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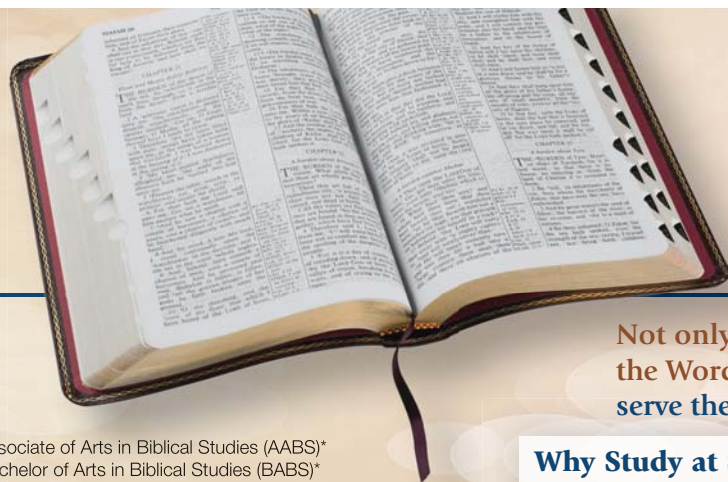
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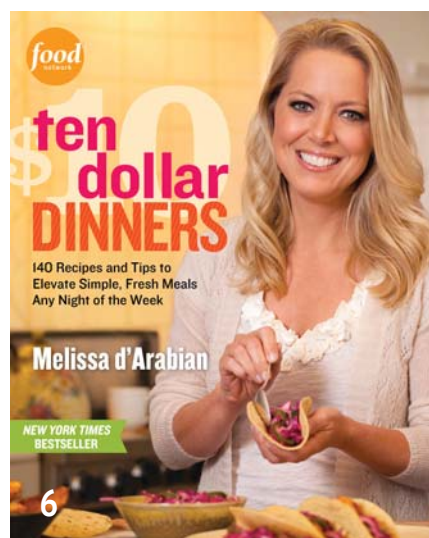
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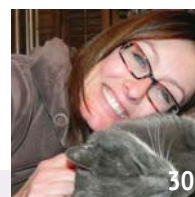
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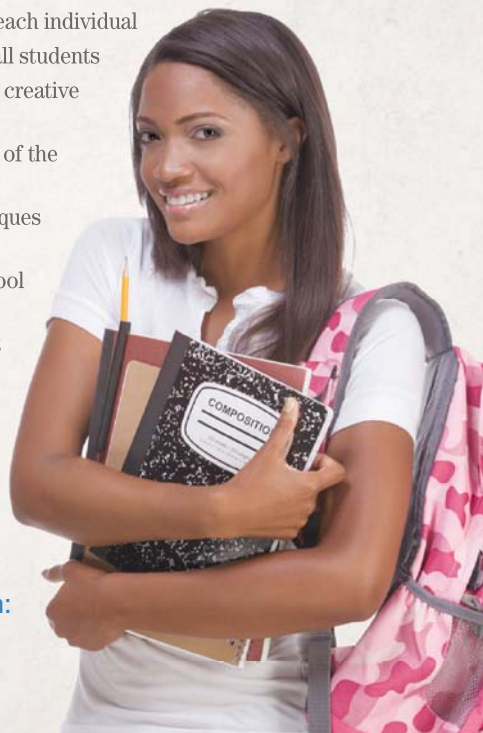
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Unconventional Communion

Our church served Communion this past Sunday, and the servers this time weren't the ministers on the church staff, or the elders, or the Church Board. They were members of a group that comes every Sunday from a facility that is helping them stay sober and out of trouble. It was unconventional. And beautiful.

As I stood in line, waiting my turn to receive elements that connect me to a meal served thousands of years ago, I remembered another unconventional scene when I was in Washington D.C. with several students. I was there for a journalism conference, and the site was near Dupont Circle, long before it became a trendy hotspot for young professionals. Back then it was filled with homeless people, drug dealers and cops.

The students and I went to dinner at a Chinese restaurant where the cook piled way too much food into the Styrofoam platters. We had a fun meal together, and none of us could finish what we had ordered. We didn't want to take the containers back to the hotel. Our rooms didn't have refrigerators, and we were leaving the next morning anyway.

When it was clear that we were not going to eat any more, one of the students gathered up the containers and closed them. I assumed she was being a servant-type and was going to throw them away. She must have good parents, I thought to myself. I'll tell them that they trained her well. She got some plastic bags and utensils from an employee without our noticing. Then we headed back to the hotel.

By the time we got to Dupont Circle, it was very dark. And much, much more

crowded. My parental instincts kicked in and I made sure I could see each student. Then I saw the one who had cleared our table approach some of the locals and hand them containers of food. They gathered around her and she patiently distributed the elements. It was over in minutes.

The rest of us stood in awe as we witnessed this act. Out of our excess, she provided some grace and mercy and relief. I had been a little fearful because

when he had his first Communion experience in church, he wondered what changes would occur when he took the wafer and cup. "Would I be a Superman, a holy man, a healer? Would homework now be easier? Would I be a wiz? Or would I be jailed in piety, condemned to sinlessness, obedience and no fun?"

What he discovered was, "I was still me; there would be no howls of objection, no immediate correction or condemnation, no hint that I was under



we were among hungry strangers. She saw it differently. Give us this day our daily bread, some of them might have prayed.

What she did stuck with me. A week ago while I was sitting at a window table in a restaurant in San Diego, I watched as a young couple sat on a bench outside the restaurant. They appeared to be living on the street. They had a torn piece of cardboard, and I watched them write something on it. Then they turned the cardboard around and set it in front of them on the sidewalk.

It said: "Just hungry."

I asked the waiter for a container and utensils for the food I couldn't finish. When I left the restaurant and gave it to the couple, they looked like they could devour the meal in seconds. They were the age of my own adult kids. Or former students.

The writer Ron Hansen said in his book "A Stay Against Confusion" that

new management, just the calming sense that whoever I was was fine with Jesus. It was a grace I hadn't imagined."

No magic. Just a Presence and Acceptance for a person hungry for presence and acceptance.

I wondered what we all looked like at church last Sunday as we approached the guy holding the elements. What did he see?

My guess is that he saw us the same way he saw himself—standing with a sign written to God that said, "Just hungry."



Dean Nelson directs the journalism program at Point Loma Nazarene University in San Diego. His book about seeing God in everyday life is "God Hides in Plain Sight: How to See the Sacred in a Chaotic World."

How to See the Sacred in a Chaotic World."

Cooking up Joy

Food Network chef rediscovers life's value after deep sorrow

by LORI ARNOLD

Her mom's home phone rang busy. Beep. Beep. Beep. Melissa d'Arabian had just returned to the University of Vermont after having spent the weekend in Washington D.C. with her single mother who worked as a doctor. The two had shopped for a formal dress that Melissa, then 20 and a junior studying political science, needed for a sorority event. They ended the shopping spree with dinner.

"It was a very typical college daughter-mom thing to do," d'Arabian said. "I remember when I found the dress that I loved, it was more expensive than what our budget was. I remember my mom said, 'Oh, well, if you lend it to me whenever I want to wear it, then it's sort of like getting two dresses for the price of one, so maybe we can double the budget.'"

