



**CHRIST CHURCH
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CROSSLINKS**

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GOD'S FIRST QUESTION - WHERE ARE YOU?

Vicar's fifteen- minute reflection
AYEKA - WHERE ARE YOU?



What if God were to ask you that question right now? How will you respond? Are you stuck in a rut somewhere not knowing what to do or where to go and stumbling around on your own? Are you longing for the "forbidden fruit", whatever that may be? Are you at peace with yourself and with God or are you ashamed of something you are doing or have done? Is there something you're trying to hide?

God already knows all of our deepest, darkest thoughts and all of our ugliest, nastiest actions. But He still loves us more than we could ever imagine. Considering that God knows everything, it's interesting that He asked any questions at all. So why did He ask questions and what can we learn from them?

The question requires that we look closely at ourselves and figure out where we are now and where we want to be in relation to our Heavenly Father.

God's first recorded question and also the shortest question in Hebrew occurred after Adam and Eve sinned. In Hebrew that word is *ayeka*? In English it means, "Where are you?" For an all-knowing God, this seems a silly question, but the query has little to do with physical location. And it's a question not asked to locate someone physically but asked about some one's emotional or spiritual location. It's a question to ask ourselves in order to discern where we are from a human potential or personal growth perspective. How could it be that the omniscient Lord of the universe, the One who spoke and the world came into being, the One who set the stars in their places and the sun in its course, the One who said to the ocean, this shall be your boundary, the God of all vision-would be ignorant so much so that He had to ask Adam where he was? I cannot help feeling the heartbeat of a loving Father as I consider this question.

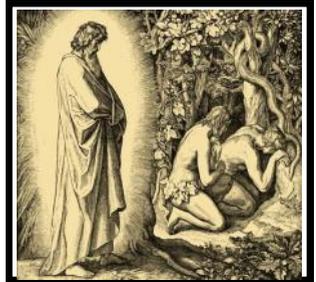
Adam and Eve were hiding and God knew where they were. Yet, He asked, "Where are you?" (Genesis 3:9). I just wonder if that question wasn't only about their "physical location" but also about the "location" of their heart and thinking and direction in life. What did God want to hear from Adam? It seems to me that God wanted Adam to face up to his rebellion, repent of it and come back into fellowship with God. The question requires that we look closely at



ourselves and figure out where we are now and where we want to be in relation to our Heavenly Father.

A ship cannot make its way through the seas without a compass, and we cannot make our way through life without being asked time and time again, *ayeka*, "Where are you?" That question, and our answer, creates the moral agenda for our work and walk in the future. That question and our answer are meant to puncture the hidings, evasions, and self-deceptions that blind us both to the ways we have made progress and also to the ways we have fallen short. The main danger in this periodic questioning is our desire, like Adam and Eve our ancestors, to hide rather than answer, to flee rather than face, to evade rather than accept responsibility for what we have done and for what we have left undone. The lesson to be learned is the same lesson learned by Adam and Eve: *hiding from God does not work*.

Adam answers *ayeka* in a truly pitiful way: "I heard your voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and so I hid myself." Sin made Adam afraid of God's presence and afraid of God's voice. Ever since Adam, men run from God's presence and don't want to listen to His Word. Adam's answer is just another evasion. He does not admit to eating the forbidden fruit, but only to being afraid of appearing before God, naked (something that had never troubled him before). After Adam's cowardly answer, God gives him yet another chance to confess and repent. God asks Adam, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree from which I commanded you that you should not eat?"



Surely we could expect Adam to confess and say "now-the game is up, God knows". But Adam still does not accept responsibility for his sin. He answers God, "The woman you put here with me – she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it" (v.12). This answer is even worse. **Confronted with direct evidence of his sin, Adam indirectly blames God for giving him the woman, and directly blames Eve for giving him the forbidden fruit to eat.** Adam seems incapable of accepting responsibility for his actions. He insists on portraying himself as a victim of choices made by others rather than as a guilty party who has made bad choices.

