

Challenge

THE GOOD NEWS PAPER

No. 390



Brothers Joel and Luke Smallbone want women to know they are priceless

PRICELESS MESSAGE

Aussie pop-rock duo speak up for women in new film

Grammy-award winning brothers Joel and Luke Smallbone of *For King & Country* have been called “Australia’s answer to Coldplay” due to their inspirational pop melodies on the preciousness of life, love, and hope.

At the 2015 Grammys they garnered awards for their latest album ‘Run Wild. Live Free. Love Strong.’ and for the single ‘Messengers’ co-performed with rapper Lecrae.

Their hope-filled songs have been broadcast on popular TV shows like *Jimmy Kimmel Live*, *The Vampire Diaries* and *Drop Dead Diva*, and their 2012 album ‘Crave’ featured strongly on the Billboard and iTunes charts.

One inspirational message the Nashville-based brothers have long advocated is respect toward women.

During a 2014 tour Joel wore a necklace with an Australian one-cent coin, and told audiences, “Culture tells, particularly you ladies,

to talk... walk... dress, like a penny”, leaving women to feel like they are worthless.

This is a lie, Joel added. Instead women must see that they are “priceless”.

That powerful word is the title of a 2015 single, as well as a feature film out August 2016, starring Joel Smallbone, who has two previous film credits.

In this coming-of-age love story titled *Priceless: She’s Worth Fighting For*, Joel plays a young man who is partly responsible for his two sisters’ capture by sex traffickers before becoming a man willing to sacrifice everything to rescue them.

The film’s message that men should show true respect to women attracted a well-credentialed cast including Bianca Santos (*The Duff*), Jim Parrack (*True Blood*), and David Koechner (*Anchorman*).

The *Priceless* movie comes at a time when high-profile actresses and female sporting stars are concerned about underrepresentation, shallow interviewing, and sexist roles.

“In most movies that I see,” Luke observes, “it’s about what a woman can give a man, not how a man can treat a woman. I think [this film is] ...a total 180 on a different perspective.”

Born in Sydney, Australia to an entertainment manager father, and siblings of another Grammy-winning artist Rebecca St. James, the brothers grew up in a musical household in Nashville, Tennessee.

When they emigrated in 1991 they had little food and a rented house with no beds or chairs but the deeply committed Christian family had great faith in God, who answered their prayers without fail.

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HOW TO PARENT IN PUBLIC

BY SOPHIA SINCLAIR

“WILL YOU SHUT THAT KID UP, or will I?” a checkout man snaps at a hapless mother trying to calm her wailing child in the next checkout. “That’s what you get when you give kids whatever they want,” he says to me.

I see other people staring, shaking their heads and muttering. I feel a rush of sympathy for the mother doing her best under the gaze of judgment.

The public tantrums and loud cries of a young child will often tempt us to parent our children differently while we are in view of others.

This usually manifests in two ways: a lack of response, or a harsh response.

Sometimes I fail to respond because the temptations of distractions or laziness stop me from giving an intentional, meaningful response to my child.

Other times I feel the burn of eyeballs in my direction, and



imagine the judgmental thoughts shooting my way.

Imagined judgement often causes me to overreact, treating my child harshly in response.

Both of these responses are unhelpful.

The following thoughts have helped me greatly in my parenting journey.

I am uniquely qualified to raise and care for my son

I am with him day after day and know how he behaves in

public and in private.

I believe I was chosen for this task because God gave us the gift of a child, and He graciously made me a mother.

Yes, I often feel inadequate. Parenting is a hard, messy and often frustrating mission, but parenthood is an appointed role.

Take heart: God can equip parents for the task. He promises unconditional love and offers His wisdom freely to those who earnestly seek it.

Preparation sets a good foundation.

I’ve learnt to think ahead in order to anticipate what my son needs in certain situations. Making sure he is well-fed, well-rested and emotionally prepared has enabled us to get through long bus rides, flights and quiet meetings.

I try to talk to my son about what we can expect from different social situations, and how I expect him to behave when we arrive. Even very small children pick up on simple explanations. “We’re going to crèche where you can play with your friends” or “we will take a train ride before we get to the zoo.”

But sometimes – despite my best efforts – life gets in the way and I am forced to deal with the hard bits of public parenting: the poo explosions, the toddler meltdowns, the hungry cries and tired grizzles.

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STORY PAGE 3



Footy player back on track

ASHLEY HUMPHREY

It pays to be sure

BY ALAN BAILEY

WRONG INFORMATION can be deadly. Recent headlines tell of one hundred men being notified through pathology that they have tested positive for cancer. Many of these men had already been through treatment and thought they were clear. The new information sent them reeling. But it was wrong. Hurriedly the hospital contacted the men again, apologising that a mistake had been made. The tests were faulty.

In many matters it is vital to have the right information. Some danger areas immediately come to mind. You have heard it said that science has disproved the Bible and rules out the supernatural. This is simply untrue. Many prominent scientists are Christians. In fact, Christians have been involved in many fields of science throughout history. Actually, science helps to show the glory of God in creation.

Another common saying is that the Bible has been changed so many times over the years that it is nothing like it was when it was written. This can only be said out of complete ignorance. There are ancient manuscripts carefully kept. All translations are from documents that date well back to Bible times or near. Comparisons have been made and close checking done to keep the text as pure as possible. There is every reason to have confidence in the text.

You have also heard it said that all religions are the same. No one religion can claim any superiority over the others. It would take a long time



to show how overwhelmingly this is incorrect. Huge differences exist. Standing above all is the person of Jesus Christ. He is incomparable. No-one was anything like Him nor claimed to be. No other Saviour is offered. He stands alone having done all for us through death and resurrection.

Then there are those who feel that if they became a Christian, their lives would descend into joyless religious routine. Yet Jesus said "I came that you may have life and have it more abundantly (see John 10:10)." True life begins when we come to know Him in a personal way and entrust ourselves to Him. He is alive and able to meet us in our need. All in all, it pays to be sure.

PRICELESS MESSAGE

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Joel explained to YoungSalvationist.org, "We would sit in a circle and pray for everything, and we saw miraculous interventions."

On one Thanksgiving night Joel recalls they were invited to a meal with another home-schooling family.

"At the end of the night the father... said, 'We believe God's told us to give you a key to a new minivan.'"

Neighbours left food at the front porch, anonymous cheques arrived in the mail, and later the local church donated furniture they needed.

"As a boy, radical paradigm shifts were made in my understanding of the spiritual world, faith, prayer," Joel says.

The brothers observe that their birthplace Australia is mostly non-religious due to a "no worries" lifestyle as the economy, weather and life is "pretty good".

However, the family's struggles and his parents' proven faith showed Joel his need of God.

"C.S. Lewis said, 'Pain is God's megaphone to rouse a deaf world'," Joel says. "We were fortunate to grow up in a spiritual family."

Joel says that he and younger brother Luke mutually "crossed [the] threshold of releasing our lives to God (that is, faith in Jesus) when we were eight years old."

Luke admitted to MStarz.com that at age eight, "I was quite a liar."

One time his father asked him to apologise to his mother when, he says, "I kind of paused and said, 'I know I need Jesus in my life.' ...I realised that I have to absolutely have Jesus to be able to forgive those sins."

Luke prayed with his parents to give his life to Jesus and recalls, "That night... I'll never forget it was the best sleep I'd ever had, because... my soul felt free."

After two years of the family getting by with odd jobs, 16-year-old Rebecca landed a record deal.

The family began touring the country "like an Australian version of the Von Trapp family" according to the brothers, who provided the background vocals, spotlights, and



video production.