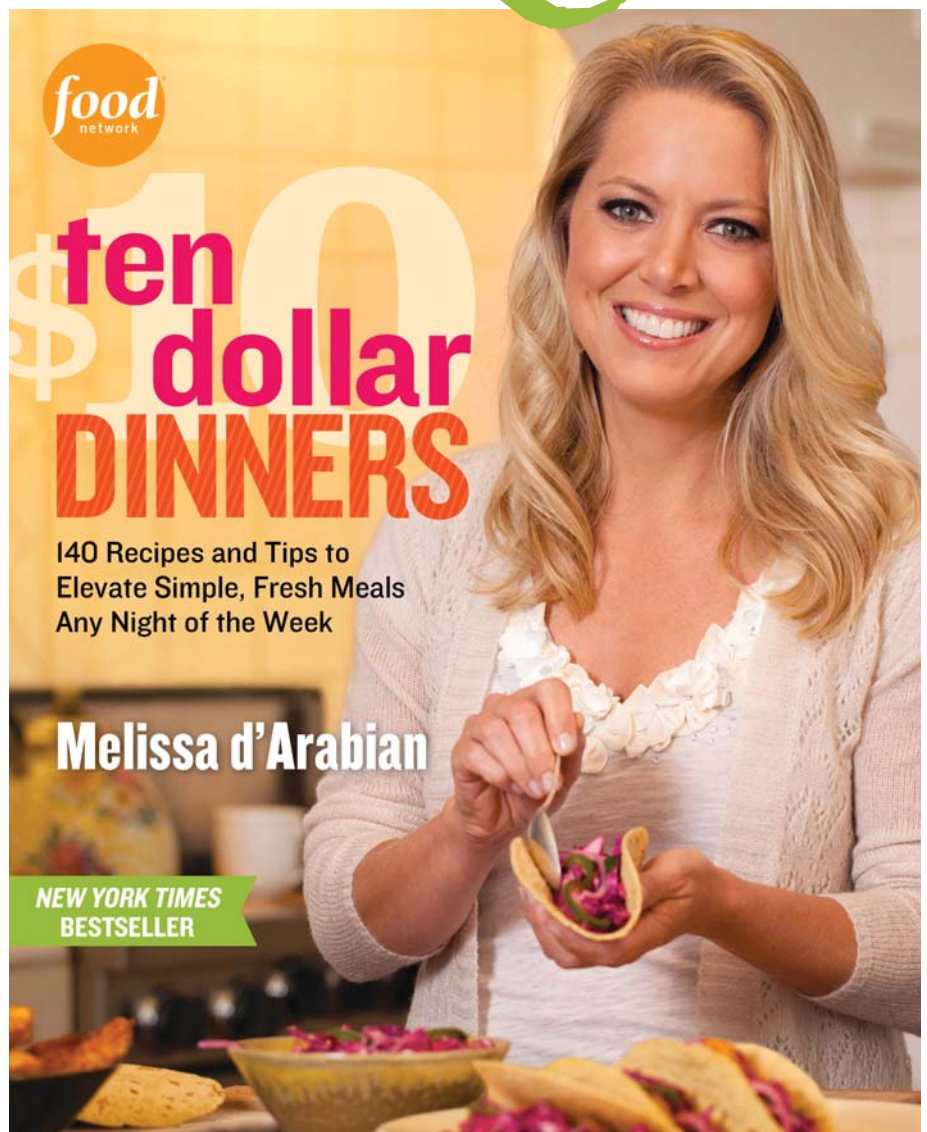
A few days later, Melissa needed money for a test-prepping course to get into graduate school. She picked up the phone to try her mother again.

The phone kept ringing busy. Beep. Beep. Beep.

On her way out the door to meet up with friends, Melissa tried her mom one last time. This time it rang.

An unfamiliar male voice came over the phone. He identified himself as a member of the Montgomery County Police Department.

Melissa d'Arabian, host of the Food Network's "Ten Dollar Dinners" still uses frugal cooking tips to feed her family, even though she's become a celebrity chef and best-selling cookbook author.





Melissa d'Arabian's cookbook, "Ten Dollar Dinners: 140 Recipes and Tips to Elevate Simple, Fresh Meals Any Night of the Week" [pictured on facing page], became a New York Times best-seller. One of those recipes is this Sole, Zucchini, and Tomato Napoleon with Tomato-Caper Crudo.

"We had a very short and simple conversation," she said. "It's one that I play in my head over and over again, less often now, but I can play it over and over in my head, word for word, note for note and yet I've never repeated it out loud in 25 years."

The gist of the conversation was this: her mother had died by suicide.

"I couldn't figure that out," she said of her mother's desperate act. "We had gone through so much. She had put herself through college. We were broke, on food stamps. She put herself through medical school and raised two young girls as a single parent. What was she thinking when she finally became a doctor and became successful—and became a success according to the world's definition of success?"

D'Arabian also couldn't reconcile their final weekend together.

"I remember thinking later, 'Why would you plan on wearing my dress if you were going to die a few days later?'"

• • •

At 45, and having now lived longer than her mother, d'Arabian is a celebrity chef on the Food Network. She hosts her own show, "Ten Dollar Dinners," and uses her public platform to promote suicide prevention, minister to and encourage women, and share her insights on her Christian faith.

It was a long journey to get to this place.

"My mom's death took its toll on me financially, logistically, but mostly it took a toll on me spiritually," she said. "You want to talk about a winter. A winter is not feeling connected to God and not feeling His presence.

"It's not even about me 'feeling' be-

cause one thing I learned over the years: Me not feeling God doesn't mean that He's not there. I'm imperfect. Knowing that God is there does not depend upon me feeling Him. That's what I've learned."

Now a resident of Coronado, d'Arabian said she was raised in the church and spent several of her teen years at First United Methodist Church of San Diego when her mother worked at Balboa Hospital. While in San Diego she also attended a private Christian school. But by the time she entered college, like most 18-year-olds trying to assert their independence, most of her spiritual influences had slipped away. The loss of her mother accentuated that void, ushering in a decade-long crisis of faith.

"I couldn't reconcile 'why,' and I couldn't reconcile what that meant in terms of my faith," she said.

"My mom's suicide catapulted me into a new reality. I would not characterize that as, 'Oh, I immediately lost my faith.' I think in some ways it was a sort of catalyst for a slippery slope of being farther and farther away from my faith."

As time passed she found herself chasing the same things that ultimately failed to bring her own mother happiness.

"Of all that things that ultimately turned out to be meaningless to her—the career, the money, the success—in a weird twist of irony those were the very things that I clung to, not because God wasn't there, but because I turned away. *That is a winter.*

"I think I thought, maybe, I could squeeze something out of those things that my mom had been unable to do. I would do it, but I would do it better."

Although she was enjoying an active social life and good money after earning

her MBA from Georgetown University, her soul was famished. She likened it to the frog in hot water.

"It's hard to ignore boiling water, right?" she said. "It's hard to ignore the bubbles when they are all around you, but that's what it took. I kept looking around and seeing bubbles and saying, 'Wait a second. I'm not doing what I think I should be doing. I don't think that what I'm doing is God's best for me.' It kind of took 10 years for the pot to boil. It was a pretty big pot."

Eventually the teachings of her youth came back into focus.

"I felt like my life didn't match my compass more and more," she said. "And when there is a delta between my compass and what my gut says, and my life choices, that's a very uncomfortable place to be. The good news is that discomfort can be the very thing that brings us back down on our knees and at Jesus' feet."

• • •

After recalibrating her life, d'Arabian was able to move beyond the deep-seated grief and uncertainty that defined most of her 20s.

"I learned that God is this dynamic God that works from the inside out. He didn't just create us in Genesis," she said demonstratively washing her hands "and then went on His merry way."

After working in corporate finance for Disney in Southern California, she accepted a post with Euro Disney where she met her future husband, Philippe. They have four children: Valentine, a third-grader, Charlotte, a second-grader, and first-grade twins Margaux and Océane.

"I raise my four young daughters as an honor to be their mentor, their guide

Potato-Bacon Torte, left, and Classic Apple Tart, right, are two of the 140 recipes in d'Arabian's cookbook.



on this path called life," she said. "My girls are a big part of my faith. They are a big part of how God has blessed me and how I give back to Him with gratitude and joy every day."

That gratitude and joy comes from a life anchored on something much greater than the material confines of self.

"I live with purpose," she said. "I find my value in places other than the outside. I trust that God sees something that I don't see in me and I'm learning to trust God's vision for me and vision of me and view of me, more and more.

I stopped comparing my insides with other people's outsides."

That vision, she said, is not Pollyanna in scope, but is grounded in the certainty that life can be hard, disappointments are real, and pain is a given.

"I've come to believe in the depths of my soul that joy is an inside job," she said. "Today I have enough joy to house the sorrow. It doesn't mean that life doesn't happen. It doesn't mean that life doesn't have its winters, but I have enough joy to house the sorrow, and I can be full of joy and yet sorrowful at the same time."

As she reaches out to others, particularly to women, d'Arabian said her goal is to help people see beyond the earthly limitations of this world.

"Wildly celebrated success fixes *nothing* important," she said. "That took me 10 years to realize. Unfortunately, my mom never realized that. Yet I will tell you that my mom was an extraordinary woman and her death does not define her. And one thing I know, that in the world of redemption it's Jesus plus nothing. It is Jesus plus nothing else. No other conditions." ■

Melissa d'Arabian is honorary chair of Taste of the Nation San Diego, a Sept. 14 benefit for the Share Our Strength's No Kid Hungry campaign, to be held at the Hilton San Diego Bayfront.



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Spinach and Cheese-Stuffed Chicken with Lemon Butter

Recipe by MELISSA D'ARABIAN
from her book, "Ten Dollar Dinners"

Fancy-looking stuffed chicken is actually a last-minute pantry supper at my house. I'm a huge fan of frozen spinach and consider it a must-have freezer item because it's so easy to add to a soup or pasta dish, to make into a side dish with garlic and lemon, or to turn into creamed spinach. The idea for this dish came from a few string cheese nubs in the fridge and a package of frozen spinach. To add a nice creaminess, I use cream cheese, another must-have ingredient in the fridge.

