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# God's Plan for You

## Good News to Share as a Family

### God rules.

Did you know that God created the world? The Bible tells us He created everything. God is a perfect, loving ruler. God created us to bring glory to Him. (See Genesis 1:1; Revelation 4:11; Colossians 1:16-17.)

### We sinned.

Adam and Eve chose to disobey God. Since then, we all have chosen to disobey God. The Bible calls this *sin*. Sin separates us from God. Thankfully God had a plan to save us from our sin. (See Romans 3:23.)

### God provided.

Our loving God provided the only way to save us — Jesus. God sent Jesus to earth. He lived a perfect life. Because He loves us, He took the punishment we deserve. (See John 3:16; Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 6:23.)

### Jesus gives.

Jesus died on the cross in our place. Our sins were punished through Jesus dying on the cross. It's all been paid for! In God's eyes, it's as if we never sinned. God welcomes us into His family as children of God.

When Jesus died, He did not stay dead. God brought Him back to life. People even saw and touched the risen Jesus. Jesus went to be with God and to rule over the world forever as King, even today.

One day Jesus will return to earth. God will welcome into His kingdom all people who have accepted His free gift of eternal life. (See Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 3:18; Ephesians 2:8-9.)

This is the gospel. Gospel means "GOOD NEWS!" Because of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, we can be part of God's family forever. That's good news!

### We respond.

We can respond to the good news by understanding who God is (holy) and who we are (sinners).

Tell God you know you messed up and are sorry. Repent, turning away from your sin. Turn to Jesus, trusting only Him to save you through His life, death, and resurrection. (See John 14:6; Romans 10:9-10,13.)

If you are ready to respond to the good news by becoming a Christian, simply pray and tell God something like this:

*Dear God, I know I have disobeyed You and gone my own way. My sin separates me from You. I am sorry that I have disobeyed You and earned Your punishment, but today I turn back to You. I believe that Jesus died on the cross in my place so that my sins can be forgiven. I believe Jesus rose from the dead and is alive. I trust Jesus to save me. Thank You for sending Jesus to live a perfect life and to take away my punishment. God, please forgive me and help me to obey You and to live for You the rest of my life. Thank You. Amen.*

### What now?

- Tell others that you are a Christian.
- Talk with your pastor about your faith decision and about how being baptized shows others that you are a Christian.
- Read the Bible to learn more about what it means to live for God.
- Talk to God every day.
- Attend church regularly where other Christians can encourage you in your relationship with Jesus..





## ParentLife

ParentLife equips parents to build strong, godly families by focusing on the needs of the whole child from prenatal to preteen.

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## Fall Memories

We packed up the van with all of our camping equipment and headed with our Sunday School class to a state park within an hour of home. We wanted the kids to have a great camping experience but knew it was going to be cold as well. So we brought with us a little space heater for our tent and a few worries that we might be laughed at or catch our tent on fire. No matter how much planning we did, we also knew there were unexpected things that you can't plan for that always pop up. Like the year we had an electrical storm so bad, we all moved to the van in the middle of the night after our oldest son exclaimed, "I don't want to die in a tent in the middle of a storm!" But we put in our due diligence and had a great time. Yes, the heater worked inside the little tent thanks to the electrical plug at our camping unit. And we still talk about that fun experience to this day.

I hope that you can make some great memories with your family this fall, whether camping or on another amazing fall adventure. This month we also take on some great topics for parents, such as fitness after baby, new parent pointers, not playing favorites as you parent, and building sibling bonds rather than rivalry.

We would love to hear from you about your parenting adventures too!



PHOTO: MELANIE MCGUAGHEY

Parenting by grace,

*William Summey*

Publishing Team Leader

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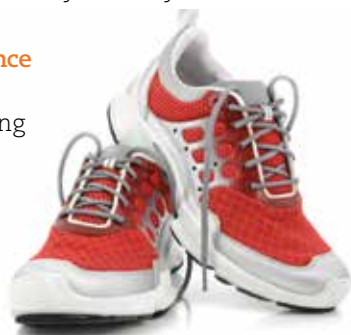
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# Inspire

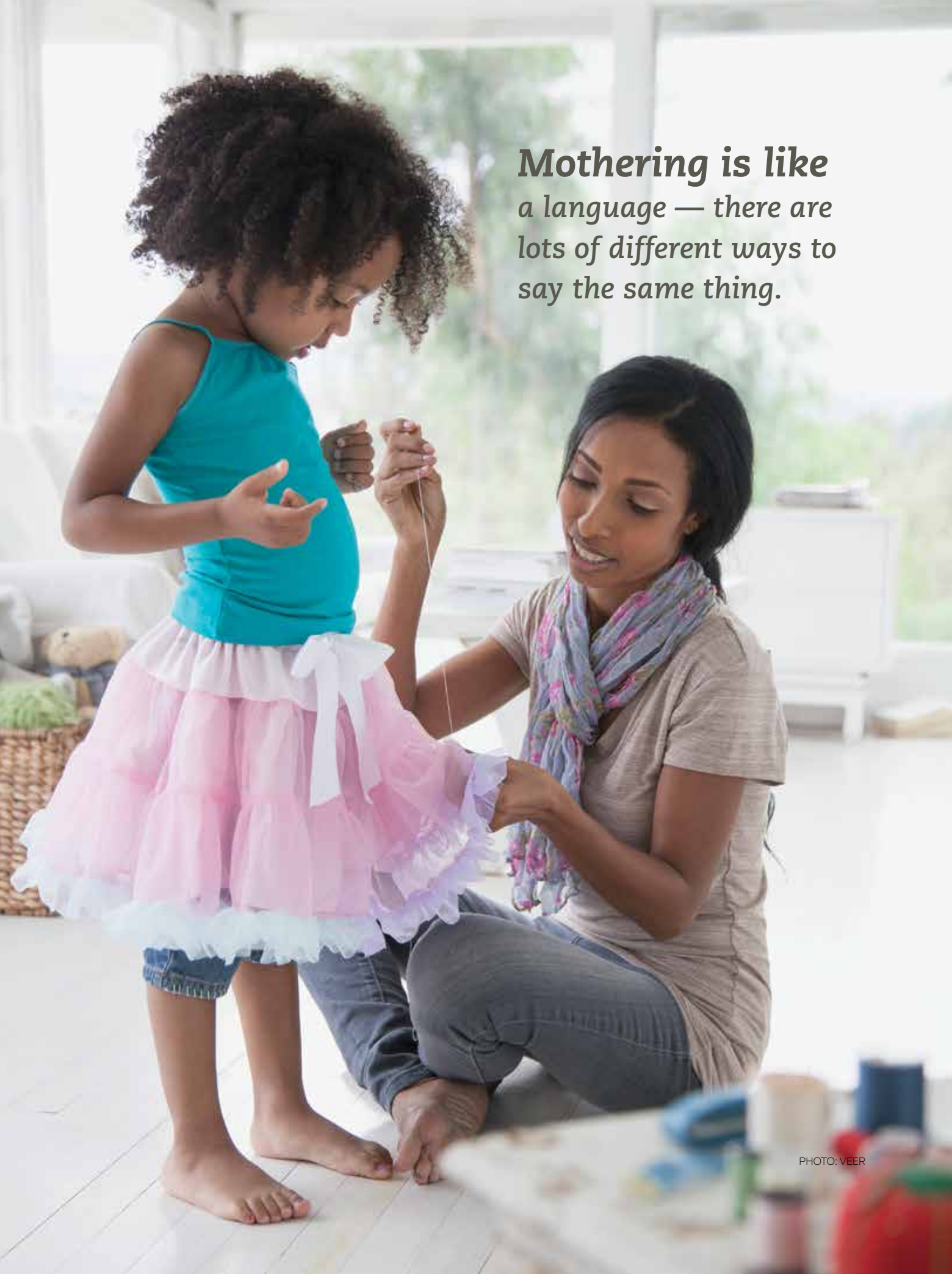
*Wisdom from experts and parent-to-parent advice*

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A woman with dark hair and a colorful scarf is kneeling on a light-colored wooden floor, sewing a pink and white tutu for a young girl. The girl, who has curly hair, is standing and looking down at the tutu. She is wearing a bright blue sleeveless top and denim shorts. The woman is wearing a beige t-shirt and jeans. In the background, there is a large window with a view of greenery outside. A small table in the foreground holds various sewing supplies like spools of thread and scissors. The overall atmosphere is warm and focused.

**Mothering is like**  
*a language — there are  
lots of different ways to  
say the same thing.*

PHOTO: VEER



# THE COMPARISON TRAP

## *3 Ways to Avoid Stepping Into One*

By Rebecca Ingram Powell

**H**ey New Mom! Have you fallen into the comparison trap? A lot of new moms do. After all, you've never done this "mom thing" before. There has to be a right way to do it.

A best way to do it.

A perfect way to do it.

Uh-oh. That's how you get trapped.

The subject of mothering is not like math, where there's one solution to every problem. Mothering is more like a language, where there are all kinds of different ways to say the same thing.

"We put way too much pressure on ourselves to be perfect," says Jodi, mother of two. "Then we end up feeling bad about ourselves when we see moms who appear to have everything under control. And on the flip side, we grow prideful if we feel like we're doing something better than other moms."

If you're looking for a picture of "perfect" motherhood, you'll find plenty of examples on blog posts, Pinterest pages, and Facebook updates. When people are sharing about their latest homemade creations, a child's award, or the time they spent snagging the best deals, it's hard not to feel defeated when you dealt with a baby who was fussy all day, and you never even snagged a shower. "People rarely share about their kid's massive meltdown at the pediatrician's office or how they pulled three jars of marinara sauce off the store shelf," notes Katy, a mother of three boys and a newborn daughter. "Through social media, we're constantly exposed to everyone's seemingly perfect lives."

We can also sabotage ourselves, setting our own comparison trap with the lies we believe. "I went from going full speed with my first teaching position to what seemed like a dead stop at home all day with a newborn," explains Ashley, mom to two girls with a baby on the way. "I began to obsess over keeping my home immaculate. I felt the need to earn my position at home, although my husband never made me feel that way."

Comparison traps have one thing in common: They center on doing — not being. When the focus is on what we do or don't do, that's a dead giveaway that these traps come from the enemy. How can you avoid stepping into one?

