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# A Measure of Grace

A Publication of Where Grace Abounds

## Work and Fellowship

*by Mary Heathman*

Every month after our intercessory prayer meeting, several of us go out for breakfast afterward, and I usually linger longer than I intended to. As we finally go our separate ways, a familiar yearning wells up, “I wish we could always be together like this.”

Book discussions are another favorite gathering. After a recent discussion with friends about a favorite book, sadness overtook me again—I didn’t want it to be over. The emotion isn’t maudlin, but very real, actual tears welled up as I headed for my car. If the feelings could talk they would say, “I just wish I could live in that sort of environment.”

At a Christian Ministry Management Conference in Colorado Springs a few years ago, a few friends

*(Continued on page 2)*

### Inside this issue:

Work and Fellowship	1
Reflections	3
10 Tips	4
December at a Glance	8
January and Beyond	8

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*Work and Fellowship continued from page 1)*

and I shared a meal and enjoyed a bit of fellowship, a respite from a rather grueling week. While I sat at the table, I was overcome with a desire to stay. Not to stay in that particular hotel, at that particular table, but to stay with what it represented to me.

It is good when God's people come together and feast, isn't it?

Whether we are feasting on a meal together, or enjoying one another's minds as we discuss books, or politics, or philosophy, or cars, or movies, or . . . or just about anything. Isn't it good?

As a missionary, I can tell you that it is a delight to get together with believers – to rest and recreate and ruminate together. And it is hard to go back into the fields.

From time to time, when the subject of community comes up, I think about these things and ask myself – “Why do I do it?” Why do I leave the warmth of the fellowship and go out; what is driving me?

A favorite reading from a church

hymnal comes to mind:

**I Stand By the Door**  
**by Samuel Shoemaker**

*I stand by the door.*

*I neither go too far in, nor stay too far out.*

*The door is the most important door in the world.*

*It is the door through which men walk when they find God.*

*There's no use my going way inside, and staying there,*

*When so many are still outside and they, as much as I,*

*Crave to know where the door is.*

*And all that so many ever find*

*Is only the wall where a door ought to be.*

*They creep along the wall like blind men.*

*With outstretched, groping hands, Feeling for a door, knowing there must be a door.*

*Yet they never find it. . . .*

*So, I stand by the door.*

The fellowship of the saints is for strengthening, for sustenance, for rest; it is absolutely a pleasure and

*(Continued on page 7)*

***The fellowship  
of the  
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for sustenance,  
for rest...***

## Reflections: Thoughts from a WGA Leader

*By Nancy Hicks*

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Therefore, **confess your sins** to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. James 5:16

I don't know about you, but the thought of confessing my sins to someone else often feels like being asked to take off my clothes and stand naked in front of them. Under fluorescent lights. Fear of the shame and exposure is often so overwhelming that I just don't do it.

But I've been thinking about this lately. I think this picture is completely backwards. When Adam and Eve sinned they realized they already were naked and they grabbed the vegetation at hand in an attempt to cover themselves. Isaiah tells that "All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags" (Is 64:6a). Old leaves and filthy rags. Not the glorious wardrobe I had hoped to present.

The truth about my attempts to cover my own sin, to create my own righteousness is that I can't. I'm flapping in the breeze just as if I were wearing a too-small hospital gown. In my own attempts to put my sin behind me, my nakedness is there for everyone to see.

But John tells us in 1 John 1:9 that "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." What does having our righteousness purified look like?

"I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels." (Isaiah 61:10)

Isaiah paints this marvelous picture of being not only clothed but decorated and bejeweled by God. A robe of righteousness. The truth is that when I confess my sin, my nakedness is covered by a robe of righteousness. Confession doesn't expose me, it covers me!

In addition, James tells us that confessing our sins and praying for one another brings about our healing. I don't know about you, but having my naked sinfulness covered and being healed are pretty high on my wish list for the new year. Maybe high enough that I'll find some safe people and be bold enough to confess! ☆

# 10 Tips for Raising G-Rated Kids in an X-Rated World

By Doug Fields and Jim Burns  
(Reprinted with permission)

Raising kids in today's culture is not easy. There's no question that the way we parent is influenced by the world we live in. And what a world it is! We need to help our children deal with drugs, sexuality, movies, television, video games, the Internet, terrorism and war. It's our goal as parents to raise our kids in this X-rated culture to become G-rated people. It can feel overwhelming trying to give our teenagers the tools they need to make godly decisions in an ungodly world. Recently, I had the privilege of talking with youth ministry expert Doug Fields for a two-part broadcast on *HomeWord with Jim Burns*. Doug shared insights into 10 action steps that parents can take to raise healthy kids in today's culture.

## 1. Instill belief in them.

The beliefs and values your children will carry into adulthood are very dependent on the examples they see parents setting at home. It's critical to understand and believe that as a parent, your actions, values and beliefs will have the greatest influence in the life of your maturing child. Parental influence

is a high calling. It's part of your destiny and your enduring legacy, for better or for worse.

## 2. Be present in your kids' lives.

Presence in a kid's life is spelled T-I-M-E. One of the major contributing factors for healthy kids points back to parents who were present in those kids' lives. Some parents subscribe to the theory that quality time beats quantity time. These parents are simply wrong. Parents must prioritize and reorganize their schedules to be present for their kids. When they get older, your kids won't care that you worked more so they could ride in nicer cars or live in a bigger home. They will care about how much time you spent with them!

## 3. Make memories with them.

Our lives are a museum of memories that contribute to who we are today. That's why it's key to strive to create good memories for our kids. Good kids have good memories. This isn't to say that our kids' lives won't have their share of bad memories. But, on balance, good memories trump bad ones. So, build great family traditions at holidays, birthday celebrations and summer

(Continued on page 5)

(10 Tips ... continued from page 4)

vacations, just to name a few. Make memories for your family by creating new adventures for them. Solidify these memories by being sure to capture them through pictures, video, and in writing through journals or letters.