Serves: 4

Preparation time: 20 minutes

Cooking time: 25 minutes

8 ounces thawed frozen chopped spinach (about half a 1-pound bag)

1/4 pound (4 ounces) sliced, shredded, or chunks of cheese, such as cheddar, mozzarella, provolone, or Swiss

2 tablespoons cream cheese

Zest and juice of 1 lemon

1 garlic clove, roughly chopped

1 teaspoon kosher salt

1/4 cup all-purpose flour

4 6- to 8-ounce boneless, skinless chicken breasts, rinsed and patted dry

2 tablespoons canola or olive oil

2 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into small pieces



ALL RECIPE PHOTOS BY BEN FINK

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Place the thawed spinach in a paper towel, squeeze out the excess liquid, and transfer the spinach to the bowl of a food processor. Add the cheese, cream cheese, lemon zest, garlic, and 1/2 teaspoon of the salt. Pulse until the cheese is broken up into small pieces and everything is nicely mixed, about five 3-second pulses. Set aside.

Place the flour in a shallow baking dish and set aside. Place your palm flat on top of a chicken breast and, using a sharp paring knife and starting about 1/2 inch from the tip, make a long slit in the side of the chicken, working the knife about three quarters of the way through to the other side, but not cutting through the breast completely, to make a good-sized pocket. Repeat with the remaining 3 breasts and then stuff each with a few tablespoons of the spin-

ach stuffing.

Thread 2 to 3 toothpicks (or shortened wood skewers) from top to bottom through the edge of the pocket to fasten it shut. Season with the remaining 1/2 teaspoon salt and then roll the breasts through the flour, lifting out and gently tapping each one to knock off extra flour.

Heat the oil in a large oven-safe skillet over medium-high heat. Add the chicken breasts, smooth side down, and cook until browned, 4 to 5 minutes. Use tongs to turn over the breasts and brown on the other side, about 3 minutes more. Drizzle the lemon juice over the chicken and sprinkle the butter pieces over the chicken. Place the chicken in the oven until cooked through and firm to the touch, about 15 minutes. Serve drizzled with the sauce from the pan.

Show and tell

Melissa d'Arabian: Setting boundaries to keep life balanced

by LORI ARNOLD

Growing up in a single-parent home, Melissa d'Arabian became as adept with the scissors as the spatula when it came to the kitchen. That's because her mother, working her way through medical school, augmented the family's limited income by training her two daughters to become coupon warriors.

"I knew we were poor but what I didn't know was that not everybody was poor," she said. "That's the piece I didn't get."

Despite the tight budget, the family relished Taco Tuesdays and Fish Fridays, as the dining room became the family's anchor.

"The daily dinner table did build my prowess in saving money," she said. "My mom was very, very proud of inexpensive dinners. She was a smart cook."

While d'Arabian, a celebrity chef on the Food Network, inherited her mother's penchant for budget cooking, she wasn't too eager to emulate her actual cooking.

"My mom was not the best cook," she said, an all-too-knowing chuckle bubbling up. "But my mom did develop a love of food because she did a lot of entertaining. She always liked having the house with people in it. She always wanted to have her friends over so she taught me the love of entertaining and that—that—was where I developed the love for food."

One of the family's trademarks was their annual mother-daughter holiday tea. It began with sisters inviting their girlfriends over for cookies, hot cocoa and songs around the piano. The event grew over time, becoming the one time they would splurge, although they clipped coupons year-round, baking cookies in advance and freezing them for the holiday party.

"I never got the sense we were short-changing anybody because we didn't have a fancy buffet," she said. "It was about the people coming over and the joy in that."

D'Arabian's knack for cost-friendly cooking prompted her to make an online video on how to make homemade yogurt, which ultimately landed her a spot on season five of *The Next Food Network Star*, an annual summer reality TV competition that pits chefs and cooks against each other with the winner snagging a pilot show on the culinary channel.

Her competition included two restaurateurs, a restaurant consultant, two personal chefs, an executive chef, apprentice chef, executive sous chef and a sales manager.

The competition was intense and, at times, mean-spirited as d'Arabian discovered after several of the contestants mocked her lack of experience on camera. The personal attack, she said, was hurtful.

"We are human. I can't control everybody else, but I can control how I deal with them," she said. "I really do try to have my value come from God. When I pray, when I am reading Scripture, when I am trying to take responsibility for my own spirituality, then I can find my value there."

Underdog wins

Another way to ease some of the criticism, she discovered, was by winning, which she did in stunning fashion, eclipsing professional chefs with far more experience. Shortly after her 2009 win, d'Arabian debuted her show "Ten Dollar Dinners." Still a network staple, the show focuses on providing family-friendly recipes that can feed four people for under \$10. It's a cooking philosophy she still embraces.



Melissa d'Arabian and her husband, Philippe, have four children: Valentine, Charlotte, and twins Margaux and Océane.



PHOTO BY KRISTEN VINCENT PHOTOGRAPHY

“I went from being a stay-at-home mom to a working parent and that has been a huge adjustment, but it’s an adjustment that a lot of people do,” she said.

In addition to taping her own show in New York, d’Arabian has also appeared on other Food Network programs, including “Chopped,” “The Best Thing I Ever Made,” “Guy’s Grocery Games” and the “Food Network Challenge.”

Her 2012 cookbook, “Ten Dollar Dinners: 140 Recipes and Tips to Elevate Simple, Fresh Meals Any Night of the Week,” became a *New York Times* best-seller.

She admits her new career can be logistically challenging.

“I’m clear on what my priorities are, and I say no to things,” she said, even as she attempted to get on a standby flight out of Pittsburgh to make one of her daughter’s concerts.

To maintain relative order in her life, d’Arabian said she is a student of compartmentalizing. When she is working, she is at work. When her girls come home in the afternoon, the office light goes off

and her focus is on being Mommy.

“I have no problem disappointing people, including my kids,” she said. “I think my kids would love it if I just never, ever traveled but I think there is a loving way to disappoint people. I want to raise daughters who know that they can disappoint people. I don’t want to raise daughters who say yes to everything that comes their direction, because I think there is something to be said for discernment and choosing what’s important and being clear on what you say yes to and what you say no to. I mean that in terms of career-wise, but I also mean that in terms of lifestyle choices.”

Setting priorities

It is amazing, however, just how many times d’Arabian has been able to say yes. She is a board member with Coronado SAFE, which works to develop and sustain healthy, responsible youth, and is an advisory board member for Act One, a training program for Christians pursuing entertainment careers. She is also pursuing a certificate in Theology and Ministry with Princeton Theological Seminary.

D’Arabian is honorary chair of Taste of the Nation San Diego, a Sept. 14 benefit for the Share Our Strength’s No Kid Hungry campaign, to be held at the Hilton San Diego Bayfront.

She is also group leader for her weekly Bible study, a room mom and one of the leaders for a daughter’s Daisy troop.

“I also want to be very clear that just because I work a lot, my kids know in their gut of guts that they are the highest priority,” she said. “I never get on an airplane that takes me away from my kids unless I feel like it’s advancing our personal life mission and what I want to accomplish on this earth before I leave it.”

That philosophy is part of the message she likes to share when she is asked to keynote at various events across the country.

“I really believe that as moms, as women, as Christians, we really have to know what our deepest yeses in our hearts are, and what we can say no to. I believe a fast ‘no’ is way better than a slow ‘maybe.’ ■

Learn more at www.foodnetwork.com/chefs/melissa-darabian.html.



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Foundation of HOPE

Urban ministry teaches character, discipline, life skills to adolescents

by LORI ARNOLD

Charles* was well beyond wearing his anger on his sleeve. Expelled from school for fighting and with no place to work out his demons, the 11-year-old had his sights set on joining a gang, one of several entrenched in what was then known as the “Four Corners of Death,” the bloodstained intersection of Imperial and Euclid.

His mother, a single parent determined to keep her son’s blood from spilling on the streets of Encanto, had different designs. She enrolled him in a baseball camp despite his objections. The camp, an outreach of Hope Leader-

ship Foundation, featured instruction by then-Padres-reliever Heath Bell. While the Major League power pitcher talked technique and skills, he also shared his own struggles with anger and how his Christian faith helped to temper it.

The spiritual pitch scored with Charles.

“This kid turned his life around,” said Willie Briscoe, founder of the foundation.

Just one critical moment away from possibly becoming another inner-city statistic, Charles refocused his priorities, transforming himself into an A student who loves science. Now 15, Charles has replaced his pursuit of trouble with base-

ball, hoping to play the sport at a Northern California college. In the meantime, the high-schooler spends his summers volunteering for Hope Leadership, working with younger versions of himself.

“That kid came back and worked with our young kids this past summer in order to be an example to them because of what had happened to his life,” Briscoe said. “Here’s a kid who was headed down the wrong road and now he’s a top baseball player in high school, a top student.”

In the four years since Charles attended that pivotal baseball camp more children are enjoying similar opportunities, as Hope Leadership Foundation has expanded its ministry to include an after

*Not his real name.





