells us that by God's power we have "everything we need" to live lives of Godliness, which is the goal of spiritual growth. If we are honest with ourselves, there is a constant internal battle. The flesh fights against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh. The only way to "Perfect Peace" is when we totally commit and yield every phase of our lives to Christ.

So what is spiritual milk? John MacArthur in his commentary described milk this way, "milk" refers to the more easily digestible truths of doctrine that were given to new believers; while "meat" is the more complete and deeper spiritual doctrines of the Gospel. In 1 Corinthians 3:1-2 (HBFV) Paul put it this way, "And, I brethren, was not able to speak to you as to those who are spiritual, but to those who are carnal - even as to babes in Christ. I gave you milk to drink, and not meat; for you were not yet able to receive spiritual meat." Spiritual immaturity makes one unable to receive the richest truths.

It is important to understand that this spiritual journey, is in fact a "journey". None of us are perfect. It is naive to expect instant spiritual maturity, and we are not expected to have it. Rather, the Christian walk is a process allowing the

Holy Spirit to lead and direct our lives.

An immature, surrendered Christian can be used by the Lord in limited ways, but as we grow as Christians, our effectiveness grows. Spiritual growth results from trusting in Jesus Christ. "The righteous man shall live by faith" Galatians 3:11 (KJV). A life of faith will enable you to trust God increasingly with every detail of your life.

Has it ever occurred to you that there could be so much more to the Christian life than what you are now experiencing? Christians need not live in spiritual poverty. The many thousands of promises recorded in the Bible apply to us today! The Bible promises that every Believer can possess love, joy, peace, and faith.

The Christian life should be a life of victory, joy, peace and purposeful living. Sure there will be bumps in the road. Spiritual growth requires something from us, you can't use a "hit and miss" approach. We must take time to quietly and deliberately come into God's presence. Many of us long to grow up spiritually but do not realize the need of giving God time every day.

"Mediate on this thought: The feeble state of my spiritual life is mainly due to the lack of time day by day in fellowship with God" (Andrew Murray). Now, how about some "meat" to go with those potatoes? Recommended Books:



RUN YOUR OWNRACE

here is a popularsaying that states, flowers in a garden don't compete with each other; they just bloom. The same can be said about your walk with the Lord. Spiritual growth is an individual journey

and comparing
where you are
to where you
assume others are
or where you think
you should

be, can be detrimental. It is similar to when a track star takes their eyes off of the path ahead in order to see what

are doing. Their intent is to beat the competition, when in reality they are losing focus on running to the best of their ability.

their opponents

Spiritual growth has to be centered on God. The moment

you begin to worry about everyone else, you are taking away from your spiritual growth. It is easy to get discouraged and distracted when you take your eyes away from the Lord. What is most important is that you make progress and don't allow yourself to give up.

I reflect back to when I decided to take a major step in my spiritual journey; I left the church I grew up in and it rubbed a lot of people the wrong way. I still hear negative comments about it even today! I knew that it was something I had to do for myself and I trusted the Lord to guide me through. And that was only the beginning; I continue to push myself to step out of my comfort zone, diligently seeking the Lord because I know that like with anything, it takes time and effort in order to grow. I hope in reading this article that everyone reflects on how far they have come and also take into account all the growing that is still left to do. Even if you have done some backsliding, that fact that you haven't given up is something to feel good about.





PART 3: Choosing the Right Leaders

Choosing the right leaders helps determine good leadership

- a. The Pastoral Eepistles give a prescription for the selection of leaders according to the Word of God
- b. Jim Collins in his book, *Good to Great*, uses the analogy of getting the right people on the bus before leadership can move, develop, or flourish.

