

# refreshed

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## Stopping the pain

Domestic violence victim is silent no more

## Loving the foreigner

Seeing refugees through God's eyes

## Shedding your freak

From control to confidence

**MICHAEL FOUST**

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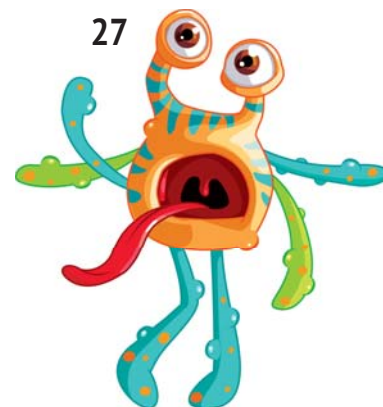
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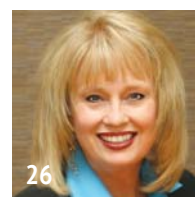
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## refreshed

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## Big lesson in serving small

A stethoscope can put a swagger in anyone's walk. I don't know if all doctors feel important when they have one around their necks, but I know that some do.

My friend Gary had his around his neck several years ago when he reported for duty at a facility run by Mother Teresa and the Sisters of Charity in Kolkata (formerly Calcutta), India.

He arrived at her place early one morning and asked where he could be the most useful to her that day. He was wearing a nice shirt, nice slacks, a sport coat, and his stethoscope. She told him he was needed at a nearby building called the House of the Dying Destitutes. This is where people go to die when they have no one to care for them. Most of the people there were dying of treatable diseases, but they didn't have access to proper care.

Armed with his medical knowledge, maybe he would even be able to put this place out of business, he thought.

"Soon this place will have a new sign that will say 'The House of Hope for the Living' instead of 'The House of the Dying Destitutes,'" he told me.

He knew he was going to make a difference. His mind began to review his medical training. This was a place that needed him.

He introduced himself to Sister Priscilla, who was in charge of the house.

"Follow me, please," she said in her soft, British accent.

He put his stethoscope around his neck and they entered the men's ward—a large, open room with rows of cots cradling what could only be described as skeletons with skin on them. Some were tossing in pain, too weak to fight their afflictions or even to eat.

To Gary's surprise, they proceeded quickly through that ward and on to the next—the women's ward. It was a simi-

lar room filled with emaciated women whose vacant eyes stared, unseeing. But again they passed through that room without stopping.

"Could there be a needier place than this?" he wondered, his mind reviewing the more serious diseases he might encounter.

They entered a primitive kitchen where a simple lunch of rice was being prepared over an open fire.

"Of course," he thought. "They're going to serve me lunch first."

But they walked through the kitchen, out the back door, and into the narrow alley. Sister Priscilla pointed to a very large pile of garbage. The smell was gag-inducing.

"We need you to take this garbage down the street to the dump," she said, handing him two buckets and a shovel. "The dump is several blocks down the street on the right. You can't miss it."

With a nod and a slight smile she was gone.

Recovering from a momentary stunned silence, Gary began to wonder what was happening. Didn't they get the fact that he was a doctor?

He put his stethoscope in his pocket and attacked the pile. He filled the buckets and headed down the street. He slung the contents onto the dump and went back for the next load. By mid-afternoon he was finished. He set down the buckets and shovel and headed back through the kitchen, the women's ward, the men's ward—places where he thought his gifts could have been better used. He was drenched, and smelled much like the garbage heap. He was a little bothered that his talents had been



Home for the Dying Destitutes, a hospice for the sick, destitute and the dying, established by Mother Teresa in Kalighat, Kolkata, India.

PHOTO BY BRITTANY KEENER SIEBRAND

wasted.

Just as he was about to say good bye to Sister Priscilla, he saw a hand-lettered sign above the door, with Mother Teresa's words: "We can do no great things, only small things with great love."

Gary said his heart melted when he saw that sign. All of his degrees, his certainty, his credentials, his stethoscope, maybe even his arrogance, didn't matter.

"Mother Teresa and Sister Priscilla pierced the armor I worked so long to construct," he told me. "Serving others is about attitude and availability to do whatever is needed—with love."



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."