PHOTO BY SHANA SILER

Former San Diego Padres star relief pitcher Heath Bell is one of many professional athletes who have participated in sports clinics with Hope Leadership Foundation. Before he was traded away from the Padres he donated \$1,000 for every save he made. Here he delivers a \$37,650 check to Willie Briscoe and HLF during a pregame ceremony on July 27, 2011.

school academy offering mentoring, tutoring and other services.

“Now we are seeing those types of stories multiplied by 25 because we have 25 kids in the academy every single day and we are able to pour into them Scripture and influence every single day as opposed to a camp every other month or so,” said Briscoe, an athlete who once worked as a sports double for Michael Jordan.

Charles’s story is precisely why Briscoe founded Hope Leadership Foundation in the first place. In many ways, Charles’s story is Briscoe’s. Raised by a single mother, Briscoe was headed on his own dicey path when his sixth-grade teacher instilled much-needed guidance, bridging some of the fatherless gap.

“Growing up in that environment

with little resources and without a father is kind of the basis of Hope Leadership Foundation,” he said. “I always said if I did something I want to really impact that population. I think it’s the heart of God to come in and really minister to the fatherless generations.”

A new focus

Briscoe, who was running his own

A football sports camp was held this summer at Helix High School. Other sports camps include baseball and basketball.

PHOTOS BY TERRY SCHWATZ

personal training business in North County, started out small, using sport camps as a way to reach inner-city adolescents. He began acquainting himself with San Diego’s urban neighborhoods, meeting with community gatekeepers such as pastors already serving in the urban areas, where broken families are often a breeding ground for gangs, abuse, drugs and rampant crime.

“I got in my car and drove around and found high-crime areas where kids were



just hanging out,” he said. “I walked from park to park, drove from park to park and handed out fliers at those parks and at those rec centers and to kids walking up and down the street that looked like they might be getting into trouble.”

In one park alone, Briscoe found 150 kids lingering in the middle of the day.

That first camp, focused on basketball, drew 50 kids, resulting in 33 children pledging to follow Jesus.

“I thought, ‘Wow, I’m on to something. God is at work here,’” he said.

Two weeks later a second camp, this one offering baseball, drew 175, with 100 commitments to follow Christ. Among them was Charles.

“These kids have been dealt a pretty raw deal, things I never had to deal with,” Briscoe said. “So we see God doing miracles in our outreaches.”

In addition to sports camps, the first



HLF's Godz Girlz program is a mentoring program for adolescent girls. It is part of the program that takes place at King Chavez Academy.

phase of Briscoe's ministry included Vacation Bible Schools, backpack drives and Christmas outreaches with toy giveaways. One of the backpack giveaways drew 800 people to Colina Park.

“That was really, in the essence of the Bible, just to kind of give a cup of cold water to introduce ourselves to the neighborhood,” the former Point Loma Nazarene basketball player said. “In some of the neighborhoods we try to

reach, trust is a very hard thing to come by. We just show up, wash people's feet, give them a cup of cold water and after a season or so of that, they recognize there wasn't a catch to what we were doing. We are just lovin' on them in the name of Jesus.”

Early on in establishing the foundation, Briscoe shut down his training business to focus on the ministry full time.

“The Lord told me I had one foot





PHOTO BY TERRY SCHWARTZ

The Hope Leadership Foundation has launched an after-school and summer program at King Chavez Academy in Barrio Logan. The free academy offers homework assistance, tutoring, snacks, and enrichment programs such as Awana, Good News Clubs and Godz Girlz mentoring.

available and one foot out,” he said. “I left my business, I left everything with \$2,000 in my pocket and started pursuing Hope Leadership Foundation full-time. I poured every ounce of energy I had into Hope Leadership Foundation.”

Sports as life

The emphasis on sports, Briscoe said, provides ministry volunteers ample opportunity for teaching moments that instill the characteristics of teamwork, responsibility, selflessness and perseverance.

“There are a lot of things that go on that are easily transferable to the biblical truth, the proverbial truth that we use when we are doing our outreaches,” the mentor of children said. “We use those things. Sports are a great vehicle. We use sports as a large net to cast in order to ultimately share the gospel.”

That net casting includes the use of professional athletes who easily capture the respect of young, impressionable children. In addition to MLB pitcher Bell, Briscoe has tapped the expertise of numerous professional athletes, including Chantelle Anderson, a retired WNBA player; NFLers Vincent Brown, Ryan Lindey, Marlon McCree and Karl Wilson; and Olympic boxer Chris Byrd.

Briscoe said the celebrity athletes are able to counter the unrealistic glamour of professional sports by sharing their

own real-life struggles and the role their own faith has played in creating a stable foundation, especially when dreams may be thwarted.

“(It’s) being able to communicate to these kids that may think their answer for getting out of the hood is a Major League Baseball contract or a football contract or whatever,” he said.

“When they see those having accomplished it, and recognizing that they are communicating to them that they play for Jesus Christ, that they get up and do what they do all for the glory of Jesus Christ, then I think that really helps set the tone for the future.”

Character building

While sports may be the initial appeal, the outreaches go well beyond the confines of the court as volunteers use the opportunity for personal reflection as they work to instill integrity and other valuable traits.

“OK, you are not on the field any more: What does character mean now? What does discipline mean now? What does making the right choices mean now?” We try to arm them for on- and off-the-field life,” he said.

The second phase of Hope Leadership Foundation was implemented with its newly launched King Chavez Academy in Barrio Logan. The after-school program runs from 3 to 6 p.m. weekdays, except

DID YOU KNOW?

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- 4.6 times more likely to commit suicide
- 6.3 times more likely to be in a state-operated institution
- 6.6 times more likely to become teenage mothers
- 6.6 times more likely to drop out of school
- 15.3 times more likely to have behavioral disorders
- 15.3 times more likely to end up in prison while a teenager
- 24.3 times more likely to run away

Source: Hope Leadership Foundation

Wednesday, when it takes advantage of early release time by offering services from 12:30 to 6 p.m.

“It was always the bullseye when I first started,” Briscoe said. “It’s all coming from a biblical standpoint. We are seven months into it and God is truly just been blessing that ministry where there is now a waiting list inside of a secular school for a Christ-centered after-school program, which is a miracle in and of itself.”

The free academy offers homework assistance, tutoring, snacks, and enrichment programs such as Awana, Good News Clubs and God’s Girls mentoring.

“Their job is to work hard and to not squander their opportunities, because another kid is sitting right behind them desiring the seat that they are sitting in,” he said.

An eye toward fathers

Even as Briscoe is hoping to expand the academy program, he already has his eyes on the foundation’s third phase, a reconciliation component to draw fathers back into their children’s lives.

“We are excited about that potential,” said Briscoe, who reconciled with his

At a glance...



own father about a decade ago and continues to nurture that relationship.

“If there is no way for a kid to connect to their father, then we want to try to do some things around those times for healing. If there is a way to connect to those dads out and start to minister to their lives, even if they are not getting along with the mother they could still be a great dad. We want to start infiltrating those dad’s lives with the gospel and with other godly fathers and men who can come around and be a mentor.”

Not surprisingly, Briscoe sees sports, especially tournaments, as an effective avenue to bring about reconciliation.

“What we’ve found is a lot of dads that have very little to do with their kids’ lives will show up to watch their kids perform in sports,” he said. “So, if they are showing up and loosely involved ... we figured we would take advantage of all the leverage we have and if they are going to show up on any level, then we want to start taking advantage of that and build on that.”

Briscoe admits the effort is complex and that prayer must be the cornerstone.

“We want to help give them resources to stay engaged, to be fully engaged in their children’s lives,” he said. “That will be the tricky one, that will be the hard one, and I assume that our success rate will be minimal compared to what we’ve been able to do with the kids, but one restored family is worth it.

“The most important thing is the emotional, spiritual and physical safety of the kids. I really have a vision of starting to heal some of the wounds of the kids and, in a lot of cases, the fathers as well.” ■

Learn more at www.hopeleadershipfoundation.org.

HLF, in cooperation with Leadership Foundations of America, is an inner-city youth ministry working within the San Diego Unified School District. HLF’s goal is to help kids from kindergarten through college succeed in life by means of mentorship in educational support, sports and recreation and spiritual development.

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EOE

Caviezel stars in 'When the Game Stands Tall'

by LORI ARNOLD



Life and loss, victory and defeat take the field—and streets—Aug. 22 with the TriStar Pictures and Affirm Films release “When the Game Stands Tall.”

Starring Jim Caviezel (“Passion of the Christ,” “Person of Interest”), Michael Chiklis (“The Shield,” “The Commish”), Alexander Ludwig (“The Hunger Games,” “Lone Survivor”) and Laura Dern (“Jurassic Park,” “Little Fockers”), the inspirational film is based on the true story of De La Salle High School’s storied football team, and its 151 consecutive victories spanning 12 years.