Leaders are sometimes chosen based on a person's personality, tenure, social status, or abilities

- a. These qualities may be helpful in leadership effectiveness down the line
- b. Those qualities should not be the standards which qualify them to become a leader in God's church

The leader's character should be the primary ingredient in selecting a leader in The Church

- a. Who the person is in their heart determines how they will lead
- b. Persons with good character will make good choices because thath's who they are in their inner being
- c. Leaders with poor character leads to poor leaders who make poor decisions
- d. Wrong emphasis of leadership criteria can lead to all kinds of trouble for The Church

There are three main criteria The Church should look at closely in choosing the right leaders

- a. The person should be seasoned in his character and virtue, one who is respected because of their character. (1 Timothy 5:22)
- b. The person must be tested. They are to be observed in their character and service to the church before they lead in an official capacity (1 Timothy 3:10)
- c. The leader must be above reproach. The leader's life should be free from sinful habits or behavior. The leader is to set the highest Christian standard and model for others (1 Timothy 3:1-7, and Titus 1:4-6)

Conclusion

- a. The whole leadership process should take thoughtful and careful time
- b. Time is a good indicator to really get to know the potential leader and their character
- c. Observation of the person in service and relationships over a period of time reveals who they are in character
- d. Some never develop good godly character in their lives due to their own willful choices
- e. Don't be fooled by one's charisma or talent in selecting godly leaders

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s Christians we experience spiritual growth when the Holy Spirit works in our life and expands our understanding of God, Jesus and His Word. In order for this growth to occur we need to allow the Holy Spirit to transform us. At times this can be painful. Here are a few things that affect us in achieving spiritual growth.

Lack of full spiritual understanding

As the Holy Spirit provides us with spiritual insights we sometimes act before we truly grasp the fullness of what has been revealed. When we don't take time to gain wisdom regarding the knowledge God has given it can cause us to act rashly. Unknown to us this can give Satan an opportunity to use us against God's will, which can cause ourselves or others to fall.

An example of this is when Jesus asked his disciples who they believed He was. Peter answered "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 16:13-17 NASB).

Peter's acknowledgement of Jesus as the Son of God was an amazing revelation, but he did not fully understand what this meant. What Peter thought about Jesus as Messiah and what God intended were not the same. This is apparent when

"Jesus begins to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day. Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, 'God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You.' But Jesus turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's'" (Matthew 16:21-23 NASB). Spiritual growth comes as we allow God to reveal His plan to us and we turn from trying to fit God into our own agenda.

Improper view of self or others

As humans we tend to think we have all knowledge. We believe that our reality is the true reality. The struggle we have is being willing to accept the truth that God knows more than we do. We generally have a distorted perception of who we are and our ability to stand with God.

In John 6:66-72 Peter strongly professes to Jesus, "We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God." Jesus asked, "Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil?" Jesus responds to this proclamation by letting Peter know he does not have full spiritual discernment regarding himself or the other disciples.

Peter does not accept this truth. During the Passover supper he adamantly testifies of his unfailing loyalty to Jesus and that he will never deny Him. Jesus states, "Before the cock crows you

from our family, ones that we adopted from friends or just our own internal perceptions. Letting go of these beliefs can be challenging.

In Paul's letter to Timothy he advised him



...we tend to think we have all knowledge CRYSTAL A. HOOD

will deny me three times." Peter forcibly rejects this prophecy and proclaims he will die before he rejects Him. The other disciples also make similar claims (Matthew 26:20-35 NASB).

Although Peter firmly believed he would not deny Jesus in the end he did. God, through the urging of the Holy Spirit, shows us who we really are. We grow spiritually when we allow the Holy Spirit to reveal to us our heart (Psalm 139:23-24).

Beliefs that conflict with God's view

When we allow the Holy Spirit to shape us God moves us away from beliefs that are not of Him. Our beliefs may be views that we inherited to pay "...close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you" (1 Timothy 4:16 NASB). Paul's advice is to be aware of who you are, what you are teaching, and what you are taught

Regardless of where our thoughts derived, if they are not in line with God's character or His Word then it is erroneous. In order to mature as Christians we need to let go of what we think is true and allow the Holy Spirit to instill God's truth. As we do these things we will spiritually grow in our ability to hear God, act in faith, and stand on His Word.