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HAPPY FATHER'S DAY



The progressive reformer, Jane Adams, in 1911 wrote, "Poor Father has been left out in the cold. He doesn't get much recognition. It would be a good thing if he had a day that would mean recognition of him." Sixty-one years later, President Richard Nixon signed a bill into law making Father's Day a national holiday. Although this is not part of the liturgical calendar, I am happy that we recognize this day.

The first four of the Ten Commandments deal with our relationship with God. The remaining six instruct us about our relationship with our fellow human beings. The first of these human-relationship commands reads, "Honour your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land which the Lord your God gives you" (Exodus 20:12). It is a command with promise. Give honour to your parents, and you will be a person whose life will be a quality existence. Although the person who lives respectful of parents has a much better chance for long life, the primary theme is quality living. So it is fitting that we celebrate Mother's Day and Father's Day. The reason God includes this in his commands is that it runs against our human nature. Our tendency is to fight authority, whether it be the authority of God or the authority of our parents. But what does God expect from loving parents? This has got much to do with fatherhood as well as motherhood.



Let us turn our attention to an effective father whose decision to be there is crucial to our understanding of God's intentions for the Christian father today. The plight of the prodigal son is a familiar biblical story that has been repeated for the benefit of many young people throughout the ages and surely is repeated today. The primary message of this parable is, of course, that the prodigal "came to himself" -- that is, repented of his sin and thus was restored in his relationship with his family. But did you ever consider what might have happened to this young prodigal if his father had not been waiting in the pathway as he made those last humbling steps toward home? Let us concentrate on just one verse of scripture, Luke 15:20. It appears to me that three of the phrases in this verse provide sound wisdom for the man of God who desires to be an effective father. (Continued next page)



Happy father's day



What do you do when your children are "far off"? That can range from being away at college to not living up to your expectations, or to God's expectations for them, to making home life chaotic because of their rebellion against authority, to growing up faster than necessary, to a lack of appreciation for all you do on their behalf. What do you do? The advice we receive from this parable from the lips of Jesus is to "be there." The prodigal's father did not give up; he exercised patience; he was able to wait on the Lord. That can only happen if that father has a close and ongoing relationship with the Lord. Is that true of you? Do you have a personal relationship with Christ that enables you to trust God eternally as well as daily?

In the parable, a pre-established relationship with God enabled the father to literally wait in the pathway until his son would come to his senses through the power of God. Those of you who have been through those moments with sons or daughters know that it requires spiritual staying power. If you are going through that at this moment, I would encourage you to trust God and seek His face daily in prayer. Those who may one day be in the position of the prodigal's father are wise if they establish a spiritual foundation while it is easier to do so.

And then beyond his ability to wait, our text tells us that the prodigal's father was filled with compassion: his mercy was like the mercy of God. Imagine having your temper or need to get retribution so in check that you could only demonstrate mercy and compassion. Do you realize that one of the reasons why there are so many dysfunctional adults running around today is because they've never heard the words "I love you" or "You're forgiven" from a compassionate Christian father? It happens because (1) a father abdicates by leaving a marriage or his role as a father; (2) it happens because a father has never experienced God's forgiveness himself, therefore forgiving others, particularly his own children, becomes insurmountable; (3) it happens because the models he had growing up were negative or, worse yet, abusive.



(concluded on page 10)

AYEKA - WHERE ARE YOU?

for himself as the result of his own free will. The question to Adam was, "Where are you?" All he could offer as his insipid answer was, "Where was everybody?"

Adam would fit cosily into our contemporary frame of thinking. Ours is an age filled with the "Adams". We are becoming a nation of victims. Each of us is armed to the teeth with reasons why what we did was simply not our fault. We are disadvantaged psychologically, damaged societally, abused addictively. What we will all admit to is that actions ought to have consequences. What we will all not admit to is that *our* actions ought to have consequences. We have created a culture where it is unbelievably easy to evade responsibility for anything we do.