Although football anchors the story, the movie centers on far more than the Concord, Calif. team’s winning streak—an unprecedented feat. The National Football League’s longest winning streak, for instance, is 21 games, held by the New England Patriots, and 47 games is the record at the collegiate level, achieved by the Oklahoma Sooners.

The film, based on the Neil Hayes book, held one of its first screenings May 5 at the Evangelical Press Association Convention in Anaheim.

Caviezel brings his trademark steely steadiness to the role of head coach Bob Ladouceur, the head coach and teacher who prepares his team as much for life as for the game. The veteran actor was aided by a quality screenplay crafted by Scott Marshall Smith and David Zelon.

“Winning a lot of football games is do-able,” Ladouceur says at one point in the film. “Teaching kids there’s more to life? That’s hard.”

Throughout the film, Ladouceur reinforces his mantra that the De La Salle football program would not be defined by its legendary winning streak or the pursuit of perfection. The purpose, he maintained, was the perfect *effort*. That effort is not limited to the confines of the stadium, either, as the players must test their grit off of the turf.

In addition to the strategy and hype swirling around the team, their coach helps his teens to also navigate commitment, accountability, brotherhood, teamwork, decision-making and dedication. Family is also a critical theme as Ladouceur, processing his own issues, coaches his own son and serves as a surrogate father to his players.

“Great, inspiring, real movie about the platform and power a coach has to instill character into young men,” said Les Steckel, president of Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

Disappointment and fear, tempered by honest faith, also have starring roles. With big league cinematography, dialogue and drama, “When the Game Stands Tall” is sure to stand big among other classic football greats such as “Remember the Titans” and “We are Marshall.”

Learn more at www.whenthegamestandstall.com.

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Holly Starr highlights autism awareness with music video

Known for her powerful, personal music videos, singer/songwriter Holly Starr recently debuted the official video for her latest single, "God Is." Directed and produced by Jonathan Ward for JonnyGrand Films and Media, the highly-anticipated video has already exceed 50,000 YouTube views as of July 25.



Shining a light on autism, the clip traces a family's poignant journey through love and loss, depicting defining moments in the life of a fictional autistic character. Portions of the video were filmed at the Autism Foundation of Tennessee, and the final frame encourages viewers to visit autismspeaks.org for more information on the disorder.

"I have a very big heart for those who are misunderstood, overlooked...picked last," says Starr of the video's theme. "I believe that no matter who you are, you have significant impact in this world. I hope the video shows that your life doesn't have to be 'less than.' We all have struggles; we all face adversity at one point or another. But the people who have taught me the power of never quitting haven't been the ones who made it; they've been the ones who have been beaten up and tossed around, but stood back up with forgiveness on their tongue."

King & Country plans tour around new album

They haven't been around long, but King & Country has already been making a big impact. And now they are readying to embark on a tour in support of their sophomore album, *Run Wild. Live Free. Love Strong.*

The 40-city "You Matter — The Tour" launches on Sept. 14 in Nashville, just two days before the release of the album on Sept. 16.

Comprised of brothers Joel and Luke Smallbone, King & Country has



already gathered some heady awards like "New Artist of the Year" and "Breakthrough Artist of the Year."

"*Run Wild. Live Free. Love Strong.* is a statement of reclaiming our birthright as humans to live a life that is for others—a life that is others-focused, God-focused—and in that find what it truly means to run wild, live free and love strong," said Joel.

Prior to the fall tour, the duo will be busy performing at summer music festivals, theme parks and other events, in-

cluding Greg Laurie's Harvest Crusade at Angel Stadium in Anaheim on Aug. 17.

The fall tour will bring King & Country back to Southern California with a concert in San Diego on Oct. 11. Other Southern California dates include Brentwood, Riverside, Chino and Lake Forest.

The Smallbone brothers are well connected to the Christian music industry. They are the brothers of well-known artist Rebecca St. James, and Joel was recently married to fellow Christian musician Moriah Peters.



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Ladies retreat to focus on relationships

SAN DIEGO — The Professional Women’s Fellowship has scheduled a one-day retreat for Saturday, Aug. 9. Described as a day for connecting with like-minded women, laughing joyfully and savoring delicious food, the event will feature iBloom speaker Betsy Ringer who will share her expertise about “Playing Well with Others.”

Ringer, known for her humorous, interactive style, is expected to speak about dissolving resentment, helping others get what they want, working smoothly with difficult team members, understanding important people and getting the to understand you, and learning how God reacts with your unique personality.

The event, which runs from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., will be held at the private estate of one of the PWF board members.

For more information, or to RSVP, visit www.pwfsd.org.

Museum Day announced

SANTEE — The Creation & Earth History Museum will hold its annual Museum Day on Saturday, Sept. 27. The theme is “Noah’s Ark and the Door of Salvation.”

The highly interactive event will feature Noah’s Adventure Land where participants will enjoy rides, games, a bounce house and face painting. There will also be a petting zoo, barbecue and the “Animals After the Ark Animal Show”

by Nathan Hutcherson.

Guest speakers throughout the day include Tom Cantor, Jason Lisle, Eric Hovind, Ray Comfort and Bill Morgan.

Museum Day runs from 9 a.m. through 6 p.m. at the Creation & Earth History Museum, located at 10946 Woodside Ave. North in Santee.

The event is free except for coffee and the barbecue lunch. Learn more at www.creationsd.org or call (619) 599-1104.

Car show to be held at Faith Chapel

SPRING VALLEY — The Christian Rods & Customs Car Club will hold its 15th annual Classic Car and Bike Show on Saturday, Aug. 30 at Faith Chapel. The event will run from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Attendance at the show is free, but preregistration to place a car in the show is \$20 and is due by Aug. 25. At the show, registration is \$25. Up to 250 cars may be included.

The car show will include trophies, food, music, raffles and vendors. Proceeds will support the drug and alcohol recovery programs of Calvary Ranch and Restoration Ranch.

To register a vehicle, visit www.christianrodsandcustomssd.com.

Faith Chapel is located at 9400 Campo Road. For more information, call (858) 679-8153.

Leeland in concert

RANCHO SANTA FE — The popular Christian band Leeland will be in concert on Sunday night, Aug. 24, at 6 p.m. at Horizon North County.

The free event will also feature speaker Mitch Botsford. The church is located at 6365 Apajo Rd. Learn more at horizon.org.

Summer outreach festival

SAN DIEGO — Bethel Baptist Church will host the Outreach Summer Festival and Health Fair on Saturday, Aug. 6. The free event will include face painting, jumpers, entertainment, games, food, prizes.

The church is located at 1962 Euclid Ave. For more information, call (619) 266-2411.

HarborFest in Chula Vista

CHULA VISTA — The Chula Vista HarborFest will take place Saturday, Aug. 16 in Bayside Park at the Chula Vista Marina.

This year’s waterfront festival will feature four performance stages, engaging educational exhibits with interactive programs offered by the Living Coast Discovery Center, historic seafaring vessels, water activities, fishing, unique automobiles and wooden boats, beautiful art displays, a Youth Zone, and a Sustainable SeafoodFest.

The event is free and will take place from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.

EVENTS ONLINE

For an online Calendar of Events for San Diego County, please visit www.refreshedmag.com.

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These are people that influenced my life in New Rochelle, NY where Norman Rockwell lived for 25 years and where my family lived for 3 generations. We all knew and loved the man in spite of a book trashing him in another attempt to destroy everything that is great about America! I am writing a book with a rebuttal that includes the untold stories about many others that shaped our country. Did you ever wonder what happened to over 100 signed letters from FDR, that Harvard wanted for their archives? Most of these people I met in my parents living room: Dr. Norman Vincent Peale, James Cash Penney, Lowell Thomas, Charles E. Wilson (Chairman of GE, FDR appointed him head of the War Production Board WW2), Carrie Chapman Catt (Woman Suffragist), Dr. James E. West (Chief Scout Executive, Boy Scouts of America), William Frank Snyder (FDR's lawyer and close friend, who also had polio, wrote his will and handled his financial affairs including Mrs. Delano, complaining to my mother: "The Roosevelt's are using my pool!"). "Buffalo Bob" Smith (It's Howdy Doody Time!). C.L. Lowes: (My grandfather started BOND BREAD. Buying trainloads of flour for 50 plants, he waited for the price of

flour to go UP so farmers could make a fair profit...he was unique! General Baking Co became General Host... "Twinkies") Richard Ellis (my brother, commercial Real Estate) and many others! After my father died, Dr. Peale said the eulogy and inspired me to increase water properties back to what it was before "The Flood" (living to Biblical ages). After "The Flood" they didn't live as long! Since I am the first person in history to do it, should be ample proof that it had to come from divine inspiration! With an Engineering Degree that includes Steam Plant Design, I increased the Hydrogen Bond Angle (HBA) in ordinary water from 104 to 114 degrees, confirmed by scientists at Los Alamos Nuclear Lab and Lawrence Livermore to The Washington Times. The Washington Post (on our website): "10,000 people per day" traveling to obtain water from my counter-top machines, even adding water to a well with miraculous results! Dr. G. Abraham MD UCLA: "Nothing is even close for measurable Blood Flow with a 114 HBA!" At 84, MEASURE 3000% more ENERGY in your drinking water (Video)!! 13 Patents 332 FDA Tests johnellis.com/measure