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"Remember that the mighty oak, was once a nut like you." This is the second couplet of an anonymous limerick written initially for young people, which addresses the perennial tedium of growing up. Growth is possible but not automatic. For some, the stuff that gets in the way is what others have learned to call *life*. Dannie and Rosa Paige afforded me the privilege of an extended conversation. See if you can detect our theme.

Rosa Paige: We had both belonged to a large and old established church. We had a group in our church, called The Stewards of Christ. This outreach group conducted various types of home visits, such as visiting the saints who could not get out. In the 6 o'clock service on Sundays, we reported what services we had provided. Dannie and I both were stewards but in different groups. I made the report for my group. One Sunday while I was standing waiting to actually make my report, I noticed Dannie in line. And then I noticed that he was kind of giving me the eye. As I moved up closer to the podium, I saw he was really looking me over. I said to myself, "If he doesn't pay attention, he's going to forget his place in the service." I slotted to give my report before Dannie, and to my surprise the officiating minister, just put it out there that I was single. So literally everybody who didn't know now knew my status. This was

Dannie's clue. Well, I also confirmed later that he was single and since it was near Christmas, I just casually mailed him a Christmas card.

Min. Dannie Paige: Yes, I had noticed Rosa. One day I found her number in the church directory and I called her. Well, we talked that night for the first time, for about 3 hours. As I recall it was during this same time of the year, during the New Year's season, New Year's Eve I believe. Later I called her and asked if I could come over and visit her. She said yes and we spent New Year's Eve together.

Min. Linwood Childs: Was that the reason you joined The Stewards of Christ?

DP: No, no, you didn't join The Stewards of Christ. You could only be recommended and then appointed.

RP: You were selected for The Stewards of Christ. That was a group that trained you to be a deacon or deaconess. We liked it. It wasn't a missionary group, but we visited homes to pray for people and sometimes witness or share a testimony.

DP: We were asked if we had a friend or relative that needed prayer or salvation. We received (Continued on Page 11)

he
Spirit
of God

came upon
me so strong
until I began
to weep

Min. Dannie Paige







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names from various sources. We put those names on a list and those were the people we visited. We had a specific street address and the people knew we were coming. This was in Baltimore neighborhoods many years ago as we grouped the visits for efficiency. We drove to the general area, but then walked when the people were close by...always in groups.

RP: The people we visited were always cordial and were almost always receptive. The group leader would say a few words and then we would pray and sing a little bit.

DP: We would make an attempt to lead them to the Lord. Whether they actually did or not, we sought to witness for Christ. We believed in evangelism and outreach.

LC: Rosa, were you anticipating a marriage proposal after you me Dannie?

RP: We both loved the Lord, and it seemed like it would follow suit.

LC: So what did you think about marrying a preacher?

RP: He wasn't a preacher when I married him. He

was a steward.

DP: I was studying to be a Deacon at the time.

LC: I used to think that I was raised in a somewhat a large family with 7 siblings, that is, until Min. Paige told me this...

DP: My mother had many children. I was the 7th of 10 boys, and she had 7 girls.

LC: Tragically, I'm told, several of the children passed away at very young ages, while 10 grew up together.

DP: I always thought it was great to have so many around. We always had somebody to play and have fun with. My mother bought another home in the Pumphrey area. It was to be our second home. However, the man that was building the home for us suddenly died so my mother and I finished building the home. My mother was very, very handy and we worked together until it was finished.

LC: How did you come to go into the ministry?

DP: When I was young and single I had an experience. One night while I was cooking, the Spirit of God came upon me. I found myself just preaching Luke 9:23, "If any man would come after



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me..." The Spirit of God came upon so strong until I began to weep. I lived with my dad, up on his 3rd floor. I came down to his bedroom and told him, "I believe the Lord has his hand on me." So, my dad and I got down on our knees and he began to pray with me. My father was an ordained Deacon for 60 years. He was ordained in 1922 and went home to the Lord in 1982. That night we prayed, and he would tell me later, that he could feel heat rising off my body as we prayed.