In 2005 Luke and Joel launched their own band and a record deal came two years later.

They say the vision of their songs and film roles is to always portray a sense of "redemption".

"When you boil it down, Jesus is about redemption (being delivered from our wrong doing)," Joel says.

Luke also believes that "If it wasn't for those trying times that we had, when we got here to America, we wouldn't be the people (or artists, says Joel) that we are today. Everything comes down to struggle."

Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Like the back of a hostile cat
- 4 Big brass
- 7 Has trouble with S's
- 8 Small lizard
- 10 Naval kitchen
- 12 Seek a seat
- 14 Banjo cousin
- 15 Athlete's foot e.g.
- 18 Stun gun
- 19 Remove facial hair
- 20 Make, as money
- 21 Smooth in speech

DOWN

- 1 ___ - bodied
- 2 Spanish clickers
- 3 Painting holder
- 5 Be plentiful
- 6 Like a crone
- 9 Be sociable at a party
- 11 Cousin of an ostrich
- 13 Shelled reptile
- 15 Decision point in a road
- 16 Congested sounding
- 17 Undershirt

SOLUTION PAGE 11

Sudoku

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 through 9.

Puzzle Level: Merium

		2				6		7
								5
8			7					4
	8			3				
4					1		7	
		3	6		7			
9	5		8			1	3	
			9					2
1						9		4

SOLUTION PAGE 11

HOW TO PARENT IN PUBLIC

• From page 1

Plan for failure

Preparedness is often as simple as being mentally prepared to remove my child from the situation when things go awry – sometimes a simple change of scenery helps.

During these times I am most tempted to react harshly. Sometimes I want to flop down on the floor and join the chorus of wailing cries! However, it is in the midst of the sweaty,



exasperated tantrums I am struck by an 'aha' realisation of God's goodness to me.

Yes – in Him I have forgiveness and his undeserved love. He bears my own childish wandering, my frustrated pleas to 'do' life my own way and the temper-tantrums of my heart. His gentleness and love guide me. His patience helps me endure—and extend patience to our son.

God's grace enables me to come down to my son's level, to make eye contact and respectfully acknowledge the situation: "I know you are upset, tell me what is wrong, I will listen." God's love allows me to be firm: "I cannot let you climb/touch/eat/throw/hit, it is too dangerous—I know this is frustrating."

God's patience helps me keep calm when I want the ground to swallow me up—because I know my worth is

not dependent on my child's behaviour. I have the confidence to take a deep breath and look the judgmental stranger in the eye, smile and say: "We all have bad days!"

Do I really know how to parent in public?

No: but I am learning. The Bible says God makes all things work together for the good of those who love Him.

Therefore, God is using this appointed role to shape me and mould me.

The varied moments of motherhood drive me to heartfelt prayer with my Heavenly Father through my Saviour Jesus.

Since I accepted Jesus and His love for me, I learn from the perfect parent: our loving Creator who is patient with us, holding out His arms for us to place all our trust in Him.

His patience helps me endure – and extend patience to our son

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Bold new song to sing

Singer-songwriter Melissa Crothers once hid her true identity but her new album reflects a determination to stand up for what she firmly believes in

It was a dream come true the day Mel Crothers found out she was among the 19 of 500 entrants accepted into Musical Theatre at the West Australian Academy of Performing Arts, which has produced stars like Hugh Jackman, Heath Ledger and Lisa McCune.

She loved the course but insecurities soon lead to low self-image.

"Whilst I had the giftedness to succeed I see now that, at age 17, I was just too young and I had a real need for acceptance and the approval of others," Mel says in retrospect.

"This need for acceptance, coupled with being immersed in an environment that was all about how you looked and performed resulted in me developing a dangerously negative body image."

While Mel never developed a serious eating disorder she became obsessed with measuring her food, counting every calorie and exercising for hours every day in an effort to "measure up to what I thought others desired".

Mel traces this insecurity about herself to events and decisions in her late childhood.

During struggles when she was 11, she remembers, "As a family we reached out to the (local Christian) church for help and the reality of there being a loving God who cared about me was realised."

The following year she committed her life to Jesus at an Easter camp, but as she looks back, she says, "I just wish now that I had committed wholeheartedly to Jesus from that young age and not 10 years later," she recalls.

She recalls being plagued by insecurities and hiding her faith from

all but a few friends in fear of being ridiculed.

"For many years I was a closet 'Sunday' Christian and not in true relationship with God," she admits.

"Sadly, hiding my faith meant that I compromised my values. I was never outrageously bad or dishonest but to feel accepted I chose to follow the crowd rather than honour God."

Things began to change when she met her now husband, Daron*.

"Daron also called himself a Christian but was not living in relationship with Christ. I truly believe the Lord had an amazing plan to draw us each to him through the influence of the other," she shares.

Over time their passion for music was coupled with their genuine desire to draw closer to God and they soon found their pursuit of Him caused life to change dramatically.

She realised that not only had Jesus forgiven all her wrongdoings, but, as she put her relationship with Him first, all of her worth came from His opinions of her.

"God has taken me from a place of gaining my self-worth from my

talents and other people to knowing and believing that my worth is found in Him and Him alone," she shares joyfully.

"Whilst I do all I can to be physically healthy and fit, my dress size doesn't matter. My talent is nothing if it's not glorifying God. And my value is only found in the One who created me. In Jesus I have found my true identity. I know from God's Word that I am fearfully and wonderfully made in the image of the Creator of the universe and He desires to have a relationship with me."

Although Mel never pursued a career in musical theatre, her and Daron have a passion to make God-honouring music and are regularly visiting churches to encourage others through their music.

"Although maybe not successful in the world's eyes I know that I am now using my gifts to make an eternal difference. Nothing in the life of those who trust in Jesus, whether good or bad, whether done in obedience or rebellion is ever wasted with God," she adds.



"I am privileged to be able to speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves," says Mel Crothers

Rather than hide her faith any longer, Mel has stepped out from the shadows to boldly share her new album *Faithful* which is available on iTunes.

"I am also privileged to be able to speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves as an advocate for child sponsorship organisation

Compassion. Knowing that through singing and sharing the songs that I write a child can be released from poverty in Jesus' name is such a thrill and blessing."

Find out more about Mel and her music at melcrothers.com.au

*You can search for Daron Crothers story at www.challenge.news.org

Footballer back on track

Depression and alcohol threatened to derail former VFL footballer Ashley Humphrey but today he thanks a club chaplain and some new friends for helping him rebuild his life.

"I played football for a number of years in the Victorian Football League with Essendon's Reserves side," Ash begins.

"I had very little direction in my life and drank very heavily, when football training and my playing schedule allowed me to.

"After my dad moved away I carried a lot of anger and really struggled with depression."

After high school the effect of Ash's poor decisions inspired a strong desire for an inward transformation.

"I was now really wanting more," Ash recalls. "I thought about the person I wanted to be and didn't know how to make changes in my life."

The development coach at Essendon asked chaplain Bruce Claridge to help Ash, so Bruce introduced Ash to some guys from the church he pastored.

"Honestly, before then no one had ever been so nice to me," Ash says.

"I was impacted by their kindness towards me and curious about the way they lived. They were normal guys and were so devoted to their faith."

About that time, Ash recalls getting very drunk at a party before driving himself and a girl he had just met home.



Ashley Humphrey says he has bounced back stronger than ever before

"I drove all over the place and was pulled over by the cops. After an hour at the police station they miraculously let me go.

"This was a strong catalyst for me that something needed to change in my life."