If you cannot give a good answer to the *ayeka* God is asking you now, don't despair. Remember that God gives Adam several chances to give the right answer. The important thing in answering *ayeka* is that we must each of us try to be really honest in giving our answer to God. Do not be afraid to be honest in your answering God's question. God knows your heart and your limits, your dreams and your nightmares, your real successes and your horrible failures.

In this struggle for honesty and courage, for shame and repentance, you should remember that every single biblical hero from Adam to Moses was flawed. Abraham lied about Sarah being his wife, Jacob stole the birth-right from his brother Esau, Moses rebelled against God at the waters of Meribah. For each of them shame was not an obstacle but an engine for their greatness. Answering *ayeka* brought them humility and courage, not humiliation and disgrace. In their fallibility we are taught that God will not judge us against some unattainable standard of saintliness. God does not consider us to have failed in our work as human beings if we are not utterly righteous.

...remember that every single biblical hero from Adam to Moses was flawed...

Those who are incapable of sin or shame are more like miracles than role models. Because they are so perfect and sinless they are in one respect lower than we are because in (continued on page 7)

AYEKA - WHERE ARE YOU?

their self righteousness, they are unable to tap into the righteousness of God which is ours through the forgiveness of our sins in Christ Jesus (Romans 3:22). Adam ought to have sought out his Maker. He should have gone through the garden crying for his God, "My God, my God, I have sinned against You " when God asked "where are you."

C.H. Spurgeon suggested that Adam should have responded as follows: "... At Your feet Your creature falls and asks mercy at Your hands. My Father, You have placed me in this lovely Paradise; I have wickedly and wilfully eaten of the fruit of which You said that I should not eat of it, since in the day I ate thereof I should surely die. Behold, my Father, I submit to the penalty. I confess Your justice and beseech Your mercy, if mercy can be shown to such an one as I am."

What we have got in this story is God seeking out Adam. It is not, "My God, where are You?" But the first cry is the voice of Grace, "Sinner where are you?" Despite all the Doctrines which our proud free will has manufactured, there has never been found from Adam's day until now a single instance in which the sinner first sought his God! God must first seek him. That is the open secret in the Incarnation story. God who is the good Shepherd seeks the sheep which are lost. The sheep strays of itself, but it never returns to its fold unless sought by the Great Shepherd! It is human to err, it is Divine to repent. Man can commit sin, but even to know that it is sin so as to feel the guilt of it, is the gift of the Grace of God.

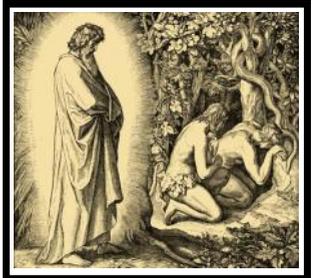
Sin made man a fool! He was once in God's Image, wise; now, since the trail of the serpent has passed over his nature, he has become an arrogant fool, for is not he a fool who would cover the nakedness of sin with fig leaves? Is not he indeed mad who would hide from the Omniscient Jehovah beneath the spreading branches of trees? Did not Adam know that God fills all space, and dwells everywhere, that from the highest Heaven to the deepest Hell (continued on page 8)

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AYEKA - WHERE ARE YOU?

there is nothing that is hidden from His understanding? And yet so ignorant and stupid is Adam that he hopes to escape from God, and make the trees of the garden a cover from the fiery eyes of Divine Wrath! Ah, how foolish we are! How we repeat the folly of our first parent every day when we seek to hide sin from conscience, and then think it is hidden from God; when we are more afraid of the gaze of man than of the searching of the Eternal One; when because the sin is secret, and has not entrenched upon the laws and customs of society, we go to our beds with the black mark still upon us, being satisfied because man does not see it, that therefore God does not perceive it!