I also told my pastor at the time, Dr Harold Carter, Sr. I explained to him that I believed the Lord has called me to preach. The fact of the matter is, I have always wanted to be a preacher and a teacher. God opened doors to be both. It was that night that I acknowledged my call to the ministry. I can never forget that night, 2 o'clock in the morning.

LC: It was some years later that Min. Paige publicly acknowledged his call. About a year after he had been married to Rosa, he preached his first sermon.

RP: Because our church was so large I remember I was eager for Dannie, wanting him to do everything just right!

LC: What was your first sermon text?

DP: I preached Isaiah 35:8, "And a highway shall be there, and it shall be called the way of holiness." I entitled the message, *One Way Highway*.

LC: Rosa later gave her husband a leather portfolio with Isaiah 35:8 embossed on it to commemorate that day.

DP: I still have it today.

LC: It seemed like they both were surrounded with strong Christians.

RP: My younger sister kind of knew early on what she wanted do in life. She was a young drummer in church in high school. She was quite good on the drums and began to travel with Shirley Caesar out of Durham, NC as part of her group of musicians. Even though at that time she began to preach as an evangelist all over the area and country. She eventually left the group for the ministry, starting a small church in Norfolk, being affiliated with the Mount Calvary Churches. The church was very small and grew steadily. Sometime later she was consecrated with Mt Calvary as Bishop and has completed her Ph.D. studies.

LC: For a while prior to coming to Columbia Community Church, the Lord used Min. Dannie (Continued on Page 13)



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Paige to pastor one of His flocks.

DP: I was taught to pray, we studied prayer. We were encouraged to think about what we wanted to say in prayer, and how we wanted to say it; particularly when called upon to pray on Sunday morning. I think it is a good thing to even write our prayers.

RP: Dannie is a praying person, personally, and is often called upon to pray impromptu. It can be anytime and anywhere.

DP: I try to pray from my heart, from my soul. I like to talk to God about my todays, sometimes just like I'm talking to you. There is a prayer language!

LC: Min. Paige provided comment on how his wife helped him.

DP: My wife has helped me to do a better job in outlining my sermons.

RP: If you outline what you want to say, then you're not stuck to the paper. But you have to study and be so familiar with what you want to say until just a couple of words under an outline will trigger what you want to say. Knowing how you want to say something is not as important as knowing what it is that you want to say. It will be you when it comes out and you never have to perform.

LC: Rosa's comments were spot on and it piqued

You need to seek to have God's peace before you tackle your problems

Sis. Rosa Paige





my interest into her background.

RP: I graduated from Hampton University with a degree in English. When I took speech classes my professor was very good and I learned a lot. He made us do full speeches using only a few small index cards, he forbade text. He made you work within that framework, and outlines force you to get clear in your mind what you want to say!

LC: In fact, she became a school teacher and made a career out of it, becoming an Assistant Principal.

RP: I taught a lot on the east side of Baltimore, such as Harford Heights Elementary School.

LC: What are the things that get you two through difficulty?

DP: I tell you, prayer. My father would pray: "You made me and know all about me!" That God can do what needs to be done, this is certain. But we must pray that His will be done.

LC: I did not immediately see why Min. Paige turned to this comment, but then connected it to God leading us into changes.

DP: I had a real nice racing bicycle, called the

Diamond Back, I would really like to ride. The last time I rode it though I fell.

RP: So much for bicycle riding!

DP: Yes that was the end of that. I gave that bike to my neighbor's oldest son.

LC: Everyone has times and seasons of challenges. We no longer know what normal looks like! What things do you employ to handle difficult times?