- *Don't travel alone.* On the journey of motherhood, it's important to find a "mentor" mother, someone who has already walked in a new mom's shoes. Samantha, whose daughter has Downs syndrome, says, "I could not do without my DS moms support group. They have helped me through so much." It's equally crucial to find peer moms who can walk alongside you, openly sharing their struggles and victories. "My best mommy friendships are the ones where we talk honestly about our strengths and weaknesses without judging or criticizing," agrees Jodi.

*Set up  
personal  
boundaries  
and ask a  
friend to  
hold you  
accountable.*

- *Get Directions.* New moms need to be sure that they're not walking around in the dark. Instead, light your path daily with God's Word. "The Bible is not specific on whether or not we should breastfeed, co-sleep, let our kids 'cry it out,' or other numerous reasons for the 'mommy wars,'" Ashley explains. "Instead, we are to fix our eyes on Jesus. He desires to give us complete satisfaction, fill us completely, and bless us with good gifts — such as children."

- *Watch Where Your're Going.* If you know that you're going to feel inadequate after spending 15 minutes on Pinterest, or after reading a certain supermom blogger, just don't log on. Watching where you're going means being aware of the traps you've fallen into before and avoiding falling in again. Set up personal boundaries and ask a friend to hold you accountable. Memorize Scriptures that remind you that you have a constant Friend and Helper by your side as you parent your children. Try Deuteronomy 31:6; Isaiah 40:11; and Philippians 4:13.

"I continually fall into these comparison traps, over and over again," admits Jodi. "Motherhood is teaching me that I can never be good enough. I have to let Christ live in and through me, relying on His grace and mercy. I have to remind myself of that every day."

Rebecca Ingram Powell is the author of *Baby Boot Camp*, a devotional book for new moms.



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By Kelly Wilson Mize

**A**ccording to Ecclesiastes 3:1, “There is an occasion for everything, and a time for every activity under heaven.” For new parents it may seem like those oh-so tiring days after the birth of a new baby, and the exhaustion you experience, will last forever. But parents of older children realize how quickly the precious time passes and how untrue that notion is. In the season of parenting a new life, consider the following suggestions for finding time for you.

## **Rx #1: Just for Mom**

### **1. Rest!**

As a new mom, I heard it often but rarely followed the advice: Sleep when the baby does. Having Baby on a schedule with regular naps and an early bedtime is not only healthy for her, but also allows you all-important relaxation time.

### **2. Accept the help.**

It's OK, and even beneficial to be away from your baby for short periods of time. Leaving your baby with trusted sources doesn't mean you are a bad mother. Being apart from mom allows the baby exposure to new people and experiences, which will mean less separation anxiety in the future. Many family members and close friends would treasure the opportunity to keep that sweet infant for a couple of hours. As your baby grows into a toddler, many churches offer wonderful mother's day out program to give you a much-needed break.

### **3. Utilize grandparents.**

Grandparents are one of God's greatest gifts to children. The relationship between grandparent and grandchild is a unique and beautiful one to be treasured and nurtured. Pamela, a grandmother from Richmond, Va., says “Don't be afraid to ask for help. I babysit for my daughter-in-law so she can get her hair done and go to the grocery store without taking two babies. I get wonderful Grandmother-time and she gets a little break!”

Remember that your baby's grandparents raised you and likely did a pretty good job. Even though their methods may be different, the time spent between grandparents and grandchildren can be a win-win for everyone!

### **4. Schedule it!**

When my children were small, I had a weekly girls' night out with a good friend. After dinner together, we would go our separate ways to the grocery store or to run other necessary errands. It was a part of my week I always looked forward to with great anticipation. Also, try getting up earlier than the kids to grab a few extra minutes of peace and quiet. You might spend time with God in addition to enjoying the rare concept of solitude. Paula, a mom of two says, “I used to get up an hour earlier than everyone else to drink coffee and gather my thoughts. Sometimes just catching a little breather will help you get through the day.”

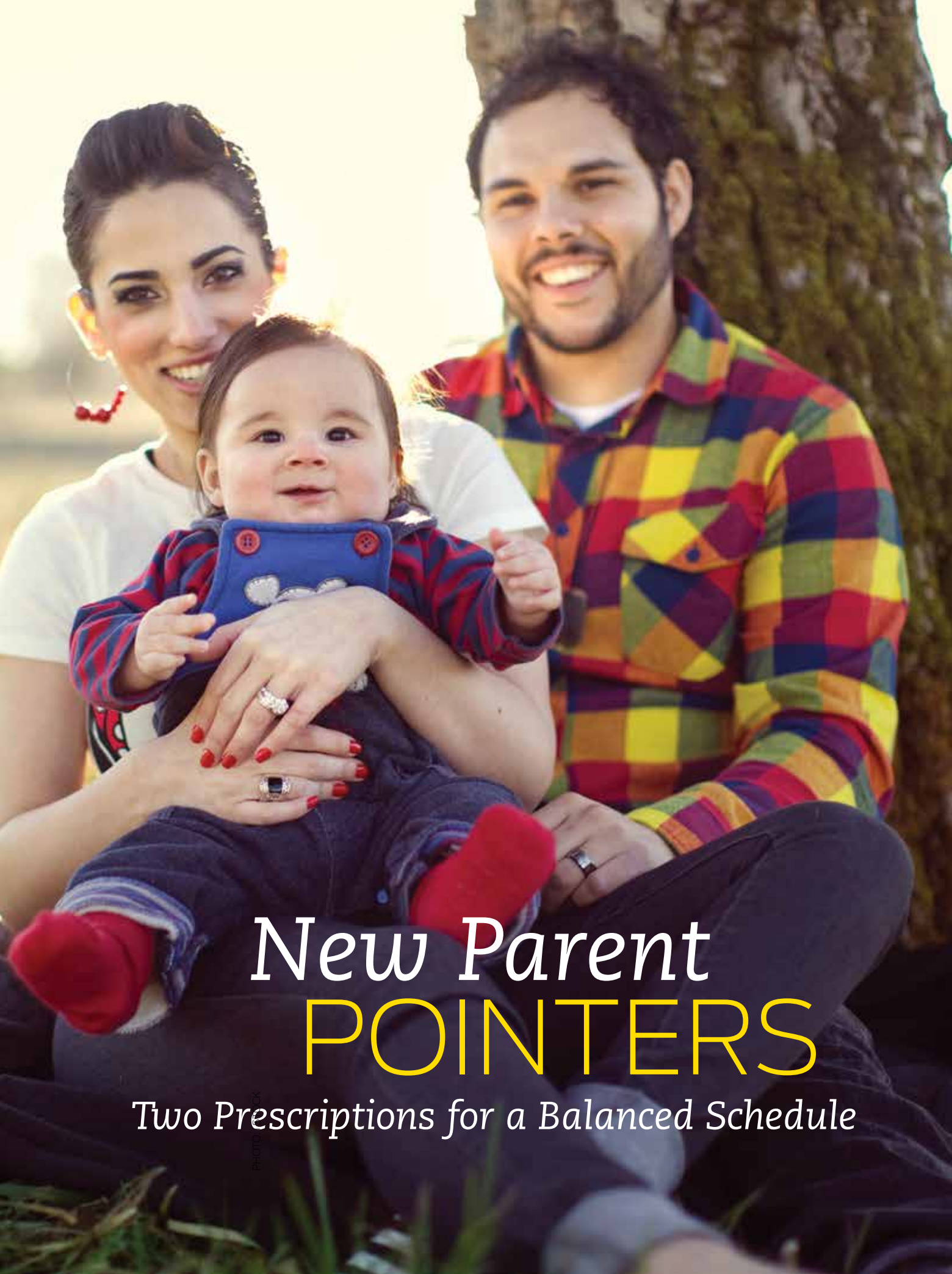
Regularly schedule time for yourself: Whether it's a mall visit, long walk, or bubble bath. Don't just “pencil it in,” because things will always come up to get in the way. Put the time on the calendar and leave it there.

### **5. Bring the kids.**

There are very few worthwhile activities that can't be made baby-friendly. Have baby-carrier, will travel! Take the baby out to a restaurant, for a hike, or to the beach.







# New Parent POINTERS

*Two Prescriptions for a Balanced Schedule*

Many new moms take part in mommy/baby classes or Bible studies specifically for new moms. Michelle, a mom of five suggests, "Join a MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers International) group! New moms learn together with older moms who have been through the same things already."

#### 6. Let go and let Dad.

Research has shown that it's very important for fathers to bond with their new babies. Allow Dad that time by leaving the baby with him on a regular basis.

Kathy Troyanek, a Certified Licensed Professional Counselor from Huntsville, Ala., advises, "I tell new moms to leave their children early and often with their husband to let new dads develop their own routines and relationships with their children. I warn them that dads don't do things the way that moms do, but kids need that! They need both parents to grow and develop well."

#### 7. Don't let yourself go!

Diet and exercise are important, but easy to neglect for a new mom who is often concerned about everything except herself. Make a commitment to treat yourself well.

"I encourage all moms to make time to exercise! It can be done." Says Deborah Williams, respiratory therapist, Zumba instructor, and mother of three, "Exercise not only makes you look better, but makes you feel better by releasing your all natural feel-good hormones. Most importantly, it makes you healthy!"

It's beneficial to keep up your outward appearance as well. Nothing makes a mom feel more energized than a new hairstyle or outfit every once in a while. Considering your own budget restraints, keep yourself in good shape, inside and out.

#### 8. "All good things must come to an end."

As with all seasons, this one will soon come to an end. Do your best to embrace each moment, whether happy or difficult.

Jennifer, a mother of two suggests, "Try to remember that, as my grandmother always said, 'This too shall pass.' Those tough stages are just that — stages — that will pass all too quickly!"

#### Rx #2: A Dose of Dad

While there is no way that dads can completely understand the complexity of a new mom's feelings, a

supportive partner can make all the difference in helping a mom adjust to her new identity. Husbands can truly be their wives heroes where a new baby is concerned. Here are four ways fathers can help.

**1. Help with feedings.** Even fathers of breastfed babies can help with feeding. If Dad can't take a turn physically feeding the baby, he can retrieve the baby and return her to her crib for late night/early morning feedings.