I appeal to you to hear the voice of God as He cries, "Adam, Mary, John, Jack, where are you?" There are two Truths of God in that short sentence! It showed that Adam was lost, or God would not have needed to ask him where he was. Until we have lost a thing, we need not inquire about it. **But when God said, "Adam, where are you?" it was the voice of a shepherd enquiring for his lost sheep. Or better still, the cry of a loving parent asking for his child that has run away from him,** "Where are you?" Those are three words, which contain the dreaded Doctrine of our "lostness". When God asks, "Where are you?" There is also mercy here, for it shows that God intended to have mercy upon man or else He would have let him remain lost, and would not have said, "Where are you?" Men do not inquire for what they do not value.



"Where are you?" Your God is not willing to lose you; He has come forth to seek you, in the Person of His Son, not only to seek but to save that which now is lost! "Where are you, Adam?" Oh, had God meant to have destroyed the race, He would have hurled His thunderbolt at once, and burned the trees, and let the ashes of the sinner lie beneath His angry gaze! He would have said, "Here you are, you rebel! Traitor, take your due deserts! Let Hell open before you, and be you swallowed up forever!" But no, He loves man; He cares for him, and therefore now inquires where he is in tones of (continued on page 9)

AYEKA - WHERE ARE YOU?

calmness, "Adam, where are you, where are you?"

Have you ever experienced God asking you, "Where are you?"? Maybe you were angry and He nudged you inquiring, "Where is your heart at? I can be trusted to bring justice." Maybe you were feeling distant from Him and He asked, "Where are you?" indicating He is inviting you back to fellowship. God is caring and concerned. He knows the answers but He invites you and me into the conversation. God doesn't just "tell" He asks. All this conversation shows how important it is for us to confess, repent and be cleansed as 1 John 1:9 tells us, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and cleanse us of all unrighteousness" (NASB). That's what God is looking for in His third question: "Have you eaten...?"

God's second question, "Who told you..." is important for ministering to others who are looking to draw closer to God. They may have an unbiblical or mistaken perception. "Who told you that you are not lovable? Who told you that God isn't trustworthy? Who told you...?" We don't even know we are believing a lie until we face it. Sometimes it helps to eradicate the lie by unearthing how we first began cooperating with Satan's spin factory. Ultimately, Satan is the source of every lie; he just may use other people to plant the seed of distrust in God. Satan had planted that lie in Adam and Eve's hearts and God asks "Who told you?" Another way to phrase it is "Where did that idea come from?"

What is God asking you today? Where are you? Where is your heart? Who told you (or where did you get the idea) that...? Did you....? What is God asking you and what is your answer? He knows the answer but wants you to talk to Him anyway because He loves you and cares about you.

While we may apply God's questions to individuals, it is applicable to the Church too. Where are you, Church of England, Methodist Church, Baptist Church, My Church International, The Only Christian Church in the World, etc? Are you where you are supposed to be or because of the world's approval, you have lost your bearing? Are you like the Church in Sardis (Revelation 3:1-2), reputed to be alive in the sight of the world but dead before the Lord? He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit is saying.

Dele Agbelusi



Happy father's day

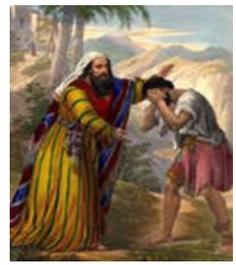


Consider what you want your children to remember you most for. If you're going to err on one side of the paternal ledger, it seems to me that compassion and caring is the side on which to err. What did Jesus do? Did He spend more time caring for and loving His disciples, or chastising them? Luke 15:20 tells us that included in this father's forgiveness was a ready response. The text says, "He put his arms around him and kissed him." Do you think the prodigal knew he was forgiven? You bet he did! The festival that followed was icing on the cake, but his father left no room for doubt that he loved and forgave his son as immediately he put his arms around him and hugged him. Many fathers still need to know that a hug given at the right time beats a new bicycle or a new glove or an iPod every time. Many modern-day parents try to buy their children's affection or respect when, in many cases, a little verbal and physical affirmation is all that is required.