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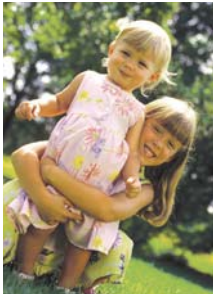
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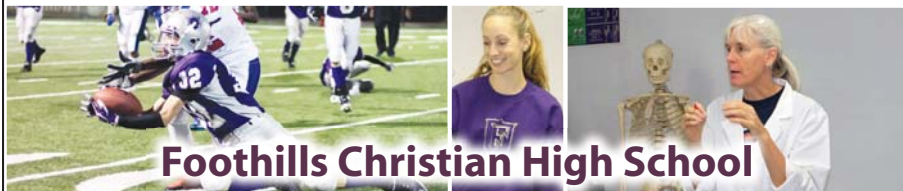
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The fine art of appreciation

I have come to realize that there is much to be appreciated about the word “appreciation.” In today’s culture it’s often used casually and without thought, making it lose meaning. If we consider the word in full context, we are able to grow gratefulness in daily life.

When prominent public figures pass away it’s not unusual to see a feature article headlined with the name of the deceased, followed by “AN APPRECIATION.”

Death reminds everyone of the good that is now missing and how significant a personality was to us. Sometimes it’s surprising to find out how much of a void there is, especially regarding those who aren’t necessarily famous, *a la* George Bailey’s story in “It’s A Wonderful Life.”

We can appreciate lots of little things each day as well... if we choose to take the time. A beautiful sunset, an ice cream cone on a hot August night, the laughter of children or just having time to really relax.

Oxford’s American Dictionary defines the essence of appreciation this way:

appreciate: *To value greatly, be grateful for, enjoy intelligently; To understand; To increase in value.*

Roget’s Thesaurus adds:

*To acknowledge; to realize the worth of; admire, respect, esteem; cherish, treasure, savor and **be conscious of.***

It’s that last line that especially gets my attention: *Be conscious of.*

How easy it is to busily progress through each day without pausing to appreciate much at all, lost in oblivion.

Just a few weeks ago, millions around the globe took time to appreciate World Cup Soccer. For many in the USA, that took some real doing. I speak from ex-

perience here.

Like many parents I was more into the game when my kids were young, playing on teams that usually featured gaggles of little ones buzzing around the field like bees, not sure of all the objectives.

But I would always appreciate their efforts and excitement in being part of it all. Maybe that’s why so many Americans who usually don’t usually care one bit about soccer found themselves consumed by teams they didn’t know existed. There were family roots in the game.

It was fascinating to watch men and women stop in their tracks when any World Cup “action” was on a nearby TV, drawn to the compelling nature of the contests, no matter who was playing.

(Let me just note, however, that World Cup “action” was often as compelling as watching paint dry.)

Still, moments of drama, trying to figure how the clock and rules worked, and exciting shoot-outs drew me in. When our US team was out, I would find some other angle. I wanted Chile, then Columbia because I have friends from (and in) both countries. I appreciated Brazil’s team, too, until their colossal collapse vs. Germany. But then I found I appreciated the loss, too, due to the historic magnitude of the event.

It was instructive and a learning experience. Then I remembered that when it was all over for another four years, life would go on. It was only a “game” (except for Brazilians of course). All that really mattered wasn’t who won, who lost, but who grew through the experience and enjoyed the process.

The point is that life can be—and should be—a daily appreciation experience. Too often we don’t really embrace a grateful heart until something or someone important is no longer avail-

able or with us.

Padres baseball star and Hall of Fame legend Tony Gwynn was loved by all. Everyone appreciated #19 and felt like they knew him personally. I was blessed to be his friend for 32 years. I also know I would sometimes take him for granted, as if he would be in our lives forever.

When he passed away in June after a long battle with cancer, the accolades were nonstop. Those “An Appreciation” articles appeared, and everyone shared tributes.

In the midst of it, and in the disbelief that he was really gone from this earth, I realized how much I appreciated about him that I knew through my unique connection to him over the years.

There was his laugh, of course, his honesty and work ethic, his smile and humility... and no one cared more for his family and community. Chats we shared, talking about faith and projects we worked on together. More things come to mind each day now, even as I keep his cell phone number in my contacts list... as if sometime he will answer again.

We all have our stories and events and people who make a difference in our lives each day. Seems to me that real blessings come when we figure out how to appreciate that which is taken for granted, in time to say thank you, to share encouragement and to simply to tell someone “I appreciate you”...while there are still ears to hear.



Mark Larson is a veteran Southern California radio/television personality and media consultant. His voice is heard on KPRZ 1210AM, and his weekday talk

show airs mornings 6-9 on KCBQ 1170AM. Learn more at www.marklarson.com.

MICHAEL FOUST

5 lessons from Proverbs that will make you a better parent

For most of my life I've thought of the book of Proverbs as a collection of "moral nuggets"—a buffet of sorts that has a verse for just about any situation in life.

Proverbs certainly has plenty of wisdom in it, but lately I've been looking at its overarching themes. That is, the "lesson behind the lessons."

Moms and dads can learn a lot from Proverbs. I know I have.

Here are five lessons that stick out to me:

1. Be a parent and not a "buddy" or "friend." That is to say a parent has God-given authority over their kids, a role that comes with enormous (but wonderful) responsibilities. Solomon, the writer of Proverbs, makes this obvious from the start: "Listen, my son, to your father's instruction, and do not forsake your mother's teaching." Think about your best friends in Kindergarten or high school or college. Did you ever give them "instruction" or "teach" them anything? No. Of course, I have lots of fun with my children. We laugh all the time. But even though I playfully call my two sons my "buddy," my role is to be their father.

2. Prioritize morals and values over schoolwork. I'm sure Solomon's children learned their Hebrew ABCs and 123s, but he wrote an entire book teaching them something far more important — morals and values. I'm as guilty as any parent of prioritizing head knowledge over heart issues. I love teaching my oldest son American history and his two younger siblings the alphabet. But in the meantime, does he share with his friends? Pray for his friends? Love all his friends — even the ones who may be mean to him? We parents stress out too much over schoolwork, when far, far bigger issues remain.



3. Put God at the center. Solomon's teachings on morals and values don't take place in a vacuum. They have a foundation. For instance: "The Lord abhors dishonest scales, but accurate weights are his delight" (Proverbs 11:1). And: "The Lord detests the thoughts of the wicked, but those of the pure are pleasing to Him" (Proverbs 15:26). The point? We should teach our children not only right from wrong, but the basis for moral laws, too. For instance, stealing is wrong because God says it's wrong *and* because honesty and truthfulness are part of God's character. When I teach my son to tell the truth, I also tell him it's a sin to lie and that God knows everything he does, even when I'm not around.

4. Don't avoid the difficult subjects. You don't have to go very far into Proverbs before Solomon dives into the subject of sex. "The lips of an adulteress drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil. But in the end she is bitter as gall, sharp as a double-edged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps lead straight to the grave" (Proverbs 5:3-5). Think about that the next time you see a trashy Cosmopolitan magazine cover in the checkout line. Solomon spends three lengthy chapters talking about sex.

Then he deals with death. The list goes on and on. No, we should not introduce subjects to our children before they can understand. But we should not run from them, either.

5. Make sure your children avoid your mistakes. Don't believe for a second that you have forfeited your moral authority on a particular subject because of your past. Solomon certainly hadn't. The man who had multiple wives and concubines was the same one who wrote some of Scripture's sternest warnings against adultery. He knew its dangers and its consequences, and he didn't want his son to follow his path. His tone is unavoidable: Don't do what I did, son. Some of the greatest conversations with my oldest son have taken place after I told him I, too, had sinned. I remember his shock once when I told him I had lied. "You've lied?" he asked, surprised. My son learned a lot — and yours just might, too.



Michael Foust is the father of three small children, a writer and editor, and blogs about parenting at www.michaelfoust.com.

Power up principle: Selecting a financial professional

Let's get practical! You have a nagging feeling you need some professional assistance, but how do you discern the appropriate advisor for you? While the scope of this article will focus on evaluating a *financial* advisor, the same due diligence should be applied to anyone included in your trusted circle of influence, including tax professionals and/or estate planning attorneys.

