

March 2010

"...your life is hidden with
Christ in God."

Colossians 3:3b

Upcoming Events

March 3rd
*Shepherds'
Conference*
No SemWives
Meeting

March 10th
*Remember Who
You Serve*
Lisa Hughes

March 17th
*Discipline in the
Parsonage*
Jack Hughes

March 24th
*Panel of
Ministry Wives*
Louise Essex,
moderator

March 31st
Spring Tea



Trusting Our Sovereign God

God does have a purpose and a plan for you, and *God has the power to carry out that plan*. It is one thing to know that no person or circumstance can touch us outside of God's sovereign control; it is still another to realize that no person or circumstances can frustrate God's purpose for our lives.

God has an over-arching purpose for all believers: to conform us to the likeness of His Son, Jesus Christ (Romans 8:29). He also has a specific purpose for each of us that is His unique, tailor-made plan for our individual life (see Ephesians 2:10). And God will fulfill that purpose. As Psalm 128:8 says, "The LORD will fulfill his purpose for me." Because we know God is directing our lives to an ultimate end and because we know He is sovereignly able to orchestrate the events of our lives toward that end, we can trust Him. We can commit to Him not only the ultimate outcome of our lives, but also all the intermediate events and circumstances that will bring us to that outcome."

Our lives are ... cluttered with a lot of "if onlys." "If only I had done this," or "if only that had not happened." But again, God has no "if onlys." God never makes a mistake; God has no regrets. "As for God, his way is perfect" (Psalm 18:30). We *can* trust God. He is trustworthy.

Bridges, Jerry. *Trusting God: Even When Life Hurts*. NavPress, 1988. 215 pp.

But our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases. **Psalm 115:3**

Recipes

Friendship Casserole

Submitted by Lisa Burns, wife of TMS student Ken Burns

This recipe makes one to eat and one to freeze or share with a friend.

Prep Time: 30 minutes
Cook Time: 45 minutes
Makes 6-8 servings (twice)

2 lbs. ground beef
1 jar spaghetti sauce
2 Tbsp. sugar
1 lb. medium egg noodles
1/2 cup butter
3/4 tsp. onion salt
3/4 tsp. garlic salt
1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese
12 oz. shredded mozzarella cheese



Brown and drain meat. Add spaghetti sauce and sugar; simmer for 20 minutes. Cook noodles according to package directions. Drain noodles and toss with butter, salts and Parmesan cheese. Spray two 9x13 pans with nonstick spray. Put 1/4 sauce in each pan and then add 1/2 noodles. Top with remaining sauce and grated cheese. Bake covered for 25 minutes at 350 degrees. Add more cheese if desired.

*Do not bake in oven if you plan on freezing. Thaw and then cook as directed.

Homemade Granola

Submitted by Jayme Stiles, wife of TMS student Ken Stiles

Prep Time: 15 minutes
Cook Time: 5–10 minutes
Makes 16 servings (1 cup each)

12 cups rolled oats
1 1/2 cups olive oil
1 1/2 cups honey (agave nectar is a possible substitute)
2 cups raw sliced almonds (or any nut/seed of choice)
2 cups raisins (or dried cranberries or any dried fruit combination of choice)
1 tsp. vanilla
1 Tbsp. cinnamon

Mix ingredients in the order given. Place the mixture on a cookie sheet (or 2 or 3 depending on how much you make) that has been covered in parchment paper. Bake at 425 for 5 - 10 minutes or until golden brown, stirring occasionally. A thin layer of granola will cook faster. Cool on cookie sheet(s); store cooled granola in an airtight container. Serve with milk or yogurt. Note: This recipe may be cut in half to yield a smaller quantity.



Hosting Tips

Submitted by Jayme Stiles, wife of TMS Student Ken Stiles

Over the years, my husband and I have frequently hosted overnight guests and have also been guests in other people's homes. While away, we've appreciated certain gestures that made us feel "at home" Here are some that we now include when welcoming guests to our home.