Do you think there is any significance to the fact that one of the last things Jesus did before He went to the cross was to wash His disciples feet? I think it was His way of hugging them and telling them that they were forgiven and that He wanted them to forgive others.

Some fathers say, "Beyond being the recipient of a new tie, or being envisioned by my children as merely a provider or a disciplinarian, I would like to be an effective father. I would like my children to love me." Fathers, let me ask you, how much do you love God? Do you love God enough to let that love fall upon your children? Do you love with a willingness to give up in order to get? Do you love like the prodigal's father?
D.A.

IMAGES OF GOD AS OUR LOVING FATHER



A Must Read Heart Touching Story

One day, a poor boy who was selling goods from door to door to pay his way through school, found he had only one thin dime left, and he was hungry. He decided he would ask for a meal at the next house. However, he lost his nerve when a lovely young woman opened the door. Instead of a meal he asked for a drink of water.



She thought he looked hungry so brought him a large glass of milk. He drank it slowly, and then asked, "How much do I owe you?" "You don't owe me anything," she replied. "Mother has taught us never to accept payment for a kindness." He said... "Then I thank you from my heart."

As Howard Kelly left that house, he not only felt stronger physically, but his faith in God and man was strong also. He had been ready to give up and quit. Years later that young woman became critically ill. The local doctors were baffled. They finally sent her to the big city, where they called in specialists to study her rare disease. Dr. Howard Kelly was called in for the consultation. When he heard the name of the town she came from, a strange light filled his eyes. Immediately he rose and went down the hall of the hospital to her room. Dressed in his doctor's gown he went in to see her. He recognized her at once. He went back to the consultation room determined to do his best to save her life.

From that day he gave special attention to the case. After a long struggle, the battle was won. Dr. Kelly requested the business office to pass the final bill to him for approval. He looked at it, then wrote something on the edge and the bill was sent to her room. She feared to open it, for she was sure it would take the rest of her life to pay for it all. Finally, she looked, and something caught her attention on the side as she read these words..... " **Paid in full with one glass of milk.**" (Signed) **Dr. Howard Kelly.**

Tears of joy flooded her eyes as her happy heart prayed: "Thank You, God, that Your love has spread abroad through human hearts and hands."

STRESS MANAGEMENT

Continued from May Issue

Express your feelings instead of bottling them up. If something or someone is bothering you, communicate your concerns in an open and respectful way. If you don't voice your feelings, resentment will build and the situation will likely remain the same.



Be willing to compromise. When you ask someone to change their behaviour, be willing to do the same. If you both are willing to bend at least a little, you'll have a good chance of finding a happy middle ground.

Be more assertive. Don't take a backseat in your own life. Deal with problems head on, doing your best to anticipate and prevent them. If you've got an exam to study for and your chatty roommate just got home, say up front that you only have five minutes to talk.

Manage your time better. Poor time management can cause a lot of stress. When you're stretched too thin and running behind, it's hard to stay calm and focused. But if you plan ahead and make sure you don't overextend yourself, you can alter the amount of stress you're under.

Stress management strategy No 3: Adapt to the stressor

If you can't change the stressor, change yourself. You can adapt to stressful situations and regain your sense of control by changing your expectations and attitude.

Reframe problems. Try to view stressful situations from a more positive perspective. Rather than fuming about a traffic jam, look at it as an opportunity to pause and regroup, listen to your favourite radio station, or enjoy some alone time.

Look at the big picture. ...Ask yourself how important it will be in the long run. Will it matter in a month? A year? Is it really worth getting upset over? If the answer is no, focus your time and energy elsewhere.

Adjust your standards. Perfectionism is a major source of avoidable stress. Stop setting yourself up for failure by demanding perfection. Set reasonable standards for yourself and others, and learn to be okay with "good enough."

Focus on the positive.

Stress Management

Adjust Your Attitude

How you think can have a profound effect on your emotional and physical well-being. Each time you think a negative thought about yourself, your body reacts as if it were in the throes of a tension-filled situation. If you see good things about yourself, you are more likely to feel good; the reverse is also true. Eliminate words such as "always," "never," "should," and "must." These are telltale marks of self-defeating thoughts.