Several fundamentals should be at the core of every professional relationship you consider. These include:

Character – A reputation of personal and professional integrity

Competency – A mastery of technical skills with appropriate education

Experience – A level of wisdom and good judgment that comes from years of working in the industry

Worldview – A compatible framework of ideas, beliefs, and core values integrated into the decision-making process

Once you've narrowed the field with these considerations, what questions should you ask? Even when a financial planner comes highly recommended, much can be learned by taking the time to interview several candidates to make sure you'll be working with someone who is truly right for you. These ten questions are a great starting point:

What experience do you have? Inquire about years in the industry, specialized fields, and the types of companies they have been associated with. Ask for a description of work experience and how it relates to their practice.

What are your qualifications? Ask about licenses and other financial credentials they hold; also inquire about education and recognized designations. Find out how they stay current with changes and developments in the financial planning field.

What services do you offer? The term

“financial planner” can be used by professionals across many disciplines. It is important to understand the scope of services for which the professional is appropriately licensed before making a decision to work with them.

What is your approach to planning?

Make sure the advisor's philosophy is neither too cautious nor overly aggressive for you. Likemindedness is also an important factor. Having an advisor who shares your worldview can go a long way in supporting a successful and synergistic relationship.

What level of clients do you typically work with? Some advisors may have a minimum net worth or level of investable assets before they will offer services to you. Ask them about their “ideal client” profile and what makes them unique or stand out from others in the industry.

Who will be working with me? Some advisors work with their clients directly and others take more of a team approach. Ask to meet the team members to ensure you are comfortable with the people serving you.

How will I pay for these services?

Planners are generally paid through fees, commissions or a combination of both. Compensation methods are the source of much debate. Consider how the method of compensation might affect the advice you receive, the way you work with the advisor, and potential conflicts of interest that may be inherent in the compensation method proposed.

How much do you typically charge?

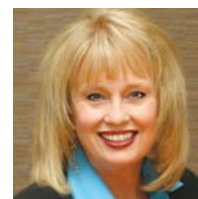
Although what you pay for services will depend on your particular needs, the planner should be able to provide you with an estimate of costs based on the work to be performed. It may be hourly rates, flat fees, or percentage of commission received on products purchased. A single transaction, for example, will be very different from a comprehensive planning arrangement. Ask for a written agreement

that outlines the scope of services provided and expected fees or compensation.

Could anyone besides me benefit from your recommendations? The purpose of this question is to help you evaluate potential conflicts of interest. Some planners have business relationships that might impact their professional judgment preventing them from acting in your best interest.

Have you ever been publicly disciplined for any unlawful or unethical action in your professional career? Several government and professional regulatory organizations, such as the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA), the Certified Financial Planner (CFP®) Board, and your state insurance and securities departments keep records on the disciplinary history of financial professionals. Ask which organizations the planner is regulated by and contact these groups to conduct a background check.

For additional resources on this topic or for help finding a qualified advisor that might be a good fit for you, visit the CFP® site at www.letsmakeaplan.org or the Kingdom Advisors site at www.kingdomadvisors.org. There are no shortcuts to finding the right qualified professional, but with a little due diligence, the right relationship can make a significant difference in your quality of life.



Janice Thompson is a certified financial planner and co-founder/CEO of One Degree Advisors, Inc. A frequent speaker on financial topics and mentor for financial

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KIMBERLY RUBY

Protective probiotics: Are they for you?

An urgent call came to me several years ago: “Kim, the pediatric medical group upstairs is trying to run me out of town, what should I do?” It was a friend and fellow nutritionist on the other line who was working in a pharmacy at the time. Her misstep? She had been suggesting parents give their children over-the-counter probiotics (“good” bacteria) as an aid to good digestion, after finishing their round of antibiotics prescribed by the physicians.

My how times have changed. It’s commonplace now for doctors to suggest yogurt with active cultures for kids and adults, as well as multiple strains of probiotics, also called acidophilus in liquid, powder or capsule form for many health-related issues and as protection against chronic disease.

There is even new research that suggests it may be possible to relieve anxiety, depression and obesity solely by manipulating bacteria in the gut.

You’re saying I’m full of bacteria?

Yes, but it’s good news and works in your favor. There are approximately 15 trillion cells in our body and over 100 trillion bacteria that mostly live in our “gut” or large intestine, often referred to as our colon. This complex ecosystem contains over 400 species of bacteria. Maintaining the correct balance between the “good” bacteria and the “bad” bacteria is necessary for optimal health.

The battle in your belly

Recent research has found that when you have an imbalance in your gut from chronic poor food choices, emotional stress, lack of sleep, antibiotic overuse, being delivered by Cesarean section, excessive use of antibacterial products, environmental factors and even the simple process of aging, the balance can be shifted in favor of the bad bacteria within your body.

When the digestive tract is healthy, it filters out and eliminates things that can damage it, such as harmful toxins, bacteria, chemicals and waste products. On the flip-side, our digestive system pulls in nutrients that our body needs such as nutrients from water and food and absorbs and delivers them to the cells where they are most needed. I always tell my patients, “you are what you absorb.” If you’re not absorbing properly, you’re not thriving.

Your immune system and gut health

Most importantly, many experts believe probiotics have the greatest impact on our immune system. You may have heard that over 70% of our immune system is traced to our digestive system. Our immune system is our protection against germs and, when it is compromised, we can suffer from allergic reactions, diarrhea, chronic constipation, IBS, urinary tract infections, muscle pain, fatigue, autoimmune disorders such as Crohn’s disease, ulcerative colitis, eczema and candida, to name a very few. Acidophilus has also been shown to help suppress the level of *H. pylori*, the bacteria that causes stomach and intestinal ulcers.

Prolonged imbalances in intestinal bacterial can trigger numerous diseases outside the intestine as well.

What you can do

A Harvard study found that microorganisms in the intestines can be quickly modified, even within a day of changing your eating and lifestyle habits. Jillian Teta, N.D., author of *Natural Solutions for Digestive Health*, says “that means it’s possible to start improving digestion at your next meal.”

Dr. Mark Stengler, owner of The Stengler Institute for Integrative Medi-



cine in
Encinitas
and author
of 17 books on

health, says that “cultured foods such as miso, sauerkraut, kefir, garlic and onions increase your internal good flora and are good sources of probiotics.”

If you choose to take an over-the-counter acidophilus (probiotic) product, make sure it contains live bacteria. Various factors can affect their potency including heat and storage conditions. Not all probiotics need refrigeration. Most acidophilus products have the number of living cells and strains listed on the side panel. Some are even coated and may be a good choice for those with digestive issues. Probiotics are generally safe to take on a regular basis but, as always, consult your health professional since they know you and your health history best.

When studying and reporting on the complexity, intricacy and diversity of the human body and its miraculous workings, I sit in awe and amazement before the One who created life. The verse that always comes to mind is Psalm 139:14: “I will give thanks to Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are thy works and my soul knows it very well.”

Now I’m going to go have my Greek Yogurt and get me some culture.



Kimberly Ruby, certified nutritionist at University Compounding Pharmacy, has been in the wellness industry for more than 20 years. She has been facilitating one of the

longest running weight management support groups in the nation, meeting weekly in the North County for 10 years. Her health segments have appeared on local news channels.

At the heart of every great marriage is a great friendship

Great marriages begin in a lot of different ways, and in a wide variety of places. But at the heart of every great marriage is this constant theme: a great friendship.

When a husband and wife are each other's best friends, everyone notices. Their kids know it and the neighbors know it. The people at church can see it from across the aisle. Strangers in the park or on the plane tend to become aware of it too. When you find one of those couples who are literally each other's best friend, no one has to tell you that they're happily married.

You just know!

Here are three ways that friendship establishes the heart of a great marriage:

Friendship forms a protective barrier around the relationship, so that boundaries and allegiances are clearly seen. So often, when a partner is unfaithful, the destructive affair begins with a friendship --- someone at work, someone at church --- and then this shared friendship inevitably leads to the bedroom. Yet when a husband and wife have a best friend at home --- someone who listens and pays attention to them, someone who values and respects them, a person who shares their sense of humor and affirms their values --- this mutual shared friendship forms a hedge of protection around the relationship itself. Both partners are much less vulnerable to outside influences and much less likely to stray. In a very literal sense, having your life partner as your best friend can be your best defense against affairs and infidelity. A tight friendship forms a useful, protective barrier for the couple.

Friendship inspires the kinds of sacrifices that build mutual respect and trust. Let's face it, most of us will do things for our friends that we would never do for someone else. We will give up our time, our energy, or even our money to help a friend with a sudden need or a challenging project. Friends build each other's cabins and repair



each other's cars. Friends get up in the middle of the night to rescue each other from trauma. Friendship inspires sacrifice; when it's a friend who needs something, you don't count the cost, you spring into helpful and immediate action. When your life partner is your best friend, you are much more likely to make sacrifices, adjust your schedule, change your plans, and more, because you are doing this for a friend --- someone you highly value. Friendship brings out the unselfish qualities that take a relationship from good to great. Being unselfish is the shortest and surest pathway to a great marriage.