- Set out a small basket with items your guests may have forgotten or that they may need during their stay. Q-tips, cotton balls, wash cloths, travel size toiletries are some of the most essential. Find an inexpensive basket on sale and save those travel size toiletries from your own hotel stays to offer to guests.
- Leave a chocolate candy bar wrapped with a ribbon and a little tag that says "Welcome (family name)." You could also leave a small dish of candy, nuts or mints.
- Leave towels and wash cloths on the bed for your guests.
- If your guests are first time visitors to your home, leave a welcome note telling them where food and other pertinent items can be found in the kitchen.

These few simple touches are inexpensive ways to help guests feel welcomed and "at home" during their stay.

"Be hospitable to one another without complaint." - 1 Peter 4:7



Saved by Grace

Submitted by Christy Beutler, wife of TMS Student Matthew Beutler



Although I was raised in a Christian home, it was not until my college years that I became a true believer in Christ. During those early years I thought I was a Christian because I was a moral person, believed in God and respected and feared Him.

My formative years were spent in constant moves between the Middle East and the Midwest. In the Middle East, “Christian” was used as a title for an American. However, the Christian *faith* of my family had to remain a secret, so we worshiped privately in our home. The Midwestern town in which we lived was, in many respects, spiritually dry. We finally found a solid church but then spent many years hopping from one church to the next. Often I would find an excuse to stay home from church.

When it was time for college, I moved to San Francisco—across the country from my family who was by that time living in the South. Living on my own for the first time, I began to wonder if the religion of my parents was mine. I had always gone along with it and never questioned it, but now I faced an intense struggle with many questions and doubts. I became gripped with a fear of death and hell, though I consoled my guilt by comparing myself to my peers. I was “good” compared to them—and was constantly told this by others.

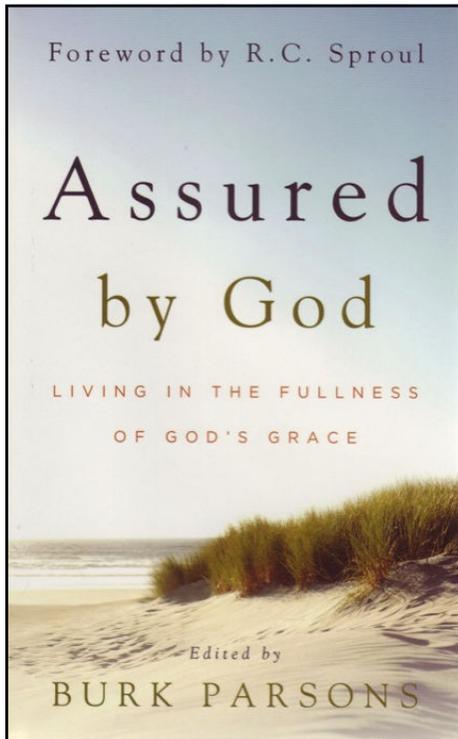
One weekend my mom came for a visit and we became involved in an argument. She had seen some changes in my life and my way of thinking and pleaded with me to follow Christ. I became increasingly angry and told her that I wanted nothing to do with God and that I, in fact, hated Him. In the moments that followed, the Lord showed me an emptiness and terror I had never felt before. Then, in His grace and mercy, He opened my eyes to see myself as I was: a sinner who had not met God’s perfect standard. I had not *only* sinned in that moment, but constantly throughout my life. The Bible says, “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus (Romans 3:23,24). I needed a savior. I needed Jesus Christ. I asked the Lord for forgiveness for my sins and for the first time, by God’s grace, I believed that Jesus Christ was my Savior and my Lord.

In the months and years to follow, I saw much growth through the change God had done in my heart. In His providence, I moved back home and attended a Bible-believing church. I began to study the Bible, pray, and attend Bible studies. The Lord also provided me with edifying friends who prayed for me, kept me accountable, and served as solid Christian examples in my life.

As I read Titus 3:3-5, which seems to describe me: “At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy,” I thank God for His mercy and my salvation.