Stress management strategy No 4: Accept the things you can't change

You can't prevent or change stressors such as the death of a loved one, a serious illness, or a national recession. In such cases, the best way to cope with stress is to accept things as they are. Acceptance may be difficult, but in the long run, it's easier than railing against a situation you can't change.

Don't try to control the uncontrollable. Many things in life are beyond our control— particularly the behavior of other people. Rather than stressing out over them, focus on the things you can control such as the way you choose to react to problems.

Look for the upside. As the saying goes, "What doesn't kill us makes us stronger." When facing major challenges, try to look at them as opportunities for personal growth. If your own poor choices contributed to a stressful situation, reflect on them and learn from your mistakes.

Share your feelings. Talk to a trusted friend or make an appointment with a therapist. Expressing what you're going through can be very cathartic, even if there's nothing you can do to alter the stressful situation.

Learn to forgive. Accept the fact that we live in an imperfect world and that people make mistakes. Let go of anger and resentments. Free yourself from negative energy by forgiving and moving on. (concluded in July Issue)



LAUGHTER LINES

FOR THE SICK

Right in the middle of the church service, little Bobby whispered to his mother that he felt sick and thought he was going to throw up. His mother told him to quickly go to the back of the church and then go to the boy's room. Moments later little Bobby returned and was wiping his mouth with his hand. His mother was concerned that he was not long enough to get to the boy's room. She asked her son, "How did you do that so quickly?"



Bobby explained, "When I got to the back of the church, I saw a box with a sign on it that was there for me." Mom continued, "What do you mean? What did the sign say?" Bobby answered, "The sign said, 'FOR THE SICK.'"

SHORT BIBLE MEN

The three shortest men in the Bible were **Knee-High-My-A** (Nehemiah) Bildad the **Shoe Height** (Bildad the Shuhite), and the centurion who **slept on his watch**.

IN THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER

There are all kinds of things to be thankful for, because thankfulness is in the eye of the beholder. One evening I asked the members of a confirmation class (eighth grade) to give a one-sentence prayer of thanks for something good that happened during the previous week. Most gave typical responses: "Thanks that we're here together"; "Thanks for the hunting trip"; and so on. Then one boy said, "Thank you that I was sick on Friday so I didn't have to go to school."

A SHORT HISTORY OF MEDICINE:

"Doctor, I have an ear ache."

2000 BC - "Here, eat this root."

1000 BC - "That root is heathen, say this prayer."

1850 AD - "That prayer is superstition, drink this potion."

1940 AD - "That potion is snake oil, swallow this pill."

1985 AD - "That pill is ineffective, take this antibiotic."

2000 AD - "That antibiotic is artificial. Here, eat this root!"

LAUGHTER LINES

"FATHER."

The natural progression of what a child thinks about his father.

- 4 Years: My daddy can do anything.
7 Years: My dad knows a lot, a whole lot.
8 Years: My father doesn't quite know everything.
12 Years: Oh well, naturally Father doesn't know everything.
14 Years: Father? Hopelessly old-fashioned.
21 Years: Oh that man is out of date. What did you expect?
25 Years: He knows a little bit about it, but not much.
30 Years: Must find out what Dad thinks about it.
35 Years: A little patience, let's get Dad's meaning first.
50 Years: What would Dad have thought about it?
60 Years: My dad knew literally everything.
65 Years: I wish I could talk it over with Dad once more.

LET'S BE REASONABLE.

A well-known preacher mentioned in a sermon that God came out of nowhere. After the message a fellow challenged him on that point. He said, "Preacher, Let's be reasonable about this," to which the minister replied, "All right, if you want to be reasonable about it, the reason God came from nowhere was that there wasn't any where for him to come from, and coming from nowhere, he stood on nothing, for there was nowhere for him to stand. And standing on nothing, he reached out to where there was nowhere to reach and caught something when there was nothing to catch and hung something on nothing and told it to stay there, and nobody said a word. And the reason nobody said anything was that there wasn't anybody there to say anything, so God himself said, 'That's good!'"