He occasionally attended church out of curiosity where Ash says his new Christian friends "encouraged me and inspired me by the way they lived their lives".

"They always seemed so upbeat, so passionate about life; I was the opposite, so I guess I wanted a piece of what they had.

"As I explored more I began to experience God's presence myself ... I found it very hard to ignore the fact that He is real."

Ash shares that He gave control of his life to the Lord Jesus Christ in 2008 and adds, "This was the best decision I have ever made."

"Behaviours in my life changed very quickly with little effort on my part. God also opened some amazing doors and exposed talent that had been dormant for a long time.

"I'm still far from perfect. I do stupid things at times, but every day I ask God to make me into a better man."

Five years ago Ash was bedridden with a serious illness for nine

months and yet he is grateful for what God did in that time.

"Ironically, in the midst of that illness, God brought healing into a range of areas in my life.

"As cliché as it may sound, in every difficulty God has enabled me to bounce back stronger and has made my life better for it."

The once reckless footballer is today a disciplined sportsman as he runs 800m track events at the Australian national level.

Ash strongly encourages people to thoroughly explore the truth about God.

"God knows us, loves us and wants the best for our lives. If you are willing to open your eyes to the reality of a loving Father God reveals to us through Jesus, and explore

His existence beyond the confines of mere theories, He will reveal Himself to you.

"If you choose to let Him in, you will have the most amazing life available to you!"



Ash playing with Essendon's Reserves

nudge WITH KARL FAASE

Not all debts are painless

Credit cards are a common part of the lives of people in wealthy nations. The access to easy credit means we don't have to wait for the things we want, we can get them now. And, if you're like me, you realise how easy it is to use a credit card - especially in the age of the 'tap and go'. It feels completely painless.

But anyone with a credit card knows that there is a day of reckoning, it's called the monthly account. All those easily bought goods now have to be paid for.

This is just like sin; dismissing God and following your own desires. It feels good in the short term doesn't it? Do what you like, pursue your desires, but there is a price to pay. First, there is the price of broken relationships, health and integrity from some of the choices you'll make.

Secondly, there will be a time to be accountable to God with everlasting consequences.

Search for the right father

Neglect and abuse caused Lisa Walker to believe that finding her biological father would complete her but it was another father that brought her true healing

"Even though I was happy to find my father, it didn't make my life complete the way I thought it would. Something was still missing," Lisa recalls.

Lisa was only two when her father was imprisoned for armed robberies and her mother was remarried to a violent alcoholic.

Apart from the vicious beatings Lisa received from her stepfather, she was made to feel unwanted because of the resemblance she had to her biological father.

"Everywhere we went my stepfather would always say to people, 'Oh, she's not my real kid'," she says.

The wounds from such comments stung and at age 13, when she found

out that everyone had lied to her about her father being dead when he was in fact alive, Lisa had had enough.

"Not out of rebellion, but out of my search for love and acceptance I turned to drugs, my new boyfriend, and running away from home," she explains.

"Almost overnight I went from a straight-A honour student to a juvenile delinquent."

At age 14 she ran away from home was, but was later located and sent home.

"With the pain of rejection, only being home two days, my stepfather told my mother that he couldn't stand to look at me any longer and it would either be me or him. She chose him," Lisa says.

After running away from her foster family she ended up in detention.

"My mother never came to visit even though she was allowed...no one ever did," she recalls sadly.

"We had one hour group sessions every day but I would never open up. I never revealed my biggest secret of all about my uncle molesting and raping me from four to eight years old."

"My mother and grandmother had told me to forget about it and to never ever tell anyone, but no matter how hard I tried I couldn't forget. I now wish that I had told someone, as I cried myself to sleep almost every night. I felt abandoned, rejected and so alone."

Due to good behaviour Lisa was eventually allowed to visit her



F TO

grandmother but, after her boyfriend broke up with her, she decided to overdose on prescription pills to end her pain.

"God was truly watching over me as my grandfather came home early from work and saw me ... the doctors said that if we had been 15 minutes later (to the hospital) I would have been dead."

Still in her teens, Lisa turned to partying and drugs, which left her in dangerous situations.

"Once I injured my neck by falling out of a speeding car and another time I was raped at gunpoint," she explains before adding, "God spared my life and the rapist was arrested ... God in His mercy was watching over me once again."

Lisa's turning point came when she later became pregnant with a son and, after an 11-year search, was eventually reunited with her biological father.

"I still remember the prayer from a Christian counsellor as she prayed that I wouldn't only find my earthly father, but that I would also find my heavenly Father. My father was located only two months after her prayer," Lisa recalls.

Yet these miracles were only pieces of the puzzle that led Lisa to the ultimate Father who had been there all along.

"Throughout my lifetime I have been through all kinds of secular therapy, counselling, hypnotherapy and medication. I found only temporary relief until, through a series of events, I was led to church and rededicated my life (to God)," Lisa explains after committing her life to Jesus Christ.

"I was full of bitterness and resentment toward all of the people that had hurt me and it had affected every area of my life. Only after I surrendered my life to God did a real change occur in me."

While Lisa had known about God from a young age it was only at this point of complete surrender that she realised what she had been missing all along.

"I found true healing through letting go and forgiving everyone who had ever hurt me. At first I didn't feel like I had really forgiven them so I prayed that God would let me truly feel the forgiveness...eventually I did," she says.

"One day my uncle called me crying and said that he was so sorry for what he had done to me when I was a little girl. I told him that I had already forgiven him years ago and I really meant it and I really felt it. Only God can change hearts this way...I'm living proof!"

Today, Lisa says her greatest desire in life is to let others know "that they can rise above any situation and that there is only true hope, true healing and true forgiveness through Jesus Christ".

In closing she adds, "I now know that the most important thing in life for anyone is to find their Heavenly Father and to read His Word (the Bible). My search is over...my Heavenly Father was what I was searching for all along."

LIFE IS A SCULPTURE NOT A PAINTING

Steve shares how personal life tragedies were used for good

A miracle restoration to his parents' marriage convinced Steve Leeder that there is a light that can overcome darkness in anyone's life.

"My parents were in a party lifestyle of drugs and alcohol and sometimes they were so violent it was frankly terrifying," Steve recalls from his childhood.

After his parents separated they decided to seek help from a Christian helpline.

"My father, Richard, was an atheist then, and had come to the end of himself," Steve recalls.

The helpline led to a visit from two young Christian pastors, who explained, "It is not enough to merely believe in the existence of God."

"God wants to have a personal relationship with us," they added, "And this happens by faith in Jesus and His sacrifice on the cross. We know God when we invite Jesus to take control of our lives."

As Steve's father walked in Perth's Kings Park and thought about the demise of his marriage, Steve says, "He cried out to God, asking that if He was real then could He reveal Himself."

After this prayer was answered Steve saw instant changes when his parents let Jesus take over their lives and received counselling from the pastors.

"My parents reconciled and became new people! They were instantly kinder and much more loving towards each other. They still had issues, but I saw a radical change in both of them."

When Steve developed pneumonia he was amazed that God miraculously healed him through the prayers of the two pastors. After that, he says it was a "straight-forward" decision to trust in Jesus for himself.



Steve Leeder (pictured with wife Shan) says his "rough edges" are being chiselled away

For a while Steve believed an "overcoming" life that Jesus spoke about meant physical success, but it turned out that Jesus' promise was instead about inward change to being more like Jesus.

He did not anticipate that a decade of tragedy would follow his decision to become a Christian.

The asthma-related death of a childhood friend resulted in his sudden battle with depression and the end of a two year relationship.