Friendship reminds us of God's love for us. Not surprisingly, the very first miracle that Christ performed was at a wedding.

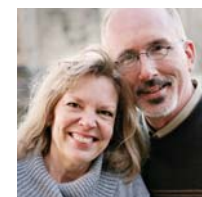
At the request of his mother, Jesus turned water into wine, delighting the party coordinator and surprising the guests with the high quality of the beverage. How much more directly could God show us His love for us --- and His love for marriages? When we share a close and deep friendship with another person, we realize that we are well and truly loved. And such

love—all such love—begins with the example of our Heavenly Father and His love for us, springing forward from the very beginnings of time itself. A great friendship is a powerful reminder that we are loved by the One who made the ultimate sacrifice for us.

There are many other ways that friendship is useful, yet these three are among the strongest and deepest benefits. When your life partner is also your best friend, the two of you have found a joy that will deepen and grow over time as you share life experiences, joys

and heartaches, decisions and outcomes, families and futures.

At the heart of every great marriage is a great friendship. Since this is true, becoming your partner's best friend is the best choice you could make, for each of you.



Dr. David and Lisa Frisbie serve together as executive directors of The Center for Marriage and Family Studies in Del Mar. They are the authors of dozens of articles and

25 books about marriage and family life, including their recent book "Becoming Your Husband's Best Friend" (Harvest House Publishers).

PHIL HERRINGTON

Life lessons from Half Dome

When the alarm sounded that morning, I wasn't even sure what planet I was on. I slowly realized I was in a tent, camping near Yosemite Valley, California. My fireman friend, who is used to sleeping short shifts, woke up easily even though it was 4 a.m. We had all slept short shifts that night due to the slight incline our tent was planted on, mixed with the anticipation of what was ahead. Five buddies and I had driven eight hours the previous day to prepare for the hike of our lives...Half Dome.

We arrived at the park that morning just as the sun was coming up. The heavens were hard at work putting the glory of God on magnificent display. As our sleepy eyes responded to the strong camp coffee, we caught glimpses through the pines of magnificent El Cap, Cathedral, and then Half Dome.

We had trained for weeks, leading up to the challenge of making a 19-mile, physically challenging hike, with an elevation of 8800 feet. I was the senior member of our group, so the last thing I wanted to be was a lead weight they had to carry hour after hour. Nervous excitement simmered just below the surface of a bunch of guys trying to act like it was really going to be a piece of cake.

The first few miles were an adjustment to the continuous uphill climb. My quads were firing and I was feeling the burn. The streams and natural beauty had a way of keeping my mind off of the fact that the air seemed thinner making it harder to breathe and continue forward.

Reflecting on our hike, there were several discoveries along the way.

We are better together

I noticed that, as we climbed, we seldom ever met anyone hiking alone. And when we did, I was concerned. Especially on our descent, when we met a

guy with a small water bottle, wearing a slick pair of Van sneakers, who asked us, "How much farther to the top?"

We tried not to bust out laughing and told him it was just around the next curve (not really). As King Solomon said many years ago: *Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up!*

I'm certain I would not have made it to the top without the encouragement and challenge of my friends. We all made a point to regularly check with each other along the way to make sure we had enough water and food. And if anyone fell behind the pace of the others, one would unselfishly wait or go back to ensure their safety. *A friend loves at all times and a brother is born for adversity.* Is there anyone you need to check on these days?

Danger shows up when you least expect it

After hiking about four hours, we approached the challenging steps of the sub-dome where there are no railings... just winding steps, steep cliffs, and no shade. As we continued the tedious motions of climbing step after step, I heard a commotion up ahead, and an exclamation, "It's a bear!" Only a few yards ahead, a good-sized black bear bolted across the path and down the mountain. He came and went before I had time to react, just like many dangers that bolt through our lives.

There's plenty of room at the top

We inched our way up the cables of the dome, arriving at the peak. The view from the summit was breathtaking and so worth the climb. The valley below was deep, green and vast. The day was perfectly clear, so we could see for mile after mile. I was surprised at the small



number of people at the top. I expected a crowd, but there was plenty of room for more. In many of life's ventures, few want to pay the price to go that far, thinking there's no room for them. The journey involved sacrifice, sweat, risk and pain, but reaching the goal was worth all the effort required.

We all felt proud of completing the exhausting 19-mile trek, and we rewarded ourselves with a refreshing swim in Bass Lake. While in the water, a bald eagle began to circle high above, descending with each pass. He swooped lower and lower until he contacted the water and snatched a fish out of the lake. It was like a scene right out of Animal Planet or Wild Kingdom. We all stood watching, amazed at the gift we had been given in that moment.

What peak in life are you called to climb? Find a friend, stay alert for danger and go for the top! Keep your heart open to the lessons God will teach you along the way.



Phil Herrington is the lead pastor of Pathways Community Church in Santee. Learn more at www.pathways.cc.



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JOANNE BROKAW

Dear diary...

I recently found my childhood diary, hidden away in the attic with a bunch of old photos and papers, preserved for posterity like an historical document.

My grade school and junior high musings are not as valuable as, say, the original draft of the Constitution. But they are pretty darned amusing.

It appears that growing up I was under the illusion that every boy who paid attention to me might like me, probably because I had been told by adults that if a boy teased, mocked or otherwise was mean to me it meant he liked me. Johnny pulls your hair, so obviously he has a crush on you.

According to my journals, I was clearly more popular than I remember.

For several days, for example, I mused about whether a boy named Timmy liked me, a notion based solely, from what I wrote, on “a feeling he might like me.”

If memory serves me right, Timmy spent quite a bit of time at recess throwing things at me, calling me names, and pretending like I smelled, which is probably why day after day I told my diary, “I think he likes me” and “I really want to know if he likes me.” I was determined to find the truth, so I hatched a plan to become his secret admirer. I apparently aborted the scheme, because my journal shows that I was soon on to another admirer.

Here are a few diary excerpts:

September 5, 1975 - I like school. John (someone said) likes me. I like him sort of. He's a year younger than me, but he's really nice. He's not really cute.

At least my priorities were in order, I suppose. Nice personality trumped “cute.”



May 20, 1976 - Mike took the pepperoni off my pizza in lunch today. Then he ate them...He is going out with Stacy. I wonder if he likes me.

Looking back, I'm not sure what would have caused me to think a boy with a girlfriend would have been interested in me, especially considering that as I aged I found that my own boyfriends generally weren't interested in me.

Seventh grade seems to have solidified the notion that a boy who does mean things to you is worthy of your attention:

February 14, 1977 - Dave kind of needs a haircut. I still think he's cute. I think he likes me for a friend. He's OK. He tried to dump salad on my head.

I wrote about going for a walk around a lake with a boy named Rick, who kissed me and promised to write to me (“!!”). I'm not sure who Rick was but I can only assume he was nice, because I have no recollection of Rick, being kissed by Rick, or waiting for the mailman to deliver a letter from Rick. It appears I only remember the rascals.

The journal makes for entertaining reading, but it's also interesting to see the budding writer/editor in me already blossoming. Throughout the meager entries, I wrote things like “fix!” and “dumb” or “this is really dumb,” the pre-teen equivalents of “revise” or “make this stronger.”

And it wasn't all about boys. At the end of 5th grade, our class went on a camping trip.

June 10, 1975 - 2nd day. Went canoe-

ing, took water safety, and first aid, too. Took photography. There's a lot of action up here.

And in the event that I might forget that I was the one who wrote about being super jazzed over first aid and water safety, I signed it, *me, Joanne*.

I read the journal to my husband, who thought it was not only funny but said it also offered insight into my adult personality. For one birthday, for example, I raved about getting books and Cracker Jacks. He said it sounds like I was a happy kid who was easily amused and easily pleased.

That honestly surprises me. I mean, I'm still easily amused and fairly easily pleased. (I still get excited over gifts of books and snacks.) But happy? When I think back to my childhood, I remember being painfully dorky, outcast, and insecure. Of course, a lot of that came after elementary school, when the boys got meaner and I got weirder and it was finally clear that negative attention from the opposite sex wasn't some indication of undying love.

That's when I fell in love with Scott Baio. But that's a story for another day.



Award-winning freelance writer Joanne Brokaw spends her days dreaming of things she'd like to do but probably never will—like swimming with dolphins, cleaning

the attic and someday overcoming the trauma of elementary school picture day. She lives with two dogs, a cat, six chickens and one very patient husband. Learn more at www.joannebrokaw.com.

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