# STOPPING THE PAIN



## Domestic violence victim is silent no more

story by LORI ARNOLD  
photos by SARAH TOLSON

Jessica Yaffa was finally turning her life around. She had left a years-long abusive relationship after her former husband, Trent\*, punched their son in the face while she held the young child in her arms. She had a new job, visiting clients in the field. It offered security and freedom from a desk. And, after not receiving child support from her ex, she was pleasantly surprised when he called to tell her he had

money for her.

“When I arrived and he opened the door I could immediately smell alcohol on his breath,” Yaffa said. “This was the first indicator there could be a problem. I also learned that no one else was home, which was a second red flag.”

There was small talk as he joked with her about her new job.

“Then he grabbed me in a bear hug

*\*Name changed*



and wouldn't let go," she said. "As I tried to pull away he squeezed harder. He then threw me on the ground, pinned my arms and legs."

The attack escalated and Yaffa was raped and sodomized.

"As I screamed for help he said, 'Don't make me hurt you,' which I knew he was capable of, so my screams turned to tears and begging him to stop. When he finished he insisted I wanted 'it' too, that it was consensual. I didn't argue. I just wanted out of there."

Though "disheveled and a mess," with scratches on her arms and legs, Yaffa kept her appointment with the client then picked up her son and dropped him with a neighbor. She then drove to the local police station. By then, black bruises had developed along her inner thighs.

"They transported me for a physical exam after what felt like hours of questioning" she said. "The district attorney picked up the case quickly and I spent the next few months being victimized all over again by the defense."

Although the immediate threat diminished after her ex was convicted and sentenced to 29 years, the repercussions remained.

"I felt dirty, used, trashy, and afraid. I began sleeping with any man that would have me, just to feel like I was seen, pretty, desired, or needed."

After each encounter, Yaffa only felt worse about herself and her life.

The experience tapped into childhood insecurities that annihilated her sense of worth, making her easy prey for a domestic thug.

"I was always hyper-sensitive to my appearance and felt unattractive from a very young age," she said, adding that she also felt disconnected from her father, who was a stickler when it came to academics.

"I didn't get great grades, nor was I interested in politics or global events," Yaffa said. "As my brother came along, he was the exact opposite of me. I watched my dad grow in affection towards him and longed for the connection they had."

...

When Jessica met Trent in her high school English class she was smitten with the attention.

"His possessive behavior, extreme jealousy, accusations, his need to be included in all of my social activities, and desire to know where I was at all times were interpreted as 'love' and felt really good to a then-16-year-old girl with low self-esteem," she said.

Over time she began self-protecting by avoiding situations that could result in confrontations.

"Anytime I wanted to go anywhere it became a huge fight full of accusations, and therefore it was usually easier to just cancel," she said, adding that she avoided "social gatherings where other men would be because I knew this would cause a blow-up."

The verbal and emotional abuse turned physical

about two years into their relationship.

"I did a very good job of keeping my family in the dark because I knew if they found out what was happening they would forbid me to be with him," Yaffa said. "Early on, my parents were afraid to push too hard because they feared I'd run off with him completely if they did."

Later, as Yaffa entered young adulthood, her widowed mother was focused on her own issues, trying to stay afloat as she raised Yaffa's younger brother as a single mom.

"I'm not sure what they could have done differently," she said. "I was so lost."

The isolation continued at college as her friends began distancing themselves as they witnessed signs of abuse.

"I did have one longtime best friend who was also in an abusive relationship, and therefore we were





## “During abusive episodes my son would cry for me, and (my husband) would physically prohibit me from comforting him.”

of no help to one another,” she said.

The intensity only magnified after the birth of her child.

“During abusive episodes my son would cry for me, and he would physically prohibit me from comforting him,” Yaffa said. “I was watched through the blinds when doing laundry, had cameras in the apartment, and was followed to the grocery store.”

Despite the chaos in her home, Yaffa said she focused on trying to be the “only stable force in my young child’s life.”

“I feared that I would die, and at times I wanted to,” she said. “My greatest fear was that he’d kill me and leave my son to be raised in an abusive environment.”

The transformational moment came when Trent hit her son during a heated confrontation.

“Although it took me a while to make preparations to leave, it was in that moment that I knew I had to,” she said.

• • •

Yaffa met Jesus in 2007 when she began dating the man who is now her husband.

“He had been pursuing me for months, and I finally gave in,” she said. “Once we got together he asked if I’d come to church with him. Once I stepped foot into church I never looked back.”

Several weeks after visiting church with her boyfriend, Yaffa attended a women’s ministry event where she received a promise.