Steve's dream career then vanished. His rock band was nearing an EMI USA record deal when the band suddenly folded.

Another childhood friend was taken by cancer, two uncles committed suicide in less than two years, and his wife's two miscarriages and tragic infidelity led to a painful divorce.

All these tragedies took him to breaking point, and stripped off his pretend "brave face".

During a country getaway, he recalls, "I asked God why He had allowed these tragedies in my life, and I received a powerful revelation about God and how He sees me in union with Jesus Christ."

For years Steve thought his purpose was to make "a beautiful painting for God" but now God was revealing the truth.

"I had felt that if I fixed up my mistakes in the 'painting of my life' I could find my way back to God. But my painting was such a mess I thought I couldn't find God anywhere. God then revealed that 'your life is not a painting, it is a sculpture.'

"God said that I am His 'work of art'. He purposely chose every single hardship to 'chisel away' all the rough edges in me, like a sculptor working

on a rock-hewn masterpiece."

Now God did not feel far away from Steve.

"I could see that God had been involved in every struggle, intentionally leading me into these hardships, to make me more into the image of the Lord Jesus Christ."

During 14 months of healing Steve says God revealed many promises to him, one of which was an unknown woman who would show him more of God's grace and peace.

In January 2013, a friend introduced Steve to Shan and they were married two years later.

Rather than being exempt from hardships by following Jesus, Steve explains that "I have come to know God through the hardships in my life."

"Through these trials I have learnt that He is an eternally faithful God. I have also learnt that Jesus was right when He said that He alone is 'The Way, The Truth and The Life' (John 14, verse 6).

"I know what the Bible means when it says that 'God works all things together for good' (Romans 8: 28). God works, not just the nice things in life, but also the messy and painful stuff too.

"I have gone from thinking I was mostly a pretty good guy, to seeing myself in truth, and honestly being able to echo (the apostle) Paul, who saw himself at the end of his life as the chief of all sinners.

"The more I come to know Christ, the more I come to know how desperately I need Him, and without His love, His sacrifice for my sins, and His grace (undeserved love), I would be totally sunk."

Life's meaning found

A kind teacher and an ex-KKK member changed the purpose of John's life

From a young age John Mayne had one question that he desperately wanted answered: does life have any real meaning and purpose?

During his state school education he was mischievous but adds that he always tried to be "a good enough person" to get into heaven one day.

"The more I tried to be a good person and a nice guy, the more it seemed like I caused and got into more trouble," John says.

"Then one of my sisters became a Christian and I could see her life changing in a positive way and it made me question what had caused this."

John's parents did not hold to a particular religion but his openness towards the idea of God blossomed during a primary school religious education program.

"We had a teacher in fourth grade who I could tell had a real relationship with God and really knew Him," John recalls.

This teacher taught the class how to pray and explained that Jesus came to earth to sacrifice His life so that anyone who truly believed in Him could be saved and go to be with Him in heaven one day.

"I remember writing in my notebook at that time that this was my favourite subject because it seemed to intuitively make a lot of sense to me and was modelled by someone who was living it out," John adds.

"There was something a little bit different about this teacher that I couldn't quite put my finger on and I started to develop a positive recep-

tion toward God."

Although John was not a Christian he remembers defending God and faith in school arguments, explaining that he had "a soft spot for Him".

Then in his final year of high school he was present for a once off presentation about who Jesus is.

"I found all my classmates were laughing and mocking it but for me that was a key moment. The message was the same one I had heard in primary school.

"I knew that as I was getting older I was doing more and more stupid things that I didn't really want to get involved with so I made a pact with God saying 'If Jesus is the real deal then help me to know for sure'," he recalls.

In the year between school graduation and university John started reading a Gideon's New Testament Bible that was given to him during that presentation.

"As I read I understood that Jesus wasn't just someone made up, He was either a lunatic or the real deal."

His sister then invited him along to a night church service where a man named Johnny Lee Clary, a former grand wizard and leader in the notorious Ku Klux Klan, shared the same message he had heard at school.

"Johnny was about to take his life after being kicked out of the KKK when he had an encounter with God and committed his life to Jesus," John recalls from the message, "He shared how God had completely transformed his life, taking him in a new direction and revealing to him that there is no room for racism as a Christian."

Without hesitation John was the first person to go to the front of the

stage when Johnny asked if there was anyone who wanted to commit their lives to Christ that night.

"I knew I was ready and it was the best decision that I have ever made," John shares. "I remember feeling peace and the weight of my own brokenness and all the wrong that was next to my name evaporate. I knew I was now a child of God."

Looking back on the decision to surrender his life to Jesus, John shares that God gave him the meaning and purpose he had searched for throughout his life.

"There were times growing up where I would get really bored but, after becoming a Christian, I had this new purpose which was to tell others about this message of forgiveness and love that bring salvation and eternal life with God."

John now works full-time on university campuses with Power to Change, an organisation with a mission to share the same message that impacted his life so profoundly.

Interested university students can connect or find out more about "Power to Change" on their Facebook group pages.



John Mayne has a passion for telling university students the same message that changed his life.

A MOTHER'S WISH COME TRUE

Breaking free from her restrictive parents and joining the rebellious school kids was what LeeAnne Dunn wanted most as a teen, but now as a mother herself she is glad for the miraculous change that happened in her life.

"I went from being a grumpy, selfish, unforgiving, proud, full of bad attitude teenager to a loving, forgiving and humble girl," LeeAnne shares about the decision she made that changed everything.

Before then she most wanted to be like the popular kids in high school.

"I started swearing in year 9 and was tempted to try alcohol," LeeAnne says.

"I felt annoyed by the restrictive religious beliefs of my parents. I am glad now that they were careful to protect me."

As LeeAnne grew older she realised that she did not know God like her parents did, "But I fought against making a decision about who Jesus was to me, even though I was very fearful of dying and having to answer to God."

She remembers a time when she believed her parents were favouring her brother: "I punished them by not talking to my mum other than what was necessary. I knew this hurt my mother and I was utterly miserable and unhappy. When I laid my head on the pillow at night I knew there was no peace in my life."

At an Easter camp her attitude began to change. She remembers being amazed by a vivid description of what Jesus did on the cross.

"I knew it was for me He suffered terrible pain and anguish. For the first time the Easter story hit me with full force," she says.

"The speaker described how it would have felt for Jesus to die on the cross for me and he cried. It shocked me because I had not seen a grown man cry."

As she now clearly understood God's great love for her, she says, "I knew I had to decide on whether I



'NIGHT AND DAY' DIFFERENCE: LeeAnne Dunn with her dad Ron

wanted God's forgiveness, and that this may be the last chance God was giving me to turn to Him."

For the next six months, LeeAnne recalls, "For some reason I kept living that miserable life I had chosen. I was in agony thinking about the weight of my sin (wrongdoing before God)."

Finally in May 1990, LeeAnne says, "I knew I did not want to keep fighting in my spirit against God. I asked my mum to forgive me and she explained from the Bible that I needed to decide to stop rebelling against Jesus, trust in Him, and surrender to God's will for my life."

After making this decision Leanne says her mother saw a "night and day" difference in her personality and outlook.

"The peace I felt was amazing – because I knew was held secure in God's hands," she explains.

"Why would you put off trusting

the most loving Saviour? He gives you peace and direction in life, and offers you a home in heaven for eternity with Himself.

"I am amazed that Jesus would suffer for a horrible person like me."

Although LeeAnne was sad to see her own mother pass away, she feels joy knowing her mum is in heaven with Jesus and they will one day meet again.