**2. Edify.** Let Mom know she's still beautiful to you, because she is likely not feeling her most attractive. Let her know that it's understandable when she's tired and grouchy from time to time.

**3. Ladies Night!** Every good dad realizes the importance of mom connecting with other women on a regular basis. At the beginning, this will be only an hour or two, but as the baby grows the time can increase.

**4. Pitch In!** Shopping, cooking, and cleaning are not just for moms. Dads who change diapers, vacuum, and help with laundry are immensely appreciated, and those who do it without having to be asked even more so!

Working together, new parents can find time for the things that are truly important: With much prayer, and a little help from family and friends, you will survive and even thrive in your role as a new parent. One day you'll look back on this short stage and forget how hard it seemed at the time. All you will remember is that beautiful, sweet baby and the precious time you were blessed to be her parent.

**Kelly Mize** is a freelance writer living in Huntsville, Ala. She is a wife, mother of two, and 5th grade teacher with a master's degree in elementary education.

### TOGETHER TIME: Reconnecting With Your Spouse

It's important for new moms to remember that new dads have their own share of stress, most keeping full-time jobs in addition to the new baby at home. Both parents should attempt to be sympathetic to the other's needs. Consider the following ways to keep your marriage strong.

**1. Make time for just the two of you.** Finding time to spend together alone is always harder than it seems. Strive to make a date at least once a week for breakfast, lunch, or dinner.

**2. Communicate, communicate, communicate.** Do so in every way possible. Schedule a time to talk about subjects other than the baby. Speak on the phone and send text messages and emails throughout the day.

**3. Play! Take up a new hobby together.** Always wanted to go antiquing or learn to play golf? Whether you bring the baby along or utilize caregivers, do it together.





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## My Kids Are Boss



PHOTO: VEER

### There are benefits to parenting big kids.

I'm in a new phase of parenting: I have a high schooler, two in middle school, and the bottom two rounding out the elementary years. I look three of my children straight in the eye. I share shoes with my daughter, and she tells me how (not) to dress. I'm not signing behavior charts, reading minutes, and homework calendars for half my kids anymore, and I give daily gratitude to the heavens for that.

Let me tell you something: Parenting big kids is my jam. I remember worrying, nay, fretting about this phase of parenting. Who can imagine dealing with a freshman in high school when all you have are toddlers everywhere? What if my kids hate me? What

if I hate them? Hear ye, hear ye: Having older kids is the best. They are hilarious and smart; they are turning into real people. I am so into them. I get to talk like a regular person in my own home now. Do you know what I mean? While parenting littles, you talk like a mom all day long:

"How do we ask?"

"Use your inside voice."

"Five minutes in Time Out!"

"We don't bite/hit/whine/disobey."

And then your husband comes home from work, and you have a minor mental breakdown and threaten to drive to Canada. It's like the Countess Dowager said on Downton Abbey: "One forgets about

parenthood ... the on-and-on-ness of it."

Obviously, childrearing does not end at middle school, but it sure does change. I love parenting my bigs. Don't worry, Moms of Littles, because the older years are every bit as precious as the younger ones. Those babies you are working so hard to shape will actually turn into the teenagers you are hoping for. All that discipline and effort pays forward. It counts and matters, so stay the course.

Because one day, very soon, you'll look around at all these teenagers standing at eye level and think: My kids are boss.

**Jen Hatmaker** and her husband, Brandon, live in Austin, Texas, where they lead Austin New Church and raise their brood. Jen speaks at events all around the country. She is the author of nine books and Bible studies, including *Interrupted* and *7: An Experimental Mutiny Against Excess*. Jen and Brandon have five children: Gavin – 15, Sydney – 13, Caleb – 11, and they've recently added Ben – 9, and Remy – 7 from Ethiopia. Check out her ministry, schedule, and blog at [www.jenhatmaker.com](http://www.jenhatmaker.com).

*Having older kids is the best. They are hilarious and smart; they are turning into real people.*



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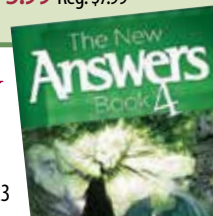
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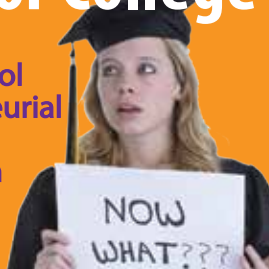
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## PHINEAS AND FERB

By Lindsey Williams

*Welcome to "Trends & Truths" – exploring pop culture from a parent's perspective. This month we take a look at "Phineas and Ferb."*

### Fast Talk

"Phineas and Ferb" is a fast-paced, satiric animated cartoon on The Disney Channel.

### Fan Talk

The cartoon "Phineas and Ferb" is a smash-up of "The Simpsons" meets "Family Guy," thanks to creators Dan Povenmire and Jeff Marsh who formerly worked on these two popular shows. Fortunately, "Phineas and Ferb" includes none of the crudeness and inappropriate language found in these animated series primarily aimed at adults. In fact, it is surprisingly squeaky clean.

The show's two main characters, Phineas Flynn and his English stepbrother Ferb Fletcher, spend the lazy days of summer dreaming up larger-than-life inventions and brainy ways to entertain themselves and their friends, all while outsmarting their teenage sister, Candace. A subplot involves their pet platypus, Perry, who moonlights as a secret agent. Perry's ("Agent P") mission is to save the world from Dr. Doofenshmirtz, a mad scientist whose hair-brained inventions always result in disaster.

The two plots generally converge when Dr. Doofenshmirtz's evil scheme inevitably destroys Phineas and Ferb's most recent invention. Their latest creation always disappears before their mom discovers it, much to the dismay of older sister Candace, whose primary goal is to "bust" her brothers. Every vignette also includes at least one song that adds a musical and educational element to this animated comedy.

On "Phineas and Ferb," the nerdy kids are heroes. The brothers are constantly inventing over-the-top fun for their friends — amusement park rides, mind games,



and life-size objects, which they always build in their backyard. If you can imagine it, the boys bring it to life and super-size it. While Dr. Doofenshmirtz is billed as the nemesis, he's more goofy than evil, always bungling plans. He's one enemy that's

neither scary nor sinister. Meanwhile, although Candace is enamored with the attention of her boyfriend, Jeremy, her over-the-top obsession is intentionally embellished.

Although the kids' mom seems aloof and is oftentimes portrayed as shallow, she only flits in and out of episodes. The children are mainly left to their own devices, but they do seem to respect their friends, their parents, and their siblings. While not overtly academic, each episode contains some educational value with imagination being the focal point of the show.

### Family Talk

Use these questions to spark family discussion about "Phineas and Ferb":

- Who is your favorite character and why?
- If you could invent something like Phineas and Ferb, what would you create?
- Phineas and Ferb fill their summers with adventures by using their imaginations. What are some adventures you can take using your imagination?
- Why do Phineas and Ferb's parents never find out about their inventions?
- Is Candace's obsession with Jeremy good for her?



Find more resources on our blog:  
[www.lifeway.com/parentlifeblog](http://www.lifeway.com/parentlifeblog)

Lindsay Williams is a freelance writer and former editor of CCM magazine. She lives in Nashville, Tenn.



# Families are discovering a tucked away paradise on North Carolina's Outer Banks.

Tucked away — like a love letter in a drawer, a sequined gown at the far end of the closet, a cherished memory in the back of your mind; tucked away as in hidden, not easy to find, but always there waiting for the right moment, holding that spark to ignite your emotions and carry you away.

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tucked away to be revisited as often as desired.

Here's where wild horses roam the dunes, sunsets blaze over the sound, migratory birds and osprey soar and dolphins surf ocean waves.

This is also where history buffs find stirring stories; sports enthusiasts golf, kayak, fish, swim, surf, hike and bike; epicureans dine on the daily catch of fresh seafood and local produce; nature-lovers inhale salt-tinged



air and thrill at the feel of sand between their toes; shoppers find treasures in locally owned boutiques and outlet stores; and vacationers do as much as they want or as little as possible in a setting that's inspired countless people to be just "tucked away."



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# The Wild Ride of Fatherhood



PHOTO: VEER

**This rollercoaster has no exit.**

"Please remove all loose objects. Pull the harness over your head and fasten the buckle. The floor below you is about to drop. Enjoy your ride." Those were the last words spoken before being jarred, flipped, tossed, thrown, and thrust into the open while battling an inverted roller coaster. I barely remember topping the first hill, and then seconds later being upside down with my feet hanging in the sky. One of the downhill cameras caught me with my mouth wide open, screaming with excitement and fear. It was a day spent with my teenage daughter.

The journey with my daughter began in my kitchen. My wife slid a home pregnancy test across the table. Her eyes were enormous, and she could barely contain excitement as she waited for me to respond. I was breathless. I stared

at the colored dot confirming our pregnancy and thought, *Pull the harness over your head and fasten the buckle. The floor below you is about to drop. Enjoy your ride.*

I spent the next nine months (as I have spent the last thirteen years) being jarred, flipped, tossed, thrown, and thrust into the open. It was, and continues to be, a wild ride. A ride that I love with everything in me and one that scares the life out of me.

The difference is that within a matter of moments, the coaster came to a halt. I hit the buckle, and the harness lifted. I reconnected with my rhythm of breathing, and I exited the ride. This ride of fatherhood has no exit. It is still going and going, and I am still screaming with excitement and fear. Many days I feel inverted and thrust into the unknown. Many days, I have ques-

tions about what in the world I am doing. This much I know to be true. No matter how frightening or uncertain the ride, I cling to the words of 2 Timothy 1:12 that says "I know the One I have believed in and am persuaded that He is able to guard what has been entrusted to me."

## Think About It!

- What have been some of the most exhilarating moments of your journey as a dad? What have been some of the most terrifying?
- Where have you seen evidence that God has protected what He has entrusted to you as a father? In what ways could you lean into that trust more?

**David Thomas**, L.M.S.W., is the Director of Counseling for Men and Boys at Daystar Counseling in Nashville, TN. His newest book, *Intentional Parenting*, released in March 2013.





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# Full of Love

**GOD IS ALL-POWERFUL** God is your Creator. God offers you His salvation, through Jesus. How much should you love God? The Bible teaches that you are to love God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind. Luke 10:27 teaches you to love God totally without end. "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." This is total love.