DP: I'll tell you what gets me through hard times -- I learned to pray often! I believe God hears my prayer. I fell right outside my home not too long ago and I got a large gash in my head. It's kind of healed up now, but I still feel the effects of it now.

LC: Min Paige, paused as his eyes turned upward as if a thought literally flew by his mind's eye.

DP: My daddy used to pray this to the Lord all the time, "You made me and you know all about me!" He would ask to be fixed! Fix me Lord. So, when something is wrong with me I ask the Lord to fix what's wrong. I believe He can heal. One recent encouragement was a sermon entitled, *Why Go to Church?* by Dr. William R. Jones. He stated some *(Continued on Page 15)*



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people come to church for their weddings, or baptism or Christening. By why do you go to church?

that King David ran into. The evil world around us has a quiet but definite impact upon those who believe in God. David found his heart envying the wicked. Dr. Jones says, "When I went to church, my perspective was purified... no matter how low-down men become they cannot keep God from taking care of his own...It was not until I (King David) went into the sanctuary of God that I understood their (the wicked's) end! God not only reset my perspective but restored my soul."

Growing requires a certain mastery of things. What areas of our lives does God want us to master?

DP: God wants us to eschew evil and avoid filthy communication out of our mouths. Vulgarity and bad language are signs of Satan's influence. God wants us to have a closer walk with Him as we dwell on earth. Matthew 5:10, "thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven". We essentially are becoming tools in God's hand. My free will has be turned over to God for Him to use me as He will. We live in a time in which to do one's own thing is the order of day. When we allow God to use our energy to promote and accomplish His will, then

LC: Min Paige's cadence peaked as he recounted another scripture.

DP: "Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth" Colossians 3:2. I was confronted with a dilemma with a job I agreed to handle.

LC: Min Paige for many years taught construction carpentry and masonry at a level that one could complete his courses and obtain gainful employment.

DP: This job I agreed to handle was to correct a kitchen cabinet installation that was done improperly. I agreed to do the work at a price that I quickly realized was way underpriced. But since the client had already paid for the work twice I could not go back and ask her for more, even though I really needed a second person to finish the work. I initially thought I had no way out. But I kept looking for a solution.

LC: Although Rosa and I peppered him with probing questions, we could not definitively determine how he came up with the solution.





DP: All jobs made use of what is called a 'dead man'. It helps you handle bulky objects when someone else is not around. But in this case the base cabinets were in the way of where the dead-man would be positioned. I did not want to have to move the base cabinet to correct the wall cabinet. After some time passed, it came to me what to do. It was so simple. I constructed a dead-man that rested on the base cabinets without having to move anything. It saved me time and money!

LC: Min Paige described his actions in that situation while never thinking it was impossible. He kept looking for an answer even though this Master carpenter and masonry artisan had no known tools or ideas on how to proceed.

RP: When I was an assistant principal. There were things that required wisdom. Oh, if I only had the wisdom I have now, then, I would have handled things a lot differently. For instance, I now see the value of the Serenity Prayer. There are things you cannot change, and you have to accept it. But there are things by which you can effect changes. You really need to know the difference and leave those things alone that you cannot change. As an Assistant Principal, which is a tough job, all kinds of parents, situations, and relations arise. Then I

didn't have the peace that you need to have. Then I didn't quite understand that you cannot solve every problem! Some things, even though they are presented to you, you need to leave some alone. Oh, for the wisdom to know the difference. I thank God, I have a much better understanding of the difference. You need to seek to have God's peace before you tackle your problems.

LC: Favorite songs?

DP: "I'm So Glad Jesus Lifted Me". My favorite scripture text is Revelations 3:20, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." This is my favorite scripture to witness to others about Jesus. God has always been there waiting for you to open the door. All you have to do is just open the door of your heart and ask Him to come in!

RP: My favorite song is Andre Crouch's version of "Amen", "God has spoken, let the church say amen."