"My dear mum always said you can't take anything to heaven with you but your family and she is right! Becoming a mother made me realise that the most important thing I wanted to pass onto my children is how to have a relationship with Jesus," she explains.

"Jesus has been my comfort and my joy and I want my children to know this for themselves. The Bible is the best parenting manual I've ever come across!"

A SHOUT OUT TO MUMS!

BY CAITLIN CHODAKOWSKY

"Motherhood is a great honour and privilege, yet it is also synonymous with servanthood. Every day women are called upon to selflessly meet the needs of their families. Whether they are awake at night nursing a baby, spending their time and money on less-than-grateful teenagers, or preparing meals, mums continuously put others before themselves," Pastor Charles Stanley once said.



I agree with this statement, having witnessed my mum sacrifice so much in service to our family that even thinking about it makes my heart well with gratitude.

Whether it be arriving home tired from work and getting straight into making dinner, spending hours on end sewing my Year 12 ball dress, driving me to and from different places before I had my license or weekends spent helping plan, set-up and pack-up for events that I'd organised – my mum always displayed a heart of genuine and loving service.

A shout out goes to all the mums out there who don't receive the thanks they truly deserve, who serve their families tirelessly without expecting anything in return.

It is people like you who help to create a better world!

The Bible's book of Proverbs chapter 31 puts it perfectly...

"Who can find a good wife [or mother]? For she is worth far more than rubies that make one rich. The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will never stop getting good things. She does him good and not bad all the days of her life. She works with willing hands... She rises while it is still night and makes food for all those in her house... She makes herself ready with strength, and makes her arms strong... Her lamp does not go out at night... She opens her hand to the poor, and holds out her hands to those in need... She opens her mouth with wisdom. The teaching of kindness is on her tongue... She looks well to the ways of those in her house, and does not eat the bread of doing nothing... Her children rise up and honour her, her husband does also... Charm is deceptive and beauty is fleeting but a woman who fears the Lord will be praised!"

LAWYER FINDS CASE FOR GRAND DESIGN

BY ANDREW HALLOWAY

As a successful lawyer and former politician, John Langlois believes the evidence for life arising and evolving by chance is completely absent.

John studied the fossil evidence and the claims of scientists and concluded: “The main tools of the legal profession are hard evidence and logic. I thought to myself: ‘If I had to prove in court the allegedly hard facts that these scientists have presented to me as my brief, how would I go about it?’

“The answer was there was no way they could prove their case to an impartial judge and jury. The link between fish, tetrapods [land animals], monkeys and of course, me, was just a figment of scientists’ imaginations.”

As a young student, John had no

problem with Darwinism. He had studied biology at school and other sciences, and believed it was just the way God had chosen to create life: “No big deal.”

Even while studying theology in

“As a barrister, I certainly could not advance the case of these fraudsters in court; the evidence is not there”

London, he enjoyed going to the Natural History Museum, where evolution was the big theme.

“I lapped it all up.”

But in the years that followed, John became increasingly doubtful, as he

looked deeper into the evolutionary explanations for life.

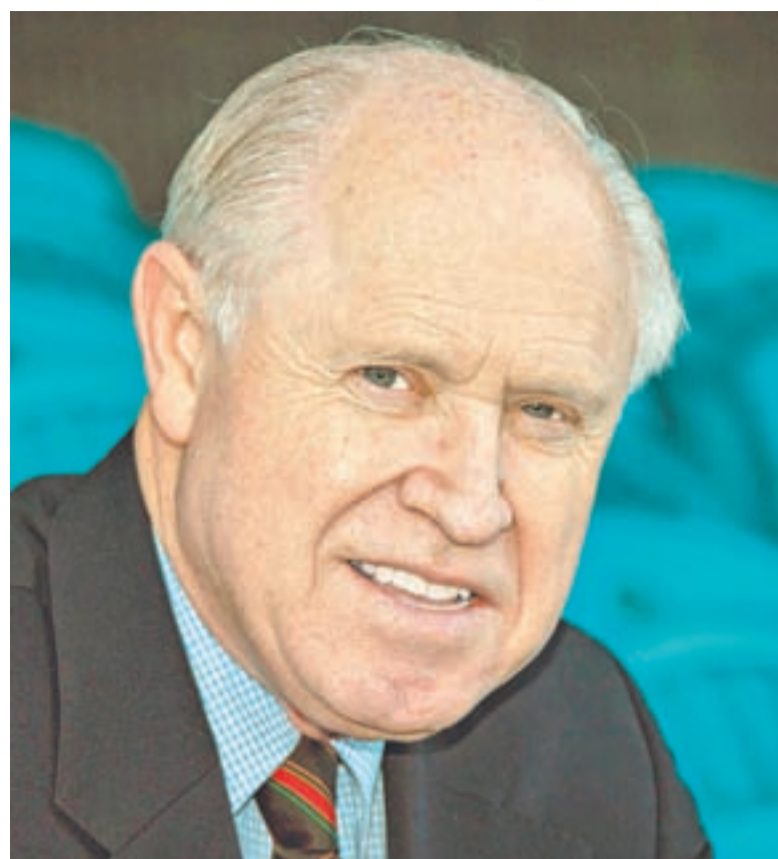
“There were (and are) still an endless series of ‘final lost links’ which allegedly tied up all the loose ends and proved that Darwinian evolution was true. The problem was that they never seemed to find the last link; they kept coming and coming...”

“I can remember April 2006, when the great discovery of the Tiktaalik fossil was announced [claimed to be the missing link between fish and four-legged land animals]. I went to see a specimen at the Natural History Museum. I was under-impressed. The creature was mostly a reconstruction, a specimen of someone’s imagination.

“The claim was that Tiktaalik’s features ‘show that many of the body features we associate with the earliest tetrapods actually evolved in fish first’. Not to me it didn’t. It didn’t stack up.

“As decades have passed, proofs have become more elusive for evolutionists. Back in the 1960s we accepted that life evolved to what it is today from a soup-like mixture in a warm pond somewhere. Now we know that life cells are incredibly complex and there are more discoveries all the time which scientists just cannot explain.

“It is becoming clearer and clearer that this level of complexity demands an Intelligent Designer. The odds of the universe creating itself out of nothing with no purpose, design or intelligence is just an insult to the intelligence that the Creator has given us. Intelligent design* is now



John Langlois shares his firm beliefs about creation

the only credible scientific explanation there is.

“New Atheists like Dawkins are primarily evangelists for atheism, not science. They just use science – or more correctly ‘scientism’ (pseudoscience) – to ‘prove’ their case... claiming that life on earth today is the result of an unguided, undesigned process. Not a chance. But that is what is being taught in our schools.

“As a barrister, I certainly could not advance the case of these fraudsters in court; the evidence is not there. But I would love to act on the side of truth and cross-examine Dawkins and co. in the witness box. I have 10,000 questions ready for them...”

John was brought up in a Christian family and made his own decision to become a Christian at just six years of age. “My faith was tested in my teens,

like most teenagers,” he says. “But God was faithful. The biggest contribution to my faith being strong has been my practice of reading a passage from the Bible and some notes on it, and praying each morning.

“Yet my faith is just as simple as that day when I was six. I am just the sheep which was lost, which Jesus found and brought into his fold. To keep me from wandering I stay close to my Shepherd.”

John concludes: “It makes much more sense that God created the world out of nothing than nothing or no one made the world out of nothing. That’s nonsense. There is a Designer. Dawkins’s case dismissed. Clear the court.”

For more about John Langlois and his intelligent design organisation, see www.c4id.org.uk.