You are also to love other people as you love yourself. This kind of love leaves no room for doubt about how you feel about them. It will be obvious that you love them. Jesus teaches you to love God and others. Real love is complete and endless. Real love in Jesus always points to God.

## DIG DEEPER

Find and read Luke 10:25-37. After you read the story, put the following events in their correct order. Number the sentences 1 through 5 in the blanks provided.

- \_\_\_ A priest saw the man and passed by the other side.
- \_\_\_ He took the man on his animal to the inn and took care of him.
- \_\_\_ A Samaritan saw the man and took pity on him.
- \_\_\_ A man was traveling to Jericho and was attacked by robbers.
- \_\_\_ A Levite came through, saw him and passed on the other side.

*Which of the three men was the traveler's neighbor?*

## 10 THINGS TO DO FOR A MINISTER IN YOUR CHURCH

1. I can bake cookies and deliver them.
2. I can help with chores at church.
3. I can create thank-you cards for a minister.
4. I can tell a minister about my Bible story from Sunday School.
5. I can plant flowers at church in honor of a minister.
6. I can invite a minister to meet my family.
7. I can send a birthday card to a minister on his birthday.
8. I can help a minister's family with their younger children.
9. I can give my offering each week to my church.
10. I can say encouraging words to a minister when he is tired.



## PARENTS

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# Create

*Crafts, recipes, and activities for fun family time*

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**26 Fit Mommy Workouts**

**28 5 Amazing Autumn Adventures**





# BEYOND BABY FOOD

## *Making the transition to real food*

By Tammy Darling

**T**he transition from baby food to “real” food is an exciting time. It’s also a crucial time because it’s so easy to get out of the habit of providing the best nutrition for our kids. Unless we take action now, poor eating habits will take root.

Kids need a healthy, balanced diet. Our kids’ dwindling palates are the result of being given the same tastes and textures repeatedly, most often in the form of salted and sweetened carbs. While our youngsters may gravitate toward sugar and starch, with some wise moves we can program those tiny taste buds to appreciate healthier options.

The American Academy of Pediatrics offers some healthy food substitutions, such as a baked potato instead of French fries and graham crackers or vanilla wafers instead of chocolate chip cookies. Parents can get their toddlers involved as well by allowing them to choose a fruit and a vegetable at the grocery store or by letting them pick between whole grain bagels or whole grain muffins. This lets their emerging independence have a say in what they eat while setting them up for a lifetime of making wise food choices.

The transition from baby food to regular food is a process. Keep your cool, even when your little tike refuses to eat steamed broccoli. Give him the option of sprinkling grated Parmesan cheese on top or dipping it in ranch dressing.

Kids want to know they have a choice (hint: it’s not “Eat it or go hungry”).

The following are some ways to make the transition from baby food to solid food a healthy, enjoyable one for the whole family:

- **Offer a wide variety of healthy foods so kids develop a diverse palate.** Serving the same meals every week will not encourage kids to try new foods. Mix it up.

- **Get the whole family involved in planning meals.** Kids are more likely to eat what they have had a say in. Whenever possible, allow them to help prepare the meals. Even toddlers can help pour ingredients and stir.

- **Let them have some mom-approved options for snacks.** Say, “You may have a banana or a yogurt cup.”

- **Model the eating habits you want your children to emulate.** Your “eat healthy” mommy mantra will fall on deaf ears if you’re chowing down on a cheeseburger.

- **Shop smart.** Drop the processed convenience foods and load up on a variety of fresh fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.

- **Dip it.** Most toddlers love to dunk and munch, often creating combos we’d never dream of trying ourselves. Keep a plethora of dippers on hand. Yogurt, salad dressing, mild salsa, and hummus are good choices.

- **Downsize.** We have a habit of loading our tots’ plates far beyond what they actually need. A toddler portion of meat is one ounce and fruit is two tablespoons. It may not seem like much, but kids can always ask for seconds.

- **Don’t give up.** You may have to introduce a new food a dozen times, served a dozen different ways before they’ll bite, and that’s OK. Exposure is the key.







### Applesauce Pancakes

- 1 cup flour
  - ¼ teaspoon salt
  - 1½ teaspoons baking powder
  - 1 tablespoon melted butter
  - ½ cup milk
  - 1 beaten egg
  - ½ teaspoon vanilla
  - 1¼ cups applesauce
- Sift flour, salt, and baking powder into a medium mixing bowl. Combine butter, milk, and egg. Stir into dry ingredients. Add vanilla and applesauce; beat well. Spoon batter onto a hot, well-greased griddle, about 4 inches in diameter.



### Chicken Rice Soup

- 3½ cups no salt, low-fat chicken broth
  - 1 cup diced cooked chicken
  - ¼ cup uncooked regular long-grain white rice
  - 10 oz. bag frozen mixed vegetables
- Bring broth and frozen vegetables to a boil over medium-high heat. Stir the rice in the saucepan. Reduce heat to low. Cover and cook for 20 minutes or until the rice is tender. Stir in the chicken and cook until hot.

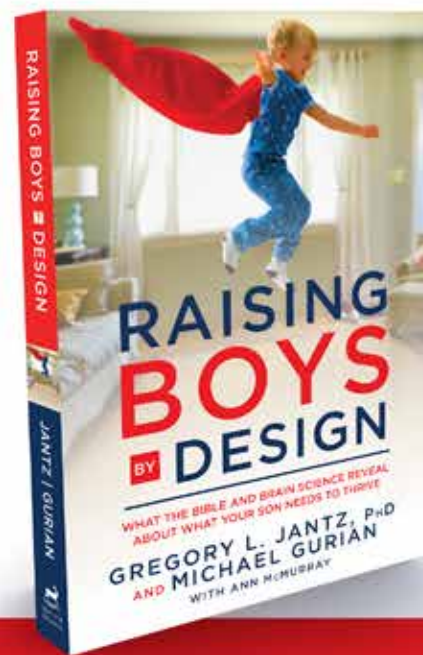


### Banana Oatmeal Cookies

- 3 ripe bananas
  - 2 cups old fashioned oats
  - ¼ cup applesauce
  - ½ teaspoon cinnamon
  - ¼ teaspoon salt
  - ½ cup raisins (optional)
- Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Mash bananas in a bowl. Mix in the remaining ingredients. Allow the mixture to sit for 10 minutes. Using a mini ice cream scoop or tablespoon, place the batter on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Bake for 25 minutes. Cool and serve.

To make into bars, place dough in a greased 8.5 x 11 dish and bake for 35-40 minutes. Cool completely before cutting.

**Tammy Darling** has 1,000 published articles and writes from her home in Three Springs, Pa., where she homeschools her four daughters. The whole family loves to "mix it up" by creating new recipes.



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# FIT MOMMY Workouts

By Branda Polk

*When you're expecting, your body is home to your baby. You think about, eat for, and focus on the baby.*

**B**ut, after your little one arrives, now what? When new moms care for their own health, they are stronger and better equipped to care for their babies and families. In addition to exercise, be sure to drink plenty of water. Choose to eat a wide variety of minimally processed whole grains, low-fat dairy, lean proteins, and plenty of fruits and vegetables. Limit simple sugars, processed, and fried foods, which contain high calories and low nutritional value. The higher the quality of your nutrition, the healthier you will be.

Before beginning any post-pregnancy activity, follow the guidance of your doctor when deciding to return to exercise. Every mom and every pregnancy/birth is unique. When you are released, have a wide variety of fun exercise options available to fit your ever changing schedule. One day you may have 10 minutes; the next you may have

45 minutes. Consider the following exercise options to stay fit and strong even with a new baby.

## **GET OUTSIDE.**

**Take a speedy walk with baby in the stroller.** Add challenges to your walk by climbing hills and doing short bursts of light jogging as you get stronger. Walk for 20-45 minutes.

**Stairs and Squats.** Using your front porch steps (5-7 steps) or at a local sports complex with bleachers, go up the stairs, perform 5 squats, go down the stairs and do 5 squats. Repeat the series for 10 repetitions or for a time interval of 60-90 seconds. Add hand weights as you get stronger. (Psst: This is good inside too!)

## **STAY INSIDE.**

**Use a workout DVD.** The Advocare "Can You 24" DVD offers seven different "no equipment necessary"



workouts all showing three fitness levels and only 24 minutes long. Perfect for busy moms to workout during naptime and continue improving fitness as the baby is older. (Available at [www.advocarewellnessconnection.com](http://www.advocarewellnessconnection.com).)

Fitness expert, Patricia Friberg, ([www.patriciafriberg.com](http://www.patriciafriberg.com)) offers Belly Beautiful Postnatal Workout as a fusion of cardio, Pilates, and sculpting workouts to reshape your post-baby body.

**Dance.** Put on your favorite upbeat music, hold your baby closely and dance for 10-15 minutes. Sway side to side, Cha-Cha, "grapevine," and tap your heels to the music. Moving consistently for 10-15 minutes will raise your heart rate and extra burn calories.

**Strength training with household items.** Use the following exercises to build muscle strength. Remember to use control, good

*Follow the guidance of your doctor when deciding when to return to exercise.*





PHOTO: THINKSTOCK

form, and breathe throughout each exercise.

**1. Wide Squats with Soup Can Curls and Press.** Stand with feet wider than hips and toes pointed outward. Hold a soup can in each hand. Reach arms down as you bend the knees to squat. Curl the can to the shoulders as you stand up. Raise your heels as you press the cans toward the ceiling. Lower the heels as you bring the cans to the shoulders. Extend the arms and squat again. Repeat for 10-20 repetitions. Complete two to three sets.

**2. Step Back Lunges with a Dictionary Press.** Stand with feet together and hold a dictionary or other large book at chest level. Step back with the left foot into a lunge while pressing the dictionary away

**Have a wide variety of fun exercise options available to fit your ever-changing schedule.**

from the chest. Step the left foot forward pulling the dictionary to the chest (starting position.) Repeat on right leg. Complete 10-20 repetitions for two to three sets.