LAUGHTER IS HEALTHY IN MARRIAGE

I'm married to a joker. Greg can see the funny side of anything, even in the dead of night, or when disaster strikes. He's always playing practical jokes on me. So I was delighted the day I finally got "pay back."

My plan was simple: hide in a dark corner and ambush Greg as he walked in the house from the garage. It was perfect! While some people don't like to be scared, my husband thrives on it. I knew he'd find it hilarious—and I'd get him back for all his practical jokes. The garage door lifted slowly as Greg's Honda Civic approached after a long day at work. *He'll never expect this*, I thought, and laughed as I anticipated the look on his face.

I giggled as I hid in the corner awaiting his arrival. I remained perfectly still as the door opened. Greg took two steps in and then noticed a dark, sinister figure standing near his left shoulder. At that exact moment I leaned in toward him. Startled, Greg let out a shrieking yelp and flew back into the door.

"Sweet revenge!" I yelled as Greg massaged his pounding heart. We exchanged high-fives and embraced. "Welcome home!" I said, as we both laughed.



After Greg and I settled into a quiet evening, I began to reflect on the fact that one of my favorite things about our marriage is the fun we have together. I smiled as I remembered Greg's scream and the joy it gave me to scare him. The best part was when, later that evening, he told me how my little practical joke actually helped him feel connected to me. Who knew that my prank could turn into emotional intimacy?

During our 12 years of marriage, Greg and I have discovered that laughter is healthy, both emotionally and physically. Having a sense of humor helps keep our relationship fresh. One of the first things that attracted me to Greg was his ability to make me laugh. Laughter brought me joy during our courtship, and it continues to bring me happiness all these years later. Often in the midst of life's chaos, a simple smile or a giggle can lighten tense situations. It creates a relaxed kind of intimacy. Greg claims that after a long day at work, coming home to an environment filled with laughter significantly eases his stress level.

Laughter is healthy in marriage

Humor in marriage has always fascinated me. As I researched what the experts had to say about fun in marriage, I was overwhelmed by its importance. In his book *Fighting for Your Marriage*, marriage researcher Dr. Howard Markman reports that the amount of fun couples had together emerged as the single strongest factor in their overall marital happiness. Other positives were occurring in these relationships—but good relationships became great when they were preserving both the quantity and quality of fun times together.



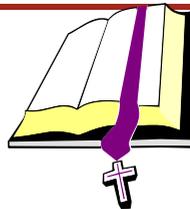
But the sad truth is that many couples no longer share the type of fun they had when they were dating or newly married. It's almost as though the daily grind of life has zapped their ability and/or desire to have fun together. It certainly makes sense: keeping up with jobs, kids, church, and friends makes it increasingly difficult to find time together. Throw conflict into the pot, and you have the perfect environment for removing the fun from life. Greg and I made a commitment that our relationship would never lose that sense of fun. So we've made it a priority—we even schedule it on our calendars! And we protect that time. We don't talk about difficult topics or bring up a subject matter that may lead to conflict. Over the years I can recall how laughter and fun have influenced both stressful and joyful times in our home. From recovering after a C-section delivery (although that did hurt to laugh!) to roaring at the hilarious things our kids say to planning our practical jokes, laughter has continued to bring Greg and me closer in our relationship. And that, of course, has been great fun!

Erin Smalley

Memory Verse

As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him; for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust.