Believe it or not

BY CREATION MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

DNA and bone cells found in dinosaur bone

Since the late 1990s, Dr Mary Schweitzer from Montana, an evolutionist herself, has been rocking the evolutionary/uniformitarian world with discoveries of soft tissue in dinosaur bones (see creation.com/schweit). And late in 2012, she and her team also found bone cells (osteocytes), proteins such as actin and tubulin, and DNA. None of these should be able to survive the supposed 65 million years since dinosaur extinction.



DNA is especially problematic. Most people think DNA is very stable, but in reality, about a million DNA letters are damaged in each of your cells every day. We would soon be a mutated mess without special repair enzymes (creation.com/dna-repair). Researchers have also measured how long DNA could survive even protected by bone. They show that even at below freezing -5°C (23°F), DNA would be totally disintegrated after 6.83 million years—only about a tenth of the assumed dinosaur evolutionary age. Yet Schweitzer’s team found DNA intact enough to form a double helix.

Could this be contamination from bacteria? No: the DNA was found right where we would expect it to be found in a dino cell. Further, Schweitzer’s team detected histones. These are little protein balls upon which DNA is wound in eukaryotes (organisms with cell nuclei) like dinosaurs and man, not in bacteria.

* For more about this powerful refutation of millions-of-years dogma, see creation.com/dino-dna.
 • Molecular analyses of dinosaur osteocytes support the presence of endogenous molecules, *Bone*, 17 October 2012.
 • The half-life of DNA in bone: measuring decay kinetics in 158 dated fossils, *Proc. Royal Society B* 279(1748):4724-4733, 7 December 2012.

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FLAG RAISING, smoking ceremonies and cultural dance performances; art exhibitions; walks, runs, and jogs; take your pick as to how you want to celebrate reconciliation this National Sorry Day.

For Australia, May 26 is a day on which we acknowledge and recognise the Stolen Generation, where Indigenous children were forcibly removed from their families between 1910 and 1970 as a result of government policies.

It is also a day where we make deliberate steps towards a future that embraces all Australians.

We work together towards peace, reconciliation, and forgiveness.

In thinking about the tragedies some Indigenous people faced —families hurt as children were removed from the arms of their parents— we might wonder how these families could forgive.

That is why we have a whole week dedicated to reconciliation every year.

Deep down some might feel like the culprits don’t deserve forgiveness, and we should not even be so bold as to ask for it on their behalf.

That is how we feel sometimes about our own dishonourable actions. In taking a look at our lives and some of the things we have done, we might feel undeserving of forgiveness.

We might do nice things and try to be better people to make up for our mistakes, but deep down we feel our actions will always burden us and define us. We will have to work our entire life to compensate the damage we have made and the pain we have caused, and even



that might not be enough.

What we don’t know is that we can receive forgiveness right now— completely free of charge.

Jesus has already paid the ultimate price for our actions by sacrificing His life, and He did it so we no longer have to be imprisoned by guilt or shame but can live a life completely free.

All we have to do is accept by faith that His sacrifice has paid the price in full for our rebellion against God, and we are not just forgiven— we are made brand new. God even tells us in the Bible He “remembers our sins no more”.

Forgiveness sometimes feels undeserved and impossible to truly achieve, but God goes beyond that. He doesn’t just forgive what we have done; He forgets it completely. We can start afresh completely delivered from our past— no matter how shameful we think it might be.

Blinded girl's new vision

An American teen who fled from her family when they learned of her Christian faith hopes her published story will inspire women who are seeking freedom

Rifqa Bary's family moved from Sri Lanka to America in 2000, seemingly to provide her medical help after her right eye was blinded by an accident with a metal toy airplane.

After recovering from a prolonged custody battle, Rifqa published a book in 2015 that reveals the move to America was to escape the 'dishonour' of her molestation by an extended family member.

Rifqa writes that in some cultures "...the shame is not attached to the abuser; it is cast on the victim. My mere presence and appearance were a stain against the most important thing of all — our family honour."

In their new home in Ohio, Rifqa gave herself completely to her family's religion hoping for freedom and her father's approval.

She told CBN TV that by age 12, "It got to the point where I didn't want [this religion] anymore because [love] wasn't there. I never have heard my father say I love you, or hug me, and I was so afraid of him."

She always wanted freedom, but says that instead "I felt like I was caged and suffocating in rules and I wanted out."

A year later, she recalls, "One

young brave woman in junior high had the courage to just ask me, 'Come to church with me'.

"After her invitation I went and had a life-changing encounter where I experienced the love of God that captured my spirit and left me changed."

Rifqa shares in a 2009 YouTube video "I thought that if your parents are Christians then you are a Christian... I had no idea that Jesus died for my sins... [so that] death has no sting."



Rifqa's autobiography

At that church service, she states, "I felt nothing but this great radical love that says 'You are mine'. I didn't know what sin or repentance meant then. A couple of months later I wept before the Lord (Jesus) and truly repented of my sins."

"Ever since then it has been the best journey."

Initially she kept her faith hidden: "I would hide my Bible and I would go out to prayer meetings when my parents did not know."

By the fourth year, she says, "It got to the point where it couldn't be hidden anymore. My father approached me and told me what the consequences would be, which would be death."

"I feared for my life. I did not think I would be alive the next day. I did not plan on running away, I planned on giving my life for Jesus."

Her father issued her an ultimatum, giving her a couple of days until she "had to turn".

When the family's religious community found out, Rifqa says there was no alternative but to flee.

"In the same way that my family left Sri Lanka to honour our image," Rifqa says, "now I have done the despicable. This is the ultimate shame for my family — that I pray to another



Rifqa Bary is bold in her new faith

God and have committed myself especially to Jesus."

A concerned parent of a school friend contacted Rifqa on Facebook and helped her escape to another state.

"I wrote a letter to my family: 'Jesus Christ is my Lord and Saviour. I refuse to deny Him. I pray and hope that you will find His mercy and forgiveness.'"

On the two-day bus ride she says God sustained her though she had no food or water.

Psalm chapter 68 verse 5 comforted her with these words "He is a Father to the fatherless and a defender of the widow."

"To this day I am so grateful for God's hand in my life," she says.

Her family's year-long custody battle ended when she turned 18 in 2011, but not before it made international headlines.

She was shuttled between many foster homes and even jailed for a few months.

Rifqa now studies philosophy and politics and says she is not afraid about the future.

While in jail during the court case, she remembers, "I was sitting there weeping, and God just came to me and said, 'Will you sing to me?'"

"There was something in that moment when I starting singing and realised that there's nothing that men can do to me."

"They can kill my body, they can take my body, but they can't have my soul ... I started singing and I haven't stopped, knowing that God is worthy of everything."

"I have such a heart for justice and people in similar situations like mine so I don't know what that is going to look like in the future, but I am studying philosophy and am really hoping I get to go to law school one day." •

CAN THERE BE PEACE IN 2016?

In a world convulsing with conflict and suffering should we give up on peace?

BY JOHN HUTCHINSON

IT'S now more than two thousand years since the angels sang: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

A writer of long ago said, "If there's to be peace in the world, there must be peace in the nations. If there's to be peace in the nations, there must be peace in the cities. If there's to be peace in the cities, there must be peace between neighbours. If there's to be peace between neighbours, there must be peace in the home. If there's to be peace in the home, there must be peace in the heart."

Peace between neighbours

Both were adjoining farmers and they got on terribly. One called his dog by the other's name. When rounding up sheep he swore at his kelpie with every loud and ugly expletive he knew — hoping the neighbour could hear it!

Is that the way to live with the person next door? Neighbours should be friends and be there for one another.