### 3. "Laughing Baby"

**Crunches:** Lie on your back on the floor. Raise your knees over your hips and place the baby on your shins. Hold the baby's hands and perform an abdominal crunch by raising your head and shoulders from the floor. Hold the crunch for a slow count of two and slowly return to the floor. Keep the abdominals tight as you lift and lower the upper body. Keep the lower legs raised supporting the baby through the whole exercise.

**Branda Polk** is a certified personal fitness trainer in Rock Hill, S.C. that exercised with all four of her boys when they were babies. Now she lifts weights and runs to keep up with her active boys who are now 21, 18, 9, and 7.

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# 5 Amazing Autumn Adventures

By Kristen White

## Pick It!

**Pumpkin Patch.** Fall is a perfect time to find a local farm to enjoy. Let your kids pick the biggest pumpkin they can find or choose several small ones.

**Apple Picking.** Take home a bushel of apples. Compare the colors, sizes, and smells of apple varieties.

## Trek It!

**State Park Hike.** State parks boast the best natural, free fun. (Take along supplies to make tree bark rubbings!)

**Run a 5K Race.** 5Ks aren't really as intimidating as they sound — and often promote a good cause. Check out regional races that would allow your family to jog/walk at your own pace. Be intentional about taking time to walk together in preparation for the race. There's no better time to focus on physical fitness, right before the food-heavy holidays.

## Hunt It!

**Corn Maze.** Scavenger Hunt (This game would be a winner at a bonfire!) Kids like the challenge of a corn maze (stay with younger children at all times) or build your own outdoor maze with hay bales (use a blindfold for older kids). Make a scavenger hunt by hiding fall items such as an apple, pumpkin, scarecrow, and mum around the yard (or house), placing a hint on each one about which item to look for next.

## Make It!

**Paint a pumpkin.** Affix a large leaf to one side and spray gold paint around it; remove the leaf when the paint is dry. Draw crazy faces with paint pens. Or dip the pumpkin in white and splatter it with fall colors using an old toothbrush.

**Make Apple Dumplings.** To make apple dumplings, roll fresh apple slices in refrigerated crescent roll dough, then pour a sweet butter sauce over them. Check out this and other apple recipes on our blog ([blog.lifeway.com/parentlife](http://blog.lifeway.com/parentlife)).

## Play It!

**Pin the Leaf on the Tree.** For fun rainy-day activities, cut a tall tree out of an old cardboard box or brown butcher paper. Have kids take turns trying to tape paper leaves to the branches.

**Marble and Coin Tricks.** Help your child search family-friendly websites for marble, coin, or silly human tricks they've never tried. Or crack open a board game you haven't played in a while.

**Kristen White** loves playing and praying with her husband and four kids in Shelbyville, Ky., where they attend First Baptist Church. Catch some encouragement on her blog at [www.womenwithroots.com](http://www.womenwithroots.com).





# Grow

*Guidance for the stages of your child's life*

**30 Super Siblings**

**32 Products That Grow With Your Baby**

**36 A Difference Only a Father Can Make**





# SUPER SIBLINGS

Laying the Foundation for Strong Sibling Bonds

*By Jodi Skulley*



I love watching my kids interact with each other. Ten-month-old Brooklyn adores her 4-year-old brother, Jack! And Jack is pretty fond of her too. The first Sunday we took Brooklyn to the baby class at church, I came out to find Jack in the middle of a total meltdown. He was not happy that we were leaving his little sister!

## Sibling Benefits

There are plenty of benefits to positive sibling relationships. Preschool siblings entertain each other. School-age siblings can share hobbies and help each other learn new skills. As teenagers and adults, they can support each other through thick and thin. With all of these benefits in mind, encourage a healthy bond between your children by laying a solid foundation from the beginning.

## Complicated Emotions

Introducing a new baby into the family can be complicated. Your older child will go through a whirlwind of conflicting emotions — excitement, confusion, jealousy, even anger. The way your child expresses these emotions will depend on her age and personality. Your toddler may not understand why you can't hold him as much as you used to. Your nurturing daughter may be so thrilled to have a baby to help care for that she gets in the way. Your high energy son may feel resentment when he has to be quiet while the baby is sleeping. These feelings are normal and will settle down as your child adjusts to your growing family. The most important thing you can do is to express your love for your child as often as you can.

## Before Baby's Arrival

1. *Plan ahead.* If your child is still in a crib and you plan on using the crib for the baby, make the transition to a big-kid bed as early as possible. If your child is used to Mommy putting her to bed every night, start having Daddy do bedtime every once in a while. This will allow for a smoother bedtime routine once the baby arrives.

2. *Talk it up.* Once your pregnancy begins to show, explain what is going on in your body in an age-appropriate way. Let your child touch your

belly and feel the baby kick. Prepare your child for changes that will take place in your house and your family when the baby arrives.

3. *Involve your child in the planning.* Let her suggest names for the baby. Let her help you shop for baby clothes. Allow her to help you paint the baby's nursery.

4. *Consider bribery!* Prepare a simple present from the baby to give your child. Have it ready to give to your child when he comes to the hospital to meet the baby for the first time.

## After Baby's Arrival

1. *Let your child "help" take care of the baby.* Have her bring a diaper when the baby needs to be changed or to throw away the dirty diaper. Ask her to bring the baby's favorite toy when he is fussing. Make her feel as involved as she wants to be in the baby's daily care.

2. *Sneak in quality time.* While nursing your baby, read a book with your older child. Use the baby's naptime as one-on-one playtime. Let Daddy take care of the baby one afternoon while you take your child out for ice cream.

3. *Avoid throwing down extra rules.* It's tempting to say, "Don't play with Baby's toys. Don't eat Baby's food." Instead, be open to the idea that your child is curious about all of these new things in his world. Let him explore some of the baby's toys and taste the baby's food if he is interested.

4. *Encourage your child to interact with the baby with close supervision.* A simple game of peek-a-boo can go a long way in building a friendship. Help your child teach the baby new things, such as waving bye-bye.

Nothing will guarantee that your children will be best friends forever, but these things should lay the foundation for a positive start. I pray that my children's love for each other will only grow over the years. I know there will be bumps in their relationship along the way, but for now, I'm soaking up the blessing of having two children that love each other.

**Jodi Skulley** works full-time as a stay-at-home mom to her two kiddos, Jack and Brooklyn. Before staying at home, she was the Content Editor of *ParentLife*. She is excited to be on the flip side of the editor/writer relationship!

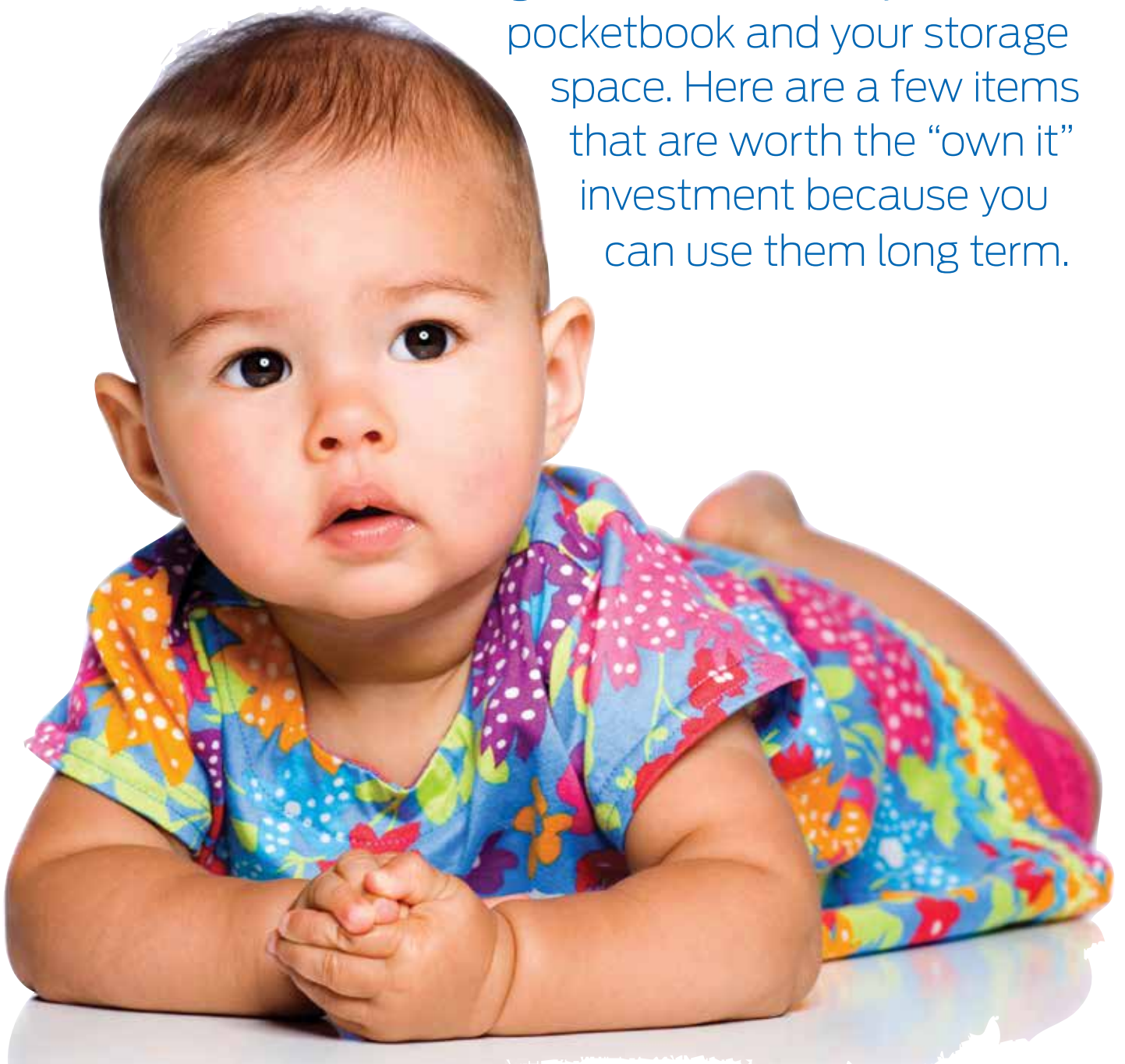
YOUR OLDER CHILD  
WILL GO THROUGH A  
WHIRLWIND OF CON-  
FLICTING EMOTIONS.  
EXPRESS YOUR LOVE  
FOR YOUR CHILD AS  
OFTEN AS YOU CAN.