LC: Rosa began to look for and softly play this song. It was with this favorite song as a background that Min. Paige recalled this poignant event.

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Min. Paige taught high school shop, construction and masonry during the day and then adult courses at night at the same location at the Skill Center in Edmonson Village in Baltimore.

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DP: There was a young guy in my high school class that always hung around and eventually I had



to get special permission for him be in my adult evening class. But he was very friendly and eager to learn. You could tell by the way he dressed that he probably was doing something amiss. Drugs perhaps, something, for he would come to school dressed sometimes from head to toe all in one color green, red or some other color. You knew he could not afford the fine clothes he was wearing. He declared constantly that he would be a brick layer.

One day while he was hanging around during lunch I spoke to him and said this. "Darryl, you're too good a boy to die and go to hell!" Oh, of course he said, "I'm not going to hell, Mr. P." I said everybody is going to hell unless they make it right with God; unless God changes their heart. That young man eventually joined my church and gave

> his heart to the Lord. A very short time later a tragic accident on a dirt bike took his life at the age 18. His father asked me to preach his funeral although I was not the Pastor, and it wasn't my place. But the Pastor disagreed and affirmed that I should preach the home-going sermon. There was such crying that none of the young people heard anything I said at the service. But I knew Darryl had given his heart to the Lord.

RP: This ties in with the serenity prayer, pray that God gives you peace in knowing what to deal with and what not to. Once you've done what God has spoken, it's done, let the rest go! My favorite scripture is Micah 6:8, "...what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" This is your marching order.



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DP: The other day my stepson came over, with no coat or gloves. I said, man you're going to catch a cold. Looking around the house I decided to give him my leather jacket, and a nice pair of lined gloves. I hesitated just for a moment and then the scripture came before me, it is more blessed to give

wrote in Philippians 3:13-14, "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

...if only I had the

I have now, then I would have handled things a lot differently

ROSA PAIGE



than to receive. It just sticks with me. When you get as old as I am, you don't need half of the stuff you've got. So I gave it to him and he was blessed by it. I told him to keep it, and he smiled.

It is so good to be in the environment of other believers, the saints. That's why, I'm never, never going to be ashamed that I love the Lord. No matter where I go, I have music playing. You see I have 100's of songs on my phone. The Apostle Paul

We shared, and definitely laughed. We listened to each other strike that great chord to which every believer in God responds. This chord is not found on any keyboard, but in the soul and masterfully blends our inescapable trouble with God's insurmountable grace. Grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ!



Hebrews 6:19

(WEB-World English Bible Translation)

"...we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and entering into that which is within the veil."

hen I think about a lifeline the picture that comes to mind is a thick rope attached to a deep-sea diver so that the diver is assured that if he needs to be pulled out of any situation while underwater, he only needs to pull on the lifeline, and he will be pulled up to safety. If for some reason the diver is without a lifeline, the diver could be lost at sea.

Thus is our relationship with God, in prayer. Prayer is our spiritual lifeline. It is the one thing that can rescue us from any situation in our life. No matter how deep the situation we can pull on our lifeline to God. We can talk to God and He can and will pull us to safety.

In the Bible, The Israelites knew where to turn when in trouble. God always responded when they used their lifeline. The same is for us. God will come to our rescue if we use our lifeline.

His Promise in Psalm 91:15 is sure, "He shall call upon Me and I will answer; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him."

When we use our faith, a spiritual lifeline will be extended to us!

In 2018, our goal should be to build our faith on what God has said. God's Word is what is truth. It is our amour and protection. However, if we don't use the Word it cannot protect us! No matter how difficult our problem, when we pray God's word, we're building our faith and we're pulling on our spiritual lifeline. God's response will be to pull us closer to Him, closer to His promises, and further away from our problems.

