



Bulletin

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HARVEST MATURITY IN AUGUST

DON'T HIDE YOUR SCARS

BY JIM DALY

DAVE ROEVER PROMISED HIS FIANCÉE HE'D RETURN FROM THE Vietnam War without a scratch. Eight months into his tour of duty, a sniper's bullet exploded a phosphorous grenade Dave was holding in his hand. Most of his face and body were horribly scarred. He barely survived.

From that moment forward, Dave could have hidden his scars from the world. That's what a lot of us do. We cover up our scars—both physical *and* emotional. We're just as ashamed of the scars on our hearts as the ones on our bodies. They make us feel broken, disfigured and ugly. The trouble is that when we hide our brokenness, our shame grows worse, not better.

Thankfully, Dave turned to God to redeem his wounds, to use them as illustrations of the hope he has found in Jesus Christ. Ever since, Dave has traveled the world, encouraging people not to hide their scars. He says, "Scars are evidence of pain, but they're also evidence of survival."

Isaiah 53:5 says, "With his wounds we are healed." *Our* wounds find healing through *Jesus'* wounds. The Son of God suffered and died that we might live. Eternally, yes, but also right here and now, in freedom and hope.

Through Christ our scars are no longer a source of humiliation and shame, but symbols of God's love, strength and healing power. Want to know more? Visit www.focusonthefamily.com.



**Tough
Questions
from Kids**

Why do
we have
to respect
teachers?



WRITE A LOVE LETTER TO YOUR SPOUSE

Texting is easy and immediate—but it's not a letter.

Handwritten letters are tangible and permanent; they require time and reflection. They're also incredibly personal. You see the person's personality on the page in cursive loops or tiny block letters; you smell the perfume or cologne dabbed onto it.

The slow nature of handwriting also invites us to ponder. It decelerates us, which is good when we want to write a love letter. When you give your spouse a handwritten letter, you're saying, "You are valuable to me."

And in 10 or 20 years, God willing, you'll be able to pull that letter out of its box and sense the emotion all over again as you read it.

In writing a letter to your spouse, consider these four tips.

1. Be specific

Describe the traits and behaviors you appreciate: how she never forgets to kiss you goodbye in the morning or how he makes up bedtime stories for the kids. Maybe you can rave about your mate's quirks. Communicating these things will bless your spouse.



2. Be authentic

That's the advice from Jen Adams, an associate professor of communication and theatre, after reading 400 love letters she found in the attic of a Victorian house. The letters were written by a couple who owned the house in the 1930s. "We are not all poets," she says. "And that's probably not what our loved ones want to hear anyway. They want to hear our voice."

3. Share a memory

As you're writing—slowly—hark back to the early days when you could think of nothing but this man or woman you are now married to. Share the feelings from that time as well as a significant moment.

4. Mention your future together

Are you looking forward to your evening together, your next travel adventure or a dance in your living room? Let them know you're dreaming about them.

If these tips about how to write a love letter seem too intimidating, just choose brevity. Write a simple message on a piece of paper and tuck it into your wife's purse or your husband's wallet. A scrawled "Love you always, babe" in ballpoint pen will communicate plenty to your spouse.

—Julie Holmquist

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO SET A GOOD EXAMPLE?

Children often model their own behaviors after those of others. Likely, your kids watch and observe your actions without you even knowing. How can you set a good example?

In Titus 2:7-8, Paul describes setting a good example: "Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good deeds, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, and sound speech."

Within this context Paul describes qualifications for leaders in the church. The Lord's standard for leadership requires a high level of commitment and character. He looks for character marked by honesty, humility and honor. How much more is this true within parenting?

As a parent, we know this: The mistakes will come. When they do, what is your response? How do you treat your kids when they make mistakes, or when you treat them without patience and grace? Where do you turn for guidance on how to set a good example for your kids? Paul provides some insight in Colossians 3:16: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom . . . with thankfulness in your hearts to God."

—David Kier



HELPING TEENS GO BACK TO SCHOOL

Teens need your help to make the transition back to school as smooth as possible. Always start with prayer. Then help them avoid unnecessary stress and find the right balance between school and the out-of-school hours during the day.

Here's how we can help our teens better adjust to school-year changes:

Express expectations clearly. Now is the time to establish goals for the coming school year. Have those conversations before school starts so your teens understand your expectations.

Go over their schedule with them. Several weeks before school starts, your teens will probably receive their class schedule. This is a good time to talk with them about their classes and teachers, along with any potential problems or concerns. Then together, strategize ways they can respond to those issues in a healthy way.

Help them get organized. Sometimes the stress of the new and unknown can seem overwhelming. Help your teens think through how they'd like to organize their locker, supplies and clothes. By brainstorming with them, you can bring a sense of excitement to an otherwise mundane task.

—Jim Burns

FAMILY MATTERS

Answers to your questions...

What's the difference between marriage and cohabitation?

ANSWER:

A young man at a marriage conference where I was speaking once asked me, "Why get married? I love my girlfriend, and I'm committed to her. I do all the things that you're encouraging us to do to have a strong and healthy relationship. Why do we need expensive rings and a piece of paper to prove our love?"

To answer, we need to start with the apostle Paul.

When Paul wrote to the Ephesians, he had a lot to say about marriage. "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become

one flesh.' This mystery is profound," he wrote in Ephesians 5:31-32.

And he's right. In God's eyes, marriage is much more than a formal declaration of love and commitment between two people.

During a traditional wedding ceremony, the man and woman make this vow: "I take you to be my wedded wife/husband, and I do promise and covenant, before God and these witnesses, to be your loving and faithful husband/wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, until we are parted by death."

When you get married, you're making a lifelong promise to God and each other. In our culture, I'm not

sure young couples really understand the seriousness of the wedding vow. Take a look at what Jesus said in Matthew 19:4-6: "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two but one flesh. *What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate*" (emphasis added).

God is involved in marriage, which is what makes it a sacred agreement that's supposed to last a lifetime. This is just one of the reasons marriage and living together are vastly different.

—Greg Smalley

TOUGH QUESTIONS FROM KIDS

ANSWER:

The Bible says God expects His people to respect those in authority. That includes teachers. Also, for teachers to do their best, they need your respect. If you don't cooperate, listen and learn, you'll be hurting yourself and your future. If you respect your teachers, you'll be polite and kind, listen to them and do what they say.

For more information on any of the topics in this bulletin, go to FocusOnTheFamily.com or call 800-A-FAMILY (232-6459). To reach Customer Service regarding your subscription, please call 1-800-692-9912. To check out more ministry resources, please visit us at www.tyndaleperiodicals.com.

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