# For the Long Term

## *Products that Grow With Your Baby*

..... By Joy Fisher .....

You've already discovered that borrowing baby gear you'll only need for a few weeks or months is a good idea, both for your pocketbook and your storage space. Here are a few items that are worth the "own it" investment because you can use them long term.







### So Easy Storage Trays (Fresh Baby)

Freeze pureed baby food or expressed breast milk into single-serving sizes in these stackable, dishwasher-safe trays. Lids eliminate spills and odors. As baby grows, use the trays for fruit juice cubes or toddler snacks. Set of two trays and lids retails for \$13.95 at [www.freshbaby.com](http://www.freshbaby.com).



### Mom — A Mother's Journal (Journals Unlimited, Inc.)

Two hundred pages in a spiral bound book offers a fill-in-the-blank format for recording baby's milestones and mom's remembrances of infancy and beyond. Sells for \$18.95 at [www.journalsunlimited.com](http://www.journalsunlimited.com).



### New Dad 2013 Journal (Cafe Press)

Customize the inside pages of this spiral bound journal so that dad can jot down memories of the first months and years of his child's life. Choose from lined, dotted, task sheet, or dot grid paper. Find it for \$12.50 at [www.cafepress.com](http://www.cafepress.com).

### Grand Central Diaper Tote (Skip Hop)

This stylish mommy bag goes everywhere, even after baby outgrows diapers. Three sections and 11 pockets include 2 exterior zip compartments to tote everything from baby bottles to mom's phone and sunglasses. View colors and features at [www.skiphop.com](http://www.skiphop.com). Retail for \$90.



### Healthy Care Deluxe Booster Seat (Fisher-Price®)

When your child is ready for a high chair, he's ready for this portable booster seat. Strap it onto any chair at home or away. You'll love the feeding tray; when it's clean, attach the snap-on cover to keep it in sanitized condition. A sturdy three-point harness keeps baby secure until he outgrows the chair at 50 pounds. Retail for about \$30. Learn more at [www.fisher-price.com](http://www.fisher-price.com).





### ShuPeas Baby Shoes

Expandable and adjustable baby shoes means that one size fits most kids up to 18 months! The trick is straps and Velcro to provide a custom fit around the ankles and toes. View a video of how the soft soled shoes work at [www.shupeas.com](http://www.shupeas.com). Several colors are available for prices between \$29 and \$32.

### White Hot® Inflatable Safety Duck Tub (Munchkin)

Everybody loves a rubber ducky, and this inflatable one makes bathtime fun. For safety, a disk inside the tub turns white when water is too hot for baby. The textured bottom stabilizes the ducky in the tub. The inflatable design makes it great for travel. Recommended for ages 6 to 24 months. Find it for about \$15 on [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).



### WaterResistant Blanket (Tuffo)

The top side of the blanket is cotton (choose from 10 designs). The bottom of the blanket is water-resistant nylon. Inside is a cushion of polyester batting. It's plenty big at 54 inches by 84 inches and folds easily into a carry-along pouch. This is a great surface for baby play at home, and the family can use it at the beach or the park for years to come. Go to [www.tuffo.com](http://www.tuffo.com). Lists for \$41.95.



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# Alpine Helen/White County Georgia

Old World towers, gingerbread trim, traditional German foodstuffs and strasses and platzes spilling over with Scandinavian goods. A natural beauty perched on the Chattahoochee River in the Northeast Georgia Mountains, Helen-White County is home to a flourishing arts community: glass shops, art studios and, specifically, The Sautee Nacoochee Center: Visual and Performing Arts, the Helen Arts and Heritage Council, the Folk Pottery Museum of Northeast Georgia. Attractions include shopping at more than 150 shops, the world's largest Alpine model railroad museum at Charlemagne's Kingdom, Sautee-Nacoochee with the nostalgic Old Sautee Store and Babyland General Hospital home of the Cabbage Patch Kids, a family-friendly retail store/gift shop/entertainment complex where you can feed the goats, and mine for gemstones. For Dining and Lodging options visit us at [www.helenga.org](http://www.helenga.org) or call 1-800-858-8027.



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# THE DADDY Difference

By Brian Dembowczyk

*Some verses in the Bible should knock the breath right out of a father. First Samuel 2:12 is one of them.*

The book of 1 Samuel opens with a stark contrast between a faithful mother named Hannah and a failed father named Eli. While Hannah was willing to do whatever it took to raise up her son, Samuel, in a way that pleased God, it seems that Eli the priest took a different approach to parenting. First Samuel 2:12 summarizes Eli's success as a father:

*“Eli's sons were wicked men; they had no regard for the LORD.”*

That verse should send a shiver down the spine of a father. Eli had one chance to raise his sons right and for reasons unknown to us, he blew it.

As fathers, we have a biblical mandate by God to be leaders in our homes. We have been given the great responsibility and privilege to lead our children spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, and physically. Our love for God and our children should be more than enough motivation for us to work hard in this role; however, there are a number of practical considerations as well. Research indicates that children are healthier and happier, including being less prone to experience depression and exhibit disruptive behavior, when their fathers are involved in raising them. In addition, fathers who nurture and play with infants, have children with higher IQs, better linguistic and cognitive capabilities, and do better in school.

*As a father, you have the opportunity to demonstrate godly, healthy masculinity to your child.*



Here are three ways you can be involved and make a lasting difference in your child:

## **1. Model godly manhood.**

Here's an understatement: God designed men and women differently. The problem is that society is rejecting this fundamental truth and trying to blur the gender line, most notably by chipping away at biblical manhood. It's not surprising that just like every other time when people stray from God's blueprint, the family and society are suffering as a result.

As a father, you have the opportunity to demonstrate godly, healthy masculinity to your child. Your child needs to see you embrace your role as a servant-leader in your home and to be a strong, bold, man who is also emotionally open, compassionate, and loving.

Practically, fathers tend to play differently with infants and pre-schoolers than mothers. Fathers offer more stimulating and playful





PHOTO: VEER

interaction with a child, which balances a mother's more nurturing style.

## 2. Love your wife.

Perhaps the greatest way you can make a difference in your child's life is to develop a quality relationship with your wife. As you love and respect your wife, you will demonstrate how a son should treat girls and women and how a daughter should be treated by boys and men.

Another way to make a positive difference in your child's life is by modeling healthy conflict resolution with your wife. Many children act out in unhealthy ways during conflict because they have not been taught how to handle it properly. Show your child how you and your wife handle conflict in a godly way.

In addition, when you affirm your love for your wife, you give her the confidence, support, and proper attitude to be a better mother.

*Fathers who nurture and play with infants have children with higher IQs, better linguistic and cognitive capabilities, and do better in school.*

## 3. Spend plenty of time with your child.

An old adage suggests that fathers should pursue quality time, not quantity with their children. Quite frankly, that's terrible advice. Fathers who want to impact a child's development need to pursue both quality and quantity time together. It takes time for you to get to know your child and for your child to get to know you. Additionally, it takes time for you to learn how to better care for your child. In short, there is no substitute for spending ample time with your child.

Play with your child and have fun together. Complete chores, clean the house, or work in the yard together. Help with homework. Just spend time together doing something — anything. Your child hungers to be with you. Your child needs to be with you. The more time you spend with your child, the bigger the difference you will make.

**Brian Dembowczyk** is the pastor of discipleship at First Baptist Church of Tampa, Fla. Brian and his wife, Tara, have three children, Joshua (8), Hannah (5), and Caleb (1).

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**Don't hide your sadness. Your child will sense it.**

**Q** I hear my son saying negative things about himself because he has been bullied at school. What can I do to boost our child's morale and improve his self-esteem?

**A** Once parents understand the profiles associated with bullies and victims, they can effectively intervene to prevent both. In 2010, the American Academy of Pediatrics published a study in which researchers reviewed 153 studies on bullying over the past 30 years. What they found was that bullies and victims share similar traits. Both lack social problem-solving skills and feel awkward and uncomfortable among their peers. So the take away here for parents is to address these issues: Take a course in behavioral parent training. Positive parenting skills can be learned. Regularly praise your son for the things he does well, teach the behaviors you want your child to practice (don't just expect those behaviors to magically appear), and discipline without shaming. In addition, children and parents should practice specific ways to handle bullying and problems. The goal is to learn better problem-solving skills. Work on your own skills in getting along with others. Be more positive and create a home environment that is upbeat and positive.

**Q** I had a miscarriage a few weeks ago and I had not told our 3-year-old son that I was pregnant. Now that this has happened, he sees me crying and wants to know what's wrong. Do I tell him?

**A** Honesty is always best, but you do not need to go into much detail with a young child. He can't process the complexities of death. Usually, it is best to answer a child's questions and let him take the lead. Children's responses vary from showing little interest to asking a multitude of questions. Don't hide your sadness because your child will sense it. You can tell your son that the baby you were carrying must have been very sick and is now in heaven with God. Nothing he did or mom or dad did made this happen. This is why you feel sad. But God and daddy are helping you with these sad feelings. It is helpful for a child to see how mourning happens. Save your intense feelings for a time when you have privacy. Young children do not understand the intensity of grief and it can be frightening to see grief unleashed, so let out those feelings with your husband and in prayer.

**Dr. Linda Mintle**, a licensed marriage and family therapist, is the author of 16 books including, *Raising Healthy Kids in an Unhealthy World*.

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For more Q&As from Dr. Linda Mintle, visit [www.lifeway.com/parentlifeblog](http://www.lifeway.com/parentlifeblog).

PHOTO: iSTOCK



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## Pacifiers

Pacifiers are useful as they can have a soothing or relaxing effect on your baby. If you are nursing wait until your baby is 3 or 4 weeks old before offering a pacifier to allow time for breastfeeding to get well established. Only offer a pacifier once you are sure your baby is no longer hungry. It has also been shown that pacifiers may reduce the incidence of SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) when given during naps or at bedtime.



## Breast milk and immune function

Breastfeeding protects your baby against colds, ear infections, digestive woes, allergies, and other illnesses. Now there are clues about how this protective effect works. Researchers discovered that breast milk boosts the growth of “good” intestinal bacteria. The friendly microbes not only help absorb nutrients, they actually help to develop infants’ immune systems.