"Love your neighbour as yourself," says the Bible, "love does no harm to its neighbour."

Peace in the home

Home, of all places, should be a place of peace. But, the need for shelters has never been greater. About 75 Australian women die each year from domestic violence. But, how many are physically and emotionally damaged for the rest of their days?

Domestic violence is costing billions. What nightmares must plague the sleep of little ones who hear it and see it!

Dorothy Law Nolte's famous list of childhood influences says: "If children live with hostility, they learn to fight." She also said, "If children live



with friendliness, they learn the world is a nice place in which to live."

Parents need to role model peace. Children need to see what it looks like.

Peace with ourselves

How do we rid ourselves of rage, fear, selfishness, prejudice and pride — and everything else which robs us of mental tranquillity?

We need peaceful attitudes. How can we be at peace with ourselves when we're stirring up others?

Jesus said, "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."

"Make every effort to live in peace with all people," says Hebrews 12:14.

We need peaceful motivations: The apostle Paul said, "...the fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control."

How much better things could be if we pursued "patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness and self-control!"

Powerful and peaceful motivators stem from a relationship with God. Human nature needs the transforming work of the Holy Spirit.

We need peace with God. The Bible says: "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ..."

Jesus came to a hostile world — not a lot different to our own. Despite his simple lifestyle and humility, violence erupted against him and he died a most humiliating and torturous death.

Yet, hanging on a cross, He exhibited peace like no other. He prayed for the forgiveness of those who nailed Him to it and spoke kindly to others. He was truly the "Prince of Peace".

One of the most gentle emulators of peace I have met was once America's most infamous terrorist — a man who seethed with hate and rage toward black people and Jews — a man familiar with machine guns and bombs.

In a solitary cell, through reading the New Testament of the Bible, he found a new life in Jesus Christ, a new motivation, a new birth. Love replaced hate and he now seeks to do the most good he can to those he once hated.

Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God."

Wishing you a peaceful year. •

"Make every effort to live in peace with all people"

'Crutch words' we often misuse

Like: Usually inserted to provide time to think, this 'verbal tic' often becomes an involuntary habit like an 'um'. Its proper use describes something of the same form, appearance, kind, character or amount.

Obviously: This word is often applied to non-obvious things, like "Obviously he should have thrown the ball to third base."

Actually: Many insert this unconscious verbal tic to add punch to a statement even though it rarely adds meaning. E.g. I actually disagree.

Literally: This adverb restricts an action to the strict sense, but many incorrectly use it in a hyperbolic or figurative sense, like "I literally sprinted 100kms".

Basically: The 'crutch' use attempts to add authority and finality to a statement, but basically should signal truth, simplicity and confidence.

Honestly: Although it is supposed to assert authority or express incredulity, this overused word rarely adds honesty to a statement. "Honestly, I have no idea why he said that." •

Building Better Marriages

THE TRUTH ABOUT INTIMACY

BY ROB FORLONG

HOW would you define intimacy? In a world drowning in social media, reality TV and an endless stream of advice on sexual fulfilment, it's a good question to ask.

I came across a good answer several years ago which defined intimacy as:

- Knowing and being known
- Loving and being loved
- Serving and being served
- Forgiving and being forgiven

It captures the essence of intimacy because it puts it in terms of the other person. There is a clear intent to know the other person deeply, love them unconditionally, serve them sacrificially and to freely forgive them when it is required.

True intimacy in a relationship also fosters other traits.

When a couple bond together in intimacy, when they become "one", they have courage to face

life together. Solomon said that "two are better than one", going on to describe the peril of falling into a pit on your own. Sharing life with another brings the security of knowing that they are there for you in difficult times – you can both face whatever life throws at you together, courageously!

It also encourages the gift of love that chooses. I am so grateful to my wife, Karen, who held out her heart to me early in our relationship and basically said, "This is who I am – will you love me?"

And I did the same with her. And we both chose to love each other, despite our failings and weaknesses.

Love that chooses is a precious gift indeed. Honesty is also the fruit of true intimacy.

Genesis says that Adam and Eve both stood before each other "naked and not ashamed".

The nakedness spoken of here is spiritual, mental, psychological and physical nakedness.

What freedom there is when you can stand before another without wearing any masks, to be truly



"naked" before them and to feel no shame!

And what happiness we cheat ourselves of when we simply interpret such a statement as referring only to the physical!

Christopher and Rachel McCluskey explain it well when they write:

"...it is important that husbands and wives enjoy intimacy without necessarily needing to be sexual, and because (unfortunately) husbands and wives are often sexual without being intimate...there is a world of difference between simply having sex and truly making love. The world uses these phrases interchangeably and, indeed, the acts themselves are the same. But the spirit of making love is entirely different from simply having sex."

Not surprisingly, this leads to greater depths of intimacy between the couple who are prepared to take the path of truly knowing each other.

What a wonderful thought

lies behind this idea of truly knowing someone!

You may be familiar with the term, "...he knew his wife..." and which is so often viewed from a sexual standpoint.

But the same word is also used to describe a person as "knowing God". The concept speaks of knowing someone "thoroughly and deeply".

Intimate couples are those who know each other thoroughly and deeply – they seek to know the other person and they in return, feel thoroughly known.

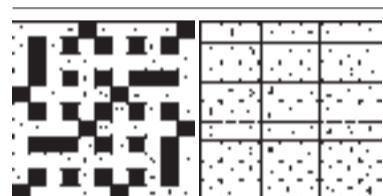
There are things I know about Karen that no one else has ever known and never will know. And it is the same for me with her.

In our seeking to know and be known by each other we have built security, understanding and deep love.

One of the greatest gifts Karen has ever given to me was the day she said to me, "I feel safe with you!"

Please don't be under any illusions about what I am saying here. The path to true intimacy is filled with pain, tears, hard times and frustration but I would not exchange it for what so many settle for – a shallow existence with someone they barely know.

Far better to embrace the One who made you for intimacy and the one that you call husband or wife.



How can I become a Christian?

Anyone can gain the eternal life offered through Jesus Christ

We read in God's word: "God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16)

<p>OUR PROBLEM:</p>	<p>Separation from God "Everyone has sinned. Nobody is good enough because God's standards are perfect" (Romans 3:23)</p>	<p>ADMIT</p>
<p>GOD'S REMEDY / SOLUTION:</p>	<p>Jesus died on the cross "God demonstrates His own love for us in this; while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8)</p>	<p>BELIEVE</p>
<p>OUR RESPONSE:</p>	<p>Trust Jesus by receiving Him "To all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God" (John 1:12)</p>	<p>COMMIT</p>

Here is an example of how you can pray.

"Lord Jesus, I need You now. Please forgive me for my sins. I open the door of my life and receive You as my Saviour and Lord. Thankyou for loving me so much that You died on the cross for me. Take control of my life. Make me the person You created me to be. Amen"

The Lord Jesus says: "I tell you the truth. Everyone who believes in me has eternal life." (John 6:47). He gives life of a wonderful quality that continues forever.

AS A NEXT STEP:

<p>If you prayed the above prayer, tick this box</p> <p>I have prayed this prayer. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Please send me:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Bible</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Some 'starting off' literature</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Information on a helpful church</p>	<p>If you have NOT prayed the prayer at this stage, tick this box</p> <p>I would like to think about this. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Please send me:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> More information as I am inquiring about being a Christian.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I have a problem (see attached letter)</p>
--	--

* Please tick and write clearly *

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Age and occupation (it helps) _____

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MONEY-SAVING TIPS FOR WINTER

BY DARRYL BUDGE

As your household bills rise due to heating costs here are a few tips to save this winter.