Book Review: *Assured by God*

Submitted by Andrea Hernandez, wife of TMS Student Kempiz Hernandez



In my journey of faith, perhaps because of disobedience or reliance on feelings rather than God's Word, I have been tempted to doubt my salvation. I began to pray to the Lord for insight and direction in this area, not only to quiet my own heart, but also to help other believers who wrestle with the issue of assurance. The Lord graciously answered my prayer in many ways, one of which was reading the book *Assured by God*. The book is a collection of writings on the subject of the assurance of salvation by authors such as Al Mohler, Sinclair Ferguson, John MacArthur, and Jerry Bridges. They write with a pastoral desire to help believers better understand God's promises and to help them live in the fullness and joy of God's grace in their lives.

Second Peter 1:10 records the command to seek assurance of our salvation, not in morbid introspection, but in self examination that is focused on Christ, so that our hearts may be assured in Christ alone and by faith alone. This book corrects faulty, unbiblical thinking that prevents true peace by carefully explaining and applying familiar New Testament passages concerning our salvation. One such passage is Philippians 1:6 where we are encouraged to have confidence that, "He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion in the day of Christ." This reminds us

that our faith was initiated by God the Father. It was made possible by the Son and is now sustained by the power of the Holy Spirit. Salvation is not initiated at all by human choice, nor kept by any human effort. Our redemption is all of grace, and thus, all of the glory goes to God. Christ is at work in and through us, and it is His work, not our own, that is the entire ground of our acceptance with God. What freedom exists when we understand this!

The book also points out that this assurance of His saving grace should stimulate our hearts to faithful, God-glorifying service to our King. May we continue to run the race with endurance, setting our minds on our awesome and mighty Savior and Lord and, in obedience to the instructions stated in Hebrews 12:2, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith. As for me, I can now give praise to God for the peace He has accomplished in my heart with the precious and glorious reality of the assurance of God's sustaining grace.

Parsons, Burk, ed. *Assured by God: Living in the Fullness of God's Grace*. P & R Publishing, 2007. 204 pp.

These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life. **1 John 5:13**

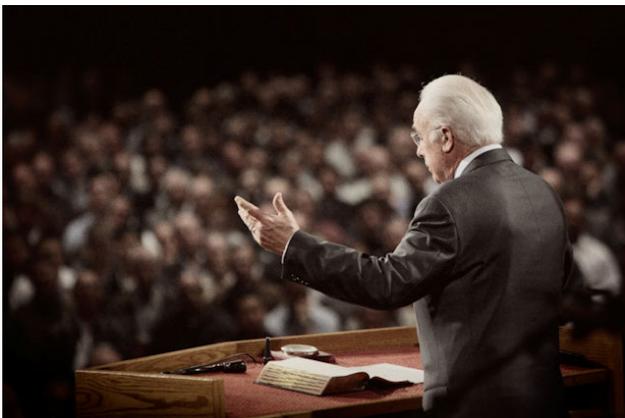
Practical Homemaking Tips

Submitted by Lauren Eckert, wife of TMS Student Jeff Eckert

I am often looking for ways to make my home more organized and efficient. One way I found to help accomplish this task was by folding my plastic bags from the grocery store. I start by placing the bag on a flat surface. I smooth out most of the wrinkles and rid the bag of any air pockets. I then fold the bag in half. I keep folding the bag in half until the bag is one to one and a half inches in width. I then start with a corner at the bottom of the bag and fold upward in the shape of a triangle (just like folding a flag). I keep folding until I get to the top. Once I get to the top of the bag, I tuck the excess bag into a flap of the triangle. This secures the bag into a small, flat triangle. I keep all of my folded bags in a big canvas bag for easy access. This saves so much space and frees me of the hassle from untangling bags. I can grab one neatly folded bag and go!



Shepherds' Conference 2010



Dates:

Wednesday, March 3rd through Sunday, March 7th

Keynote Speakers:

John MacArthur, Al Mohler, Steve Lawson, Rick Holland, Phil Johnson and Tom Pennington

Location:

Grace Community Church

Evening sessions are open to the public. For more information, visit:

<http://www.shepherdsfellowship.org/SC>.