## Don't be *angry!*

Your baby tunes in to your moods. Be aware not to speak in a harsh or sarcastic tone to or in front of your baby when you're having a bad day, but also be honest. Your baby may not understand every word you say, but talking calmly about your disappointment will help her feel secure rather than fearful — and helps you process and keep perspective in a healthy way.

Grrrr...





## SAFE SLEEPING

Do your best to prevent SIDS and provide a safe sleeping environment for your baby.

- Place your baby on her back to sleep. Use a firm sleeping surface for your baby to sleep. Use cribs, bassinets, and play yards that meet current safety standards (visit [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov) for more information).
- Keep objects, such as pillows, blankets, bumper pads, and stuffed toys, out of the crib.
- Do not sleep in the same bed as your baby.
- Keep your baby away from second-hand smoke.
- Keep your baby from getting too hot.

## HAVE A SAFE FALL!

During the month of October you will probably have several opportunities to participate in Fall Festival or Trunk or Treat type activities in your community or at your church. And if you are like many parents, you will want to dress your baby up in a costume. As a father, God has given you the responsibility of protecting your family from harm and there are certainly dangers lurking about during this season. Here are three ways you will need to protect your baby:

**1) Costumes.** When you choose a costume for your baby, look for one that does not have any choking hazards. Examine the costume for anything that can be torn off and swallowed or anything that might restrict his breathing while wearing it.

**2) Candy.** While your baby is too young to eat the candy associated with this season, he doesn't know that. Most babies will put pretty much anything they can in their mouths. Monitor what your baby can grab to protect him from choking on candy or small toys.

**3) Fear.** Your baby will see things he has never seen before during this season. There is a good chance that he will be frightened by what he sees, even if the costumes are not scary ones. Be ready to protect your baby by shielding his view of the costumes that frighten him. You may need to even walk with him away from the event.



## Bath Support (Angelcare)

An anti-slip guard holds this plastic bath support in place in the tub. Water flows through the sturdy mesh, so it is easy to clean and dries fast (and hangs by a hook) when not in use. Designed for newborns up to 6 months of age; max weight is 30 pounds. Sells for \$29.99 at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).



## Milestones for DEVELOPMENT

Some physical development milestones your 2-year-old should be doing include:

- Running
- Kicking and throwing a ball
- Walking up and down steps while holding on
- Standing on tiptoes
- Climbing on or off furniture without help

## JUST A LITTLE JUICE

Toddlers tend to like juice, but it can contribute to tooth decay and tummy troubles. Two kinds of carbohydrates in juice, fructose and sorbitol, can sometimes cause bloating, gas, and diarrhea. Apple juice, which is a kid favorite and a frequent ingredient in many juice blends, is a common culprit. Four ounces of 100 percent fruit juice per day is plenty for a toddler. Dilute it half and half with water to make it less sweet.

## Parenting Together

Most babies are quite dependant on their mothers, making it challenging for fathers to be equally involved in parenting early on. As a child becomes a toddler though, fathers can easily assume a more active role in parenting.

Your wife probably has an effective system for taking care of your toddler, and you might think that she doesn't need your involvement or that you might mess up her system. Resist the urge to passively allow her to continue carrying the bulk of parenting responsibilities. If you're not sure how to help, ask her. Share your concerns and work out a system together where you can parent together.







## HEALTHY EMOTIONS

Before toddlerhood, you probably hid your emotions well from your baby. Now, your inquisitive toddler may see you cry or lose your cool. How can you be honest about your feelings without overburdening your young child?

- ★ Remember you are a human, not a robot. Let yourself cry, laugh, and say you're disappointed.
- ★ Do not take out frustration on your spouse or children. Even if they've done something extreme, tearing down people in your immediate family will not solve the crisis you face.
- ★ Try to treat strong disappointment matter-of-factly. Putting your disappointment into a child-friendly explanation often helps diffuse overbearing emotions.
- ★ Do not explain details about disappointing situations to your child. Remember that she is your child, not your best friend.
- ★ Remember to celebrate God's goodness and answers to prayer. Don't take for granted what He does each day.
- ★ Put your baby in a safe place like a playpen, while you are dealing with an unexpected, frustrating problem, like cleaning a spill or talking on the phone.
- ★ Watch your eating and sleeping patterns. When you are sleep-deprived or have low blood sugar because you've waited too long to eat, tempers flare more easily. Taking care of yourself really does help you be the best for those around you.
- ★ Give yourself and others grace. Enjoy the ups and downs of life and the experience of being a parent. No one has ever done it perfectly, but you can parent well.

### Barnyard Babies Gertie Balls (Small World Toys)

The four balls in this set are made of a soft, safe material that feels just a bit "sticky" to make them easy for little ones to grasp. Your baby can hold the ball, then walk around with the ball, then learn to roll or throw the ball. Choose from a cow, sheep, pig, or duck for \$7.99 each. Go to [www.shop.smallworldtoys.com](http://www.shop.smallworldtoys.com).



## Ear Infections

What is it? Your child's ear may become infected when her Eustachian tube becomes blocked and fluid begins to accumulate in her middle ear. Then bacteria begins to grow, causing pressure on the eardrum and resulting in pain for your child. Who gets it? Younger children more commonly get ear infections than middle or older children.

How do you diagnose it? A pediatrician must diagnose an ear infection by using an otoscope.

How do you treat it? Your pediatrician may prescribe antibiotics to fight the infection and acetaminophen or ibuprofen to help ease your child's pain.



## FLU Season

*Protect your child against the flu with these tips:*

- Take your child to get the flu vaccine every year.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Encourage your child to wash her hands often with soap and water and sing the “Alphabet Song” while lathering up.
- Teach your child to avoid touching her eyes, nose, and mouth and to sneeze into her elbow (not her hands).
- Clean doorknobs, faucets, countertops, toys, and other surfaces often touched. Wipe them down with a household disinfectant.
- Launder sheets, blankets, pillowcases, and stuffed animals often.

### A DAD'S PRAYER

**Here's a suggested prayer for fathers:**  
“God, help me lead, protect, and show Your love to my family today. Give me three opportunities to serve You, my wife, and my children before I go to sleep tonight. Thank You for blessing me with my family. Amen.”

### Learning Forgiveness

Preschoolers get frustrated fast. They also move on quickly — sometimes without apologizing when they've said something mean or lost their temper. Help your preschooler learn to say,  
“I'm sorry for \_\_\_\_\_.  
Will you forgive me?”



## Media Time

Children in the United States on average are exposed to 4 hours of TV a day. Too much screen time can affect your child's brain development. Children learn best from parental interaction and unstructured play which teaches them to think creatively. It is recommended that toddlers spend no more than 2 hours a day in front of a screen whether it is the TV or computer.





## HUNGER and FULLNESS

**Q** Lately my 3-year-old says “I’m hungry” throughout the day. Should I give her more than three meals and a couple of snacks?

**A** Probably not. If your daughter didn’t eat much at her last meal, she may be truly hungry. But if she consumed a decent amount, there could be something else at play. Sometimes preschoolers confuse hunger with other feelings. At times she may ask for food when she’s thirsty instead. Or she may be bored, tired, or want your attention, but isn’t sure how to put those feelings into words.

This is a great age to teach your daughter about hunger and fullness. When your daughter says she’s hungry and you suspect she isn’t experiencing physical hunger, tell her the next meal or snack will be coming soon. Offer her some water, then redirect her attention to an activity and see if the hunger disappears. If not, offer a small amount of fruit. Teach your child to listen to her tummy. Talk about how your stomach feels when it’s rumbling and empty versus full and satisfied. At mealtime, model it for her. Say “I’m full — that means it’s time to stop eating,” and put your fork down.

Make meals a relaxing, unhurried time where everyone enjoys their food. Teach your child to chew each bite thoroughly. Eating slowly allows enough time for the brain to send the “full” signal to the tummy.

### About Face (eeBoo)

Over 150 photos of common objects are depicted on card strips. Kids can arrange the strips into millions of different configurations to make silly faces, expressive faces, and fascinating faces. For ages 3 and up. Retail for \$14.95 at [www.geniusbabies.com](http://www.geniusbabies.com).



# GrowthSpurts.....6to8 Years



## Put a lid on it

How often does your child slurp sugary drinks? Sugar-sweetened beverages — soda, sports drinks, energy drinks and fruit-flavored drinks — contribute over 46 percent of the added sugars in the American diet.

Drinking lots of sugar-laden drinks has already been linked to childhood obesity. Now a new study suggests sugar-sweetened liquids may affect a child's heart health, too. Higher intake of sugary beverages by kids was linked to cardiovascular disease risk factors: lower HDL (good cholesterol) and higher C-reactive protein (an indicator of inflammation.) It might be time to put a lid on sugary drinks.

## TEMPERATURE TIPS

**Q:** Now that my child is older, how do I correctly check his temperature?

**A:** You can use a digital thermometer to take your older child's temperature orally. Clean the thermometer with rubbing alcohol or by washing it with warm, soapy water. Press the "on" button and place the tip of the thermometer under your child's tongue toward the back of his mouth. Hold it in place until it beeps; then check the digital reading. Be sure to wait to take your child's temperature at least 15 minutes after your child has had food or drink.



## I'M SORRY

Those words come out of the mouth begrudgingly at times, but when sincere, an apology shows your child has empathy. Apologizing shows respect for the other person's feelings. The child feels bad for something that he said or did to hurt another person. Apologizing helps make things right again.



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**AUTHORIZED Disney VACATION PLANNER**







## ***Moving Matters***

A recent study found that kids who got more daily exercise had a lower percentage of body fat. Makes sense, right? But surprisingly, the amount of time children were sedentary, such as watching TV or lying around, did not affect body fat. It appears exercise helps keep kids lean, even if they're inactive much of the day.

## **Preteens & Kidney Stones**

Did you know that kidney stones most often occur in adolescents, especially girls? It's true! Kidney stones in preteens can be due to:

- Diet
- Lack of fluid
- Specific inherited problem
- Urine flow blockage
- Kidney infection

The most common symptom of kidney stones is sudden and severe pain in the back or side, often accompanied with nausea and vomiting. Kidney stones are detected through x-rays or ultrasounds. Your doctor will discuss treatment options. To prevent kidney stones, be sure your preteen drinks a lot of water every day and limits salt.