“God spoke to me on this particular night about using all I had endured for good,” she said, though she admits she had no idea what that would entail.

Four months later she launched HEALING (Honoring, Empowering, and Loving Individuals Needing Guidance), a domestic violence ministry at Rock Church. It’s believed to be the first ministry of its kind in San Diego County. Since then, the ministry has served close to 10,000 people.

She also wrote “Mine Until: My Journey Into and Out of the Arms of an Abuser,” a no-holds-barred account of her experiences. She also created a workbook for therapists called “Help Me, Help Her: A Therapists Guide to Treating Victims of Domestic Violence.”

As demand for her voice grew, Yaffa, 40, launched No Silence No Violence, a national non-profit that provides resources and aid to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. The non-profit also works to change perceptions of domestic violence in an effort to change culture.

“We actually have a Bible Study that talks about God’s view on domestic violence,” she said. “We use Bible stories, verses, and other Christian materials to help women move past feelings of guilt and shame and into a place of peace and surrender.”

She has also partnered with Practical Re-

### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE BY THE NUMBERS

October is national Domestic Violence Awareness Month, a campaign that evolved from the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence’s “Day of Unity,” first held in October 1981.

Domestic violence numbers are staggering:

- Every 9 seconds in the US, a woman is assaulted or beaten.
- On average, nearly 20 people per minute are physically abused by an intimate partner in the United States. During one year, this equates to more than 10 million women and men.
- 1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men have been victims of (some form of) physical violence by an intimate partner within their lifetime.
- 1 in 5 women and 1 in 7 men have been victims of severe physical violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime.
- 1 in 7 women and 1 in 18 men have been stalked by an intimate partner during their lifetime to the point in which they felt very fearful or believed that they or someone close to them would be harmed or killed.
- On a typical day, there are more than 20,000 phone calls placed to domestic violence hotlines nationwide.
- The presence of a gun in a domestic violence situation increases the risk of homicide by 500 percent.
- Intimate partner violence accounts for 15 percent of all violent crime.
- Women between the ages of 18-24 are most commonly abused by an intimate partner.
- 19 percent of domestic violence incidents involve a weapon.
- Domestic victimization is correlated with a higher rate of depression and suicidal behavior.
- Only 34 percent of people who are injured by intimate partners receive medical care for their injuries.
- 1 in 5 women and 1 in 71 men in the United States have been raped in their lifetime.
- Almost half of female (46.7 percent) and male (44.9 percent) victims of rape in the United States were raped by an acquaintance. Of these, 45.4 percent of female rape victims and 29 percent of male rape victims were raped by an intimate partner.

Source: [www.ncadv.org/learn/statistics](http://www.ncadv.org/learn/statistics)



covery to open a treatment center for women who are misusing alcohol, illicit drugs or prescription drugs to self-medicate as a way to cope with the traumatic stress of toxic, abusive or violent relationships.

Yaffa, who has a degree in sociology and works as the director of admissions and community education for a substance abuse treatment facility, said she is committed to tackling the issues that make women—and men—vulnerable to abuse.

Although the majority of her clients are women, Yaffa said they do refer male clients to Christian therapists trained in handling their unique issues.

“Unfortunately, the stigma that already exists around domestic violence is worsened when a man comes forward,” she said. “Men are ashamed to report, seek help and admit they have no control over what is happening. We work to eliminate that shame, while

## A story of hope

In the seven-plus years since Jessica Yaffa launched her first ministry, HEALING (Honoring, Empowering, and Loving Individuals Needing Guidance), more than 10,000 people have been assisted.

Though each story is unique, their narratives all speak powerfully to God’s mercy and grace on the redemption road.

In one instance, Yaffa and her team were able to assist an unchurched pregnant woman with three children, two of whom had been removed from her custody because of domestic violence. She found Yaffa while bouncing between shelters with her 2-year-old.

“When she showed up she had one pair of torn sandals and her daughter had one outfit,” Yaffa said. “She was struggling to feed the two of them and had developed pregnancy complications. When she came to our first support group she was hopeless and alone.

We provided her with a sense of unconditional love and acceptance,” Yaffa said. They also clothed them, provided them with food, and began to gather baby supplies for the soon-to-be-newborn.