Let Us Pray:

Lord, we thank You that You are the God of the impossible. You can do anything. We want to trust in Your ability and not our own. Teach us to see difficulties in our life from Your perspective. Help us to focus on You and Your power. We want to be like Joshua and Caleb who believed in a good report and focused on You even in hard circumstances (Numbers 14:7-9). Our responsibility is to carefully read, trust, and obey Your Word. Help us not to fear but to trust You in all of our situations good and bad. We declare our faith in Your ability to fulfill Your promises to us. In Jesus name, Amen.

NOTE: The Encourager Magazine is both honored and blessed to welcome Angela to our ministry!





Excerpts from a recent broadcast on Focus On the Family

Pushing buttons. When we argue, it's rarely about what we think it's about. Surface topics may appear to be what's driving the conflict, but that's an illusion. What really happens is that a "button" is pushed — a fight touches on a sensitive topic or a long-hidden wound. We all have buttons throughout our psyches, and boy, is it easy to push them. These buttons are often deep insecurities: feeling unloved or rejected, abandoned or misunderstood. Our buttons are pushed when we feel like we're failing. Like we're failures. Once a button is pushed, our hearts close instantly. It's like one of those little roly-poly bugs — they just fold in on themselves and prying them open is difficult. Over the years, Erin and I have figured out three simple steps that can help open our hearts:

First, call a timeout. Instead of continuing to argue, hit pause. Get away from each other and de-escalate your emotions. "A fool gives full vent to his spirit, but a wise man quietly holds it back," Solomon wrote in Proverbs 29:11. Take a walk. Go for a run. Listen to some music. Pray. But as you create some space, make sure to let the other person know that you're taking a timeout to open your heart and that you'll be back later to finish the discussion.

Second, identify your emotions.

When you're hurt and frustrated, your thoughts are centered on the other person in the worst sort of way. If you're going to pry your heart open, you have to shift from your spouse to you, in a "log in your own eye" sort of way. It's like David suggests in Psalm 4:4, "Be angry, and do not sin; ponder in your own hearts on your beds, and be silent." During your timeout, ask yourself, What button just got pushed? Identify the emotion. This will help you calm down.

Third, we need to discover the **truth.** Emotions are powerful things, but they represent nothing more than information. We should never mindlessly act on any information without evaluating it first.

The best way to evaluate your emotions or feelings (the buttons) is to take that information to the Lord. Remember that as humans, we are not the source of truth. If we try to determine the validity of our emotions and thoughts about our spouse without bringing God into the equation, we are at risk for believing lies. I don't want to trust my own interpretations and perceptions of what my wife does; I want God's perspective because ultimately He is the source of truth (<u>John 14:6</u>).

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Living the Life

God Has Purposed

FEATURED ARTICLE

KIMODOMS-BOLDEN

eginning this month millions of people will watch the 2018 Winter Olympics. Global competitors will compete in bobsleighing, skiing, snowboarding, and for many the fascinating figure skating in PyeongChang, South Korea. Many, if not all, competitors have trained for years. Their daily routines are often spent training in their particular sport for more than 6 hours a day, seven days a week. It is not new news that whatever and wherever we spend the most of our time will be known not only to us but to those who see, hear, and spend time with us.

I often tell the story that I was baptized when I was about eleven, but I fell in love with Jesus while in England in my thirty's. It was at this

point, as it is done at the starting line of most races, I was raised from starting blocks into a race I now know I knew very little about and began my new life of running with and for Christ. The apostle

Paul knew very well what race he was in and what it was about. Paul stated, "However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has

given – the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace" (Acts 20:24 NIV).

Like seeing a rainbow at the end of the tunnel, I was unable to see the finish line. Paul asked the question, "Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize" (1 Corinthians 9:24, NIV). I now know I could not see a finish line because there is no finish line and there is no end as we know it in this life. Unlike the Olympics, this race is eternal. The good news is at the end of this journey the line is replaced with a prize.