## **Get Movin'!**

Children should have at least 60 minutes of physical activity a day. In addition to improving health, an ongoing survey of youth demonstrated that children who were more physically active were more likely to have better grades in school.





## Divorce Care

The impact of divorce on kids is usually felt over two to three years. A few things can be done to cushion the pain from a failed marriage, however, moms and dads should take care of themselves first. Think of it like the instructions for the oxygen mask on an airplane. Adults are supposed to strap theirs on first, so they are conscious to help their children. If you're not taking steps to help yourself, you won't be in a good position to help your children. Check out divorce care groups at local churches, and turn to family and friends for support. Keep some family traditions alive while working to make new memories.

Secondly, for the love of your children, keep them away from adult arguments. Research shows the level of parental

conflict kids are exposed to is the single biggest factor in their long term adjustment. So, zip the lip on snide remarks about your ex. Communicate with your former partner without using your kids as a go-between. Don't inquire about what's happening with your ex. Kids hate "spying" on the other parent.

Lastly, keep the dialogue going. Your child may blame you or your ex for the divorce. Be prepared to answer questions. Reassure them that they are not to blame. Check in with your children periodically because questions may come up that they hadn't thought of when they were younger. If you get too emotionally charged talking about the divorce, ask a friend or counselor to assist.

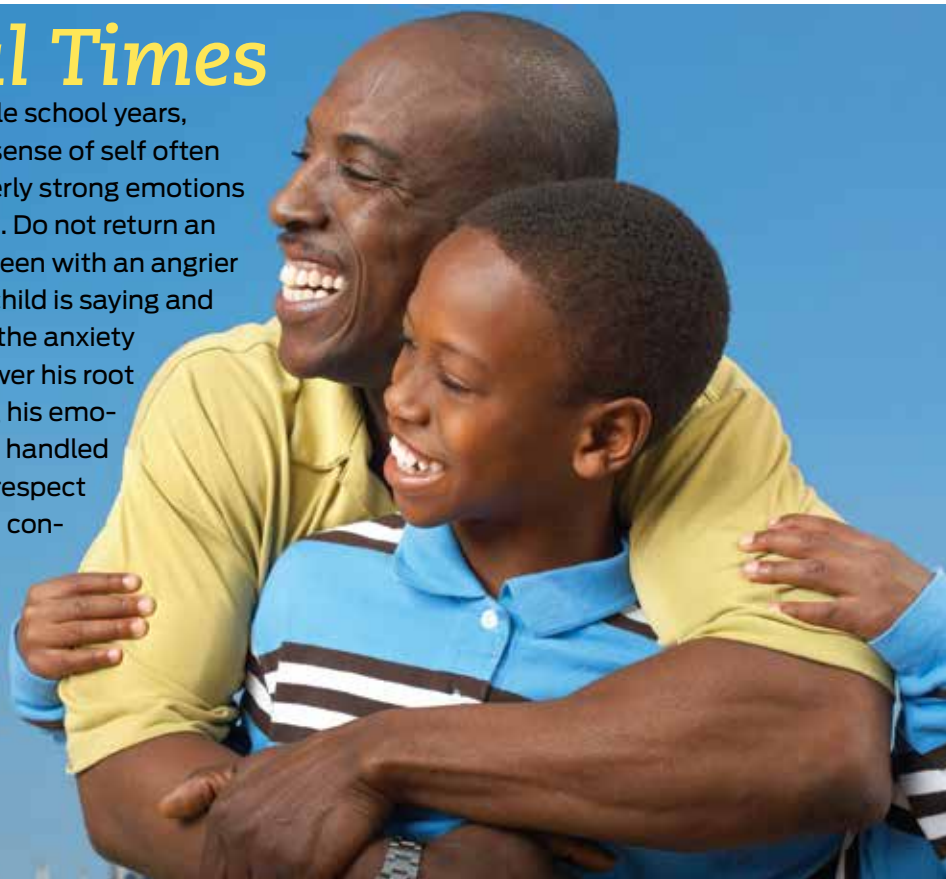
### Tantrix™ Match! (Family Games America)

Find the missing tiles to complete each partially-filled Tantrix puzzle card. Game developers say it trains a child's spatial and logic skills. With four levels of difficulty, we say it makes learning fun for the whole family. Suitable for ages 8 and up; \$14.99.



## Emotional Times

As they approach the middle school years, hormones and a changing sense of self often cause kids to react with overly strong emotions of anger or disappointment. Do not return an angry exchange from a preteen with an angrier exchange. Hear what your child is saying and try to discern the source of the anxiety behind his comments. Answer his root concerns without matching his emotions. Then address how he handled herself. Make clear that disrespect is not tolerated; that he can control his words; and that you care about him intensely. Ask him to practice thinking of another way he could have expressed his feelings. Pray with him about his concerns and his sense of worth.



## The Lord's Supper

Driving home from church one Sunday where we had just participated in the communion service, our 4-year-old son, Brian, asked, "Mommy why do they call it the Lord's Supper?" Trying to keep my answer simple, I said, "Well, because we have grape juice and a little cracker." After a few moments of silence, he said, "Well if they had orange juice and toast instead they could call it the Lord's Breakfast!"  
Jan Thomas — Fort Walton Beach, Fla.

## I Am

Around Easter, I read the Easter story from the Bible to my children. When I read about Jesus answering the high priest saying, "I am," I explained how He was affirming that He was God. A couple of days later I asked my 7-year-old if he was doing his chores. He replied, "Yes, I am. ... Well, I'm not God, but I am doing my chores."  
Tonya Russell — Reno, Texas

## Fruit or Veggie

On the drive home from the grocery store, my 6-year-old, William, asked his 5-year-old brother, Abe, "Did you know that a tomato is a fruit?" Abe ignored William, so William asked him louder. Abe calmly replied, "William, a banana is a fruit ... a tomato is a Bob!" Spoken like a true Veggie Tales junkie.  
Kelly Forsythe — Hattiesburg, Miss.

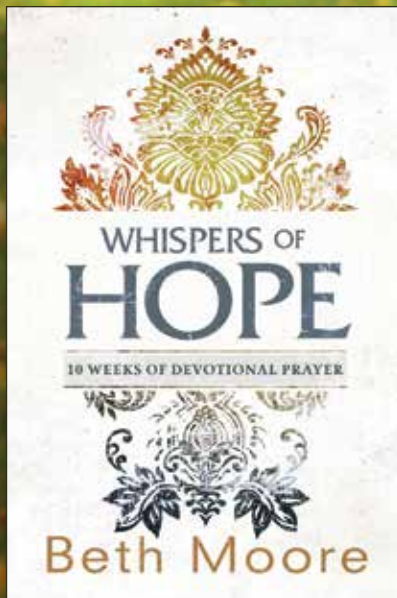
## CAN YOU TOP THESE STORIES?

Send us a funny and true story involving your child. Submit your story at [www.lifeway.com/parentlifeblog](http://www.lifeway.com/parentlifeblog) or e-mail your story to [parentlife@lifeway.com](mailto:parentlife@lifeway.com). If we publish your story, you will receive \$20. Please include your name, address, e-mail address, and daytime phone number. Submissions should be 25 to 150 words and will not be returned. Stories may be edited for clarity and length.



# New Releases From Beth Moore and Priscilla Shirer

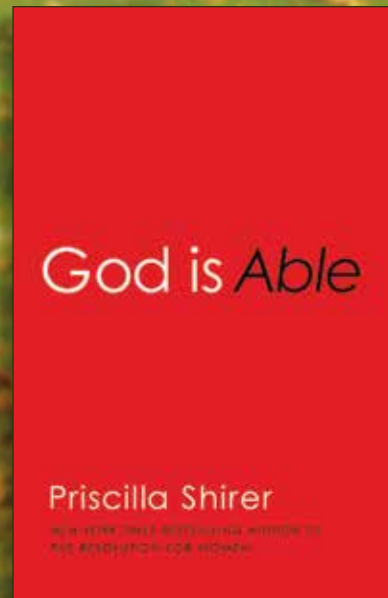
Available at Your Local LifeWay or Online at [LifeWay.com](http://LifeWay.com)



## **Whispers of Hope** Beth Moore

Best-selling author Beth Moore addresses important questions about prayer in this new devotional. *Whispers of Hope* features 10 weeks of devotionals that offer an easy to remember and apply method of prayer. Along the way she helps readers know how to pray, how to pray without ceasing, and where to start in talking to God. Each devotional is followed by a prompt to put the method of prayer into action.

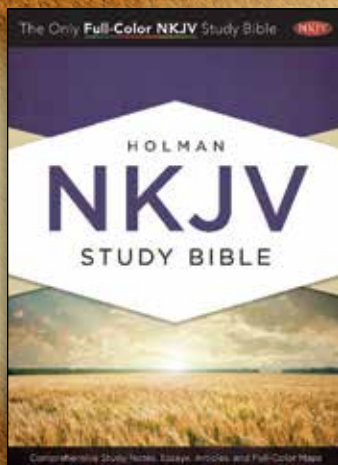
PB 005567167



## **God Is Able** Priscilla Shirer

Based on one of Priscilla Shirer's most popular speaking topics, *God Is Able* helps readers know where to turn when life seems overwhelming. In fact, it teaches reader to Whom to turn — an exceedingly almighty God who is our solid rock. Shirer applies Ephesians 3:20-21 to a wide range of challenging scenarios facing people today, leading women to the recurring answer each time: God is able.

PB 005591864



## OCTOBER IS **BIBLE MONTH** AT LIFEWAY

### **NEW! NKJ V Study Bible**

Modeled after the EPCA Christian Book Award-winning *HCSB Study Bible* and the *KJV Study Bible*, the *NKJV Study Bible* is ideal for any Bible reader who loves the poetic nature of the KJV translation but appreciates the updated language in the NKJV. Every illuminating study help is on the same spread as the related biblical text, helping you stay on the same page as God. It features 15,000 study notes, 141 photos, 62 time lines, 59 maps, articles, essays, and more.

HB 005569858

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