For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. **Hebrews 4:12**

Facebook Filter and Fundamentals for the Faithful

Taken from the blog of TMS Professor Dr. Bill Barrick, drbarrick.org/MyBlog.html

When it comes to Facebook, keep in mind that many, many people (Christian and non-Christian alike) will see and read what you post. What you post affects your testimony, your family's testimony, and your church's testimony. What you say about what and when you do it can become the information the unscrupulous and criminal will utilize to steal your identity, to enter your home while you are away, or to stalk you or your family.

- *Proverbs 2:11*: "Discretion will guard you, understanding will watch over you."
- *William J. Toms*: "Be careful how you live. You may be the only Bible some person ever reads."

Choose your friends with care. Don't be bashful about rejecting friend requests on Facebook.

- *1 Corinthians 15:33*: "Do not be deceived: 'Bad company corrupts good morals.'"
- *Japanese Proverb*: "When the character of a man is not clear to you, look at his friends."

Watch the time spent on Facebook. Avoid addiction. Don't be a Facebook junkie.

- *Ephesians 5:15,16*: "Therefore be careful how you walk [= live], not as unwise men, but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil."
- *Benjamin Franklin*: "Would you live with ease, do what you ought, and not what you please."

Christian users of Facebook need a dose of biblical wisdom. Before posting pictures and writing on walls, consider the following contrasts between how Christians ought to think and behave as compared to how the world thinks and behaves. NOTE: Don't take any biblical principle as a reference only to the gender to which it is immediately addressed—all biblical principles apply equally to both men and women (e.g., modesty and being wise).

- *The World*: "I don't say we all ought to misbehave, but we ought to look as if we could."~Orson Welles
- *The Bible*: "Abstain from every form [or, appearance—refers to outward form or appearance] of evil."~1 Thess. 5:22
- *The World*: "You have to do a little bragging on yourself even to your relations—man doesn't get anywhere without advertising."~John Nance Garner
- *The Bible*: "But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, 'God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.'"~James. 4:6
- *The World*: Modesty is the lowest of the virtues, and is a confession of the deficiency it indicates.
- *The Bible*: "I want women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly . . ." 1 Timothy 2:9
- *The World*: "If you've got it, flaunt it." ~Ubiquitous
- *The Bible*: "As a ring of gold in a swine's snout So is a beautiful woman who lacks discretion."~Proverbs 11:22

Facebook offers great opportunities for systematically keeping in touch and for praying for one another. It also provides a means for linking together in great spiritual causes. Like every other tool, however, it has potential for abuse and harm. Use it wisely for the glory of God.

Wise Words for Wise Women

Submitted by Nelly Feldi, wife of TMS Student Matt Feldi

“Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others as more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” Philippians 2:3-7

Early in our marriage, some older married friends suggested that my husband and I meditate upon this passage of Scripture. We have done that and have found it to be instructive not only in our marriage, but in every part of our lives. This passage consistently reminds me of my own sinful tendency towards selfishness. I am so prone to do the very opposite of what this passage commands! Yet my inability to successfully keep this command compels me to look to Jesus, the Author and Perfector of my faith, in Whom lies my only hope of attaining to this high and otherwise unattainable goal.

“To preach the gospel to yourself... means that you continually face up to your own sinfulness and then flee to Jesus through faith in His shed blood and righteous life. It means that you appropriate, again by faith, the fact that Jesus fully satisfied the law of God, that He is your propitiation, and that God’s holy wrath is no longer directed toward you.” Jerry Bridges, *Discipline of Grace*

“We can see...that the continuous day-by-day appropriation of the gospel, as it assures us of the forgiveness of our sins, is an important part of our dealing with sin in our lives...We must preach [the gospel] to ourselves daily.” Jerry Bridges, *Respectable Sins*

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The Distaff Layout Editor: Christy Sherban, wife of TMS Student Alan Sherban

TMS Seminary Wives Disclaimer:

While we recommend many different resources for your consideration, we also encourage you the reader to be like the Bereans who could receive a message with eagerness and then examine the message against the truth of Scripture. ~ Acts 17:11