#### **4. Give them encouragement.**

Encouragement is food for our souls and we all long for it. Our kids need encouragement, too. Words are powerful. Words can either build confidence or they can destroy. A parent's words have lasting effect. Learn to be an encourager. Catch your kids in the act of doing something right, and then take the opportunity to mention it! In addition, be sure to go beyond encouraging for just a job well done. Kids mess up and fail all the time. Find ways to encourage your kids, despite their failures. Encouraging beyond performance means conveying that you love and value your kids even when they mess up.

#### **5. Be positive and caring role models.**

You are your children's role model for living life. Be assured that they are watching you. They know what you say and how you say it. They know how you treat people. They know how you respond to conflict. Kids need you to set a positive and caring standard for living life. They need your integrity and they need

you to set the pace when it comes to faith. Your kids know that you aren't perfect, so there's no pressure to try to act like it. What your kids need are parents who demonstrate what it means to be a lover and follower of God, despite their shortcomings.

#### **6. Give them discipline and boundaries.**

Providing your kids with consistent boundaries and discipline is all about guidance, not punishment. Boundaries and discipline are the result of love. Giving kids too much freedom and not holding them accountable for their actions does not demonstrate love. When disciplining, be delicate. Don't discipline in anger.

#### **7. Give them affection.**

Emotionally healthy kids have been given lots of proper affection. Kids who don't get adequate affection from their parents often turn to inappropriate sources of affection. And, there's plenty of inappropriate affection to be found in today's X-rated culture. Unfortunately, kids who have their needs for affection met in inappropriate ways, often become emotionally distant, not emotionally healthy. If you aren't an affectionate parent, get over it! Learn to become one. It's that important to the health of your child!

(Continued on page 6)

*(10 Tips... continued from page 5)*

**8. Develop responsibility in them.**

Parents want their kids to grow up into responsible, functioning adults. Unfortunately, we often unintentionally teach irresponsibility, instead. We allow kids to become apathetic by too quickly solving their problems for them. We allow kids to pass the buck by blaming others. And, we are slow to force our kids to carry their own weight. The solution comes in not rescuing our kids from their problems. Sure, there are times that we need to lend a hand and help out, but these times are, in reality, few and far between. We must let kids wrestle with consequences. Whenever we jump in to bail our kids out, they never learn to take responsibility for themselves and they don't have to experience consequences. Learning from mistakes is a great path to responsibility and wisdom.

**9. Be fun.**

In the book of Ecclesiastes it says this: One of the necessary rhythms of life is laughter and dance. If you want to fully understand life, if you want to fully live abundantly, meaningfully, joyfully you need to have some laughing and dance in your life. It's one of the necessary rhythms of life. This generation of kids is totally stressed out. So, when kids see their parents injecting fun and laughter into life, it helps relieve some of the anxieties they feel. So, lighten up the mood

in your home. Have some fun with the life and family God has given to you.

**10. Give them a peaceful home.**

Your kids don't need a perfect home, but to thrive, they need a peaceful one. Kids are at battle all day long. They're battling an X-rated culture and language and values. They're battling bullies and peer pressure and body image and conforming. In your teen's world, there are battles going on all the time. They need to come home to a place where they can retreat and drop their battle gear at the door and be in a shelter where they can just be themselves. Your home ought to be the one place your kids feel truly safe; where they can be loved and known and cared for.

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(Work and Fellowship continued from page 2)

delight, and the desire to stay comes from our deep understanding of the home that awaits us all in heaven one day. But for now, this side of heaven, the gathering of the community and all that it offers is for two purposes—rest and recuperation for battle-weary saints, and for strengthening, equipping, and vision that enables a saint to return to the front lines of the Lamb's War. It is always preparation for going back out to whatever part of "all the world" is our part of the Great Commission. As I look ahead to all that 2007 will bring to us, I look forward to

great times of working together in the power of the Holy Spirit as He stands with us at the door, and to the fellowship within which the Lord heals and restores us, that we might be strong in Him and for His purposes.

Join me in praying for WGA staff member, Roger Jones, who is currently on sabbatical, and for all of our staff and leaders. May the Lord's purposes be accomplished as we fellowship together in our little community's rhythm of work and rest. ☆

*I do not understand the mystery of grace- only that  
it meets us where we are, but does not leave us  
where it found us.*

Anne Lamott



## December At a Glance

**December 3rd:** Mary presented at First Friends Church in Colorado Springs

**December 10<sup>th</sup>:** WGA is participated in a Missions Fair at Peterson Air Force base in Colorado Springs

### Thursday Night Group

**December 7th:** 49

**December 14th:** 50

**December 21st:** No Group

**December 28th:** No Group

## January And Beyond

**January 4<sup>th</sup>:** Scott Kingry will be speaking at Denver Seminary

**January 5-7<sup>th</sup>:** Men's Commitment Group and Survivors of Abuse Group begin this weekend. Please pray for those participating!

**January 9th:** Mary will be presenting at Abundant Life Church

**January 13th:** Intercessory Prayer: Join us from 7:00—9:00 am at the WGA offices

**January 28th:** Scott will be presenting at Hope Fellowship

**January 30-February 2:** Exodus Leaders' Conference in Orlando

**March 23-25, 2007:** Family and Friends Retreat

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*A Measure of Grace*  
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*Where Grace Abounds*  
exists to guide and support  
men and women who seek to  
understand sexuality and  
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all people to know and  
personally appropriate  
God's plan for their  
sexuality and relationships.

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