Switch off appliances, computers and laptops at the wall switch. According to Choice, entertainment appliances sit on standby more than 80% of the year, which could cost you up to \$100 per year. A laptop power pack that feels warm will be drawing power even if it is not attached to your laptop. A powerboard with individual switches, or a long-cord inline switch like EcoSwitch may be used to turn off those unneeded appliances.



Switch to more energy efficient appliances.

Check out Energyrating.gov.au for a ratings database and a very useful Energy Rating Calculator. The calculator asks for a star rating, or the brand and model of an appliance, the purchase price, then tells you the total cost of ownership.

Switch electricity or gas supplier. You can compare electricity and gas retailer offers at EnergyMadeEasy.gov.au (not available for WA residents). In WA, only gas is privatised so far, but all other states have a choice of private retail energy suppliers.

Insulate your roof or ceiling, block wind draughts around doors (using a door snake), and opt for thermal-backed curtains that when closed at night will keep the heat in.

Save on fuel using new mobile apps that rely on crowd-sourced info like Fuel Map Australia, GasBuddy (of North American origin) or Petrol Spy. For Android users in WA, Bowser Watch is a top app, using info from the FuelWatch government website. 7-Eleven has chosen the unique approach of enabling customers to lock-in a low price via their mobile app "7-Eleven Fuel", then 'redeem' that price up to seven days later.

Create a household budget. The ASIC website MoneySmart.gov.au has some invaluable budgeting tips and easy-to-use planners. Start by clicking on "Managing your Money". They also have a great Money Health Check at moneysmart.gov.au/Asset/20/index.html

Reduce your grocery spend. MoneySmart recommends buying only what is on your shopping list, taking only the cash allocated in your grocery budget, buy in bulk every fortnight, and eat a meal or snack before shopping, as you will buy less food on a full stomach.

Computers & Technology

OUTRIGHT MOBILES CHEAPER THAN ON CONTRACT

Taking up a mobile repayment plan not worth it, says CHOICE

If you add up handset charges, data packs and contract cancellation fees, the typical two-year contract consistently costs more than buying the same phone outright and getting a prepaid plan.

Based on a two year period CHOICE found a new iPhone 6S Plus on contract with lots of calls and 3GB of data costs \$2200-2400 on Vodafone or Telstra, compared with around \$1700 if you purchased outright and used a Amaysim/Vaya 3GB prepaid plan on the Optus network.

Further savings can be made if you keep using your 'outdated' smartphone or purchase a cheaper model on the second-hand market.

Keep in mind that, like desktop PCs and tablets, smartphones are reaching a plateau in processing speed, camera quality, storage space and usability. Newer phones do offer an upgrade to Android 6 OS, or faster operation on iOS 9 for iPhones, but neither of them offers groundbreaking new features.

Going prepaid also means you can change your mind without financial penalty if life changes.

If you move overseas, lose a job, gain a baby, you won't be stung by early termination fees. To exit a contract you must pay out the remaining months of your contract including handset fees.

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A 2015 CHOICE survey found customer service is better among smaller network resellers who offer prepaid and month-to-month postpaid plans. Telstra had the lowest score, but was best for network coverage.

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Filipino boxing champion and parliamentarian Manny Pacquiao turns from boxing to help his country further

Following his decisive victory and announced retirement in April, no-one knows whether Manny Pacquiao will fight again, not even himself, and yet the way he won exemplified why the boxing world named him best fighter of the 2000's first decade.

A shoulder injury exacerbated during his loss to Floyd Mayweather in May 2015 led to an 11 month recovery and a slow start against Timothy Bradley Jr. before a neck-jerking punch awakened the five foot five giant, who then knocked down Bradley twice.

By unanimous decision from the judges, 116 to 110, the grinning 37-year-old raised the WBO welterweight title belt that Bradley took from him in 2012, then called time on his career after 58 wins, including 38 knockouts.

"As of now I am retired," Manny said after the fight. "I am going to go home and think about it, but I want to be with my family. I want to serve the people [of the Philippines]."

Manny has used his status as the world's second highest paid athlete of 2015 (according to Forbes), to be one of his sport's most generous people, as illustrated when he gave away \$80 million, half of his Mayweather



LAS VEGAS, APRIL 9, 2016: Manny Pacquiao gestures to fans as he celebrates after defeating Timothy Bradley Jr. in a 12 round unanimous decision. Pacquiao captured the WBO International Welterweight Title. (Photo John Gurzinski/AFP/Getty Images)

fight earnings, in May 2015.

He has built a hospital and two churches in the Philippines with his own money, and has spent tens of millions to twice win a congressional seat in the lower house of Philippine's parliament.

Manny is widely expected to win a senate seat in Philippine's parliament in May 2016 and eventually to run for President. Many suspect that financing these campaigns could encourage Manny to box again.

"I have no fear in my life, I don't fear losing," Manny told The Telegraph back in 2009. "Why feel fear in your heart when you believe in God?"

This courage has arisen from humble beginnings and his personal relationship with God, reminding him that win or lose, there are more important things in life.

Manny left his broken home at the age of 14 as his mother could no longer afford to support him and his five siblings. He lived on the streets of Manila before meeting the owner of a gym, Ben Delgado, who took a special interest in Manny and agreed to train him.

"He always had a big heart, in and out of the ring, and even back then, he wanted to be champion of the world," Ben says.

Manny was boxing professionally at 17 and earning \$2 a fight, which he sent home to his mother.

As his success grew, Manny admits he strayed from God for many years, but never forgot the way his mother brought him up to understand the importance of faith in God.

He admitted in 2015 on Filipino TV show *Tapatan ni Tunying* that in 2010 his marriage to Jinkee was in trouble and it was trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ personally that saved his life and his marriage.

Manny recalls, "I was drinking, gambling, womanising and always swearing."

Their fighting was so serious that Jinkee once threatened him with a knife while he pulled out a gun.

That all changed when he trusted in Jesus as Lord and Saviour later that year.

"I have no fear in my life, I don't fear losing"

"I'm happy because I found the right way to salvation," Manny told The Guardian in 2014.

"We are required to be born-again [of the spirit], all of us. Christ said unless we are born-again we cannot enter the kingdom of God. So it's very important to me. Jesus Christ said: 'I am

the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father [God] except through me.' There is no other way. The only way is through Jesus."

"While we thank the Lord for all His temporal gifts, we are not to depend on them, even slightly. Jesus Christ is our only need in life."

Although he was continually on the road for fights, training and publicity appearances, Manny remained faithful in attending

church regularly.

"Win or lose, I will pray at the corner to thank God for all his blessings," he says.

At a gathering he asked the crowd: "What about you, did you count your blessings? Remember to thank God for all that He has done. He will give you your needs."

Always remembering that his physical ability and wealth comes from God, he never turns the poor away when they come begging for money and food at his house.

"God has given me a gift and it is my duty to share the fruits of this gift with my people," he says.

"Before, my ultimate dream was just to be champion in the Philippines. But look at me now. This is because I lifted it all up to the Lord [in prayer]," he says.

"I don't want to say I'm the best boxer in the world. I would say I'm a boxer who can fight a good fight against any fighter in the world. All my talent comes from God." ●



YOYAKARTA, INDONESIA - JULY 10, 2015: Filipino boxer Manny Pacquiao (2nd from L) and wife Jinkee (3rd from R), meet, and offer support to convicted drug trafficker Mary Jane Veloso of the Philippines. Veloso maintains her innocence. (Photo Ulet Ifansasti/Getty Images)

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