Psalm 103:14



JUNE-JULY AT A GLANCE

<u>Date</u>	<u>10:30AM</u>	<u>6:00PM</u>
16th JUN	(FS) Don't Try It-It's Dangerous Acts 9:1-19	NO EVENING SERVICE
23rd JUN	(H&A) No Magic Formula Mark 5:21-43	The Questions of Jesus John: 21:15-19
30th JUN	(MC) Follow Me Gal. 5: 1, 13-25; Luke 9: 51-end	The Questions of Jesus 2 Luke 24:13-35
7th JULY	(HC) Reasons for Rejoicing Luke 10:1-11, 16 - 20 2 Kings 5: 1 - 14	Overview of 1 Peter 1 Peter
14th JULY	(AA) Go and Do Likewise Luke 10:25 -37	NO EVENING SERVICE
21st JULY	(MP) Being Mary & Martha Gen. 8:1 -10; Luke 10: 38 - end	Precious Salvation 1 Peter 1: 1 - 12

Note:

(HC) - indicates Holy Communion (Common Worship)

(MP) - Morning Prayer; (AA) - All Age Service;

(H&A)- Healing and Anointing .

There is Holy Communion Service every Sunday at 8am using the Book of Common Prayer

NOTICE BOARD

Healing and anointing service-

June 23rd, 10.30am.

Summer Barbecue - July 14th

12noon -3.30pm

Day- coach trip to Bournemouth -

July 20th (Adult £22, children under 16, £10)

HEAVENLY CORRESPONDENCE

E-MAIL FROM GOD (38)

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From: **GOD, YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER**

To: **You, My beloved child**

Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for
he who promised is faithful
Hebrews 10:23

Subject: **TRUST ME**

My Child,

There's a saying, "Who can you trust these days?" Maybe you don't trust your parents, your friends, or even the leaders at your church. Maybe you have a good reason to distrust them.

However, the question is, do you trust Me? If anyone ever hurt you, that was not I. I will never hurt you. In fact I hate it when you're hurt. Know that I exist, that I'm powerful enough to save you, and that I love you intensely. People may let you down, but I never will.

Don't stop trusting Me just because some Christians do cruel or stupid things. I am faithful. My words in the Bible are true. Don't give up on Me, I will never give up on you.

Your Faithful Father,
God

Adapted from 'e-mail from God for Teens'-Clonigers

TEXT FOR THE YEAR (Isaiah 41:10. NLT)

Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand.

FINDING OUT ABOUT ...CHRIST CHURCH?

Tel/Fax: 020 8340 1566

We are a family of men and women, boys and girls who are resolved to live for God in a world that has largely chosen to ignore Him.

We believe that it is God's world and that He has given the answer to all human problems in Jesus Christ. As a body of believers, we offer to all who come, regular opportunities for worship and service that point the way to God as our strongest resource in all aspects of life.

We will be pleased to welcome you to any of our activities.
You will find a warm welcome at Christ Church.

Times of worship and fellowship are shown below:

- Sunday** - **8.00 am.** Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
- **10.30 am.** Main service with Crèche facilities
There is all-age/parade service once every month - usually the third Sunday of the month unless otherwise indicated.
- **6.00 pm.** Evening worship

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES AT A GLANCE

- Sunday** - Choir practice in church (9.30 am)
Monday - Brownies meeting in church (5.30 pm)
- Prayer meeting in church - 17th June, 1st July, 15th July
Wednesday - Fellowship Meal in church (6:30 pm) followed by, Bible Fellowship (7.15 pm)
Thursday - Homework Club (5 pm-7 pm during term-time)
Friday - Scouts meeting in church and hall (6.30 pm)
- Music Team practice in choir vestry (6.00 pm)
Saturday - Intercessors prayer meeting in church (7-8 pm)
Enquiry/Counselling/Prayer Lifeline - please phone 020 8340 1566
Editorial Board: Sheila Wheeler, Iyabo Agbelusi, Dele Agbelusi
Vicar: - Revd Canon Dele Agbelusi
Church Wardens: Peter Green, Jibola Fapohunda, Charles Murphy
Lay Ministers: Richard Mercer, Iyabo Agbelusi
Organist: Jan Hazucha

YOUR COMMENTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS ARE WELCOME

PLEASE WRITE TO THE EDITOR AT:

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