Since entering this race, I have been shown this race is not for the faint at heart. In addition to spending a great deal of time training, as do

Olympic athletes, there are many roadblocks. Paul said to the Galatians, "You were running a good race. Who cut in on you to keep you from obeying the truth" (Galatians 5:7 NIV)? Growing and



strengthening in the Lord teaches us how to navigate and move beyond the roadblocks to reach the goal of living the life God has purposed for us. Or in Paul's words, "the task given" to us.



Being a Christian and running the race for and with Christ may sometimes feel very lonely. Yet, God reminds us we are never alone. He will never forsake us. A race, or a competition is not a competition if there is no one to run against. Along with roadblocks there are also stumbling blocks. Thus, Paul tells us, "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart" (Hebrews 12:1 NIV).

Part of an Olympic athlete's training is strengthening, and another part is endurance. "If you falter in a time of trouble, how small is your strength" (Proverbs 24:10 NIV). As his journey here on earth moved him closer to his prize Paul shared, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith" (2 Timothy 4:7). When we do not grow weary, when we do not fall faint, when we do not falter, we do as the well-trained Olympic athletes do, and we finish the race. However, unlike Olympic athletes, as we grow and not get weary our prize is greater than any eye has

seen, any ear has heard, or ever entered into the heart of man.

Fight the good fight, continue to grow in the Word and run to get your great prize. Remember it's not how you start the race it's how you finish. Also know, to get the prize you have to get into the race. Whose race are you in, and what is the prize you are seeking to obtain?



MESSAGE FROMTHE EDITOR



reetings in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ! I love bringing in a new year. It is such a wonderful time of reflection. As I look back over the year I see the hand of God not only in my life, but in the lives of my family, friends, and loved ones. I thank the Lord for how He has kept me yet another year and has showered my life with favor and blessings. He has been my faithful friend, my unchanging rock, my encourager, and an ever present protector as I navigate life.

Bringing in a new year is, for me, also a time of thankfulness. To see His new mercies day after day, His provisions, His love, and His grace reminds me that He keeps His promises. He has never left me or forsaken me. There certainly have been times when I felt isolated and abandoned only to be comforted (instantly at times) by His presence in the thoughtful words of my wife, my daughters, my friends, and my loved ones. Surprisingly, He has even comforted me through the life of our spunky Yorkshire Terrier, Cali!

I continue to be thankful for the incredible staff of The Encourager Magazine who steadfastly stand with me in bringing the Good News of Jesus Christ to our readers. I continue to be thankful for Pastors Reginald and Juanita Elliott for modeling the love of Jesus on a daily basis, and for presenting the truth of the Gospel through the anointed sermons and Bible Studies throughout the year. On many

occasions the Lord repeatedly blesses me through CCC's online audio sermons. Many a night I have drowned out the cares of the day and comforted myself to sleep by using my Bluetooth earpiece to listen to our Sunday services over, and over again (without awakening my beautiful wife).

This is not to say I haven't had my share of challenges during the year. My beautiful friend and dear sister, Pat, went to be with the Lord right before Christmas last year on 12/18/18. Although many prayers went up for her from this supportive congregation, friends, family, and loved ones, Pat made her transition right into the waiting arms of Jesus! She had been healed from breast cancer, bladder cancer (twice), and bone cancer (of which I gave a testimony). The bone cancer went into a very short remission before returning...little did Satan know that what he meant for harm sent her right into the presence of God...Hallelujah! I had the privilege to witness her faith through all of these challenges and see how she impacted and readily shared her faith with other patients and her healthcare providers through her uplifting words of encouragement and positive outlook on life. I personally want to thank Cindy Rooths and the ACTS Cast for their love and support to my family and me during this time.

As we step into the first quarter of 2018, I pray that each of you will have a Blessed, Healthy, Prosperous, Christ-Filled and Happy New Year!

Michael &



COLUMBIA COMMUNITY CHURCH

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

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

EVERY SUNDAY:

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

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 Sunday 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM and after service until 2:00 PM