Yaffa connected the woman to the church’s Adopt-a-Family program for Christmas. There were gifts for all four of the children, along with practical household items. And when the baby arrived early, a volunteer showed up at the hospital with a car seat so Mom could take her newborn home.

“Since then, this woman has gotten her two older children back,” the ministry director said. “We helped her get into her own apartment. She is now working and going to school. She volunteers with our ministry and gives her time and treasure to other women in need.”

**“God has always been there. I could have died 100 times over and he protected me in those moments. Because of this I can step out of bondage and not fear the future.”**

empowering them with resources, guidance and support in the same way we do our women.”

Regardless of her clients’ gender, Yaffa said the vision of her ministry is to “speak worth and value into every person that God allows us to step in front of so that they may know where their worth comes from and where it doesn’t. When we believe we are worthy because He says so, we don’t need to look for that validation from another human being, nor do we need to control them.”

It is a lesson that Yaffa personally learned after deciding she didn’t want to walk the path alone anymore.

“God has always been there,” she said. “I could have died 100 times over and he protected me in those moments. Because of this I can step out of bondage and not fear the future.”

That future includes her ex-husband’s scheduled release from prison in 2025. But the thought of that doesn’t fill Yaffa with foreboding.

“I choose not to live in bondage or fear. God has, and will continue to be, my protector,” Yaffa said. “I am strong, resilient, courageous, and anointed. Where I was full of shame, I now walk free. I didn’t want anyone to know my ‘secret,’ yet today my testimony is my greatest gift.”

It’s a gift she gratefully passes on to others by reminding them they are not alone, either.

“It’s OK to be sad, angry, lonely, confused, and afraid,” she said. “I have learned to acknowledge where I am and be kind to myself in those moments, rather than trying to escape them.”

The key, Yaffa said, is not staying in the pit.

“No matter how stuck you may feel, God provides the resources we need in order to walk according to His will,” she said. “There is hope.”

• • •

Although other congregations have begun similar ministries, Yaffa said many churches are still reluctant to address the issue of domestic violence. Some Christian bookstores have declined to carry her memoir and even when she’s been invited to speak she’s been asked more than once to “tone it down.” Yaffa said she believes silence is an unnecessary enabler.

“Survivors often say, ‘I had no idea there were others out there,’ ‘I’m not alone or crazy,’ ‘If she can do this, I can do this,’” she said. “All of those moments make this worth doing.”

Yaffa said that churches are in a unique position to not only address the dark side of domestic violence, but to wipe it out with the light of the gospel, the one true prescription for redemption.

“What we don’t talk about we don’t have to address,” she said. “This happens to Christians. (Let’s) talk about it, have resources available, and be sure you have church council that understands the delicate nature of abuse within Christian households.

“It is when we can move out of the darkest places and into light that He is truly glorified. So many of us are dealing with, or have dealt with, abuse at some level. We need to create safe spaces to talk about it without judgment or fear of shaming. We fight against that enough on our own.” ■

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RESOURCES

### PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES

**No Silence No Violence** — (858) 413-6063, [www.nosilencenoviolence.org](http://www.nosilencenoviolence.org)

**Break the Silence against Domestic Violence** — (855) 287-1777, [www.breakthesilencedv.org](http://www.breakthesilencedv.org)

### THE CHURCH AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

[www.kprz.com/11596483/](http://www.kprz.com/11596483/)

[www.lifewayresearch.com/2014/06/27/pastors-seldom-preach-about-domestic-violence](http://www.lifewayresearch.com/2014/06/27/pastors-seldom-preach-about-domestic-violence)

[www.focusministries1.org/pastorstools.asp](http://www.focusministries1.org/pastorstools.asp)

### EMERGENCY HELP

**San Diego Domestic Violence Council** — 1-888-385-4657, [www.sddvc.org](http://www.sddvc.org)

**National Domestic Violence Hotline** — 1-800-799-SAFE (7233), [www.thehotline.org](http://www.thehotline.org)

**National Sexual Assault Hotline** — 1-800-656-HOPE (4673), [www.rainn.org](http://www.rainn.org)

**Stalking Strike Force** — (619) 515-8900, [www.sdca.org](http://www.sdca.org)

**Battered Women’s Services** — (619) 234-3164, [www.wrcsd.org](http://www.wrcsd.org)

**National Organization for Victim Assistance** — 1-800-879-6682, [www.trynova.org](http://www.trynova.org)

### SHELTERS

**Big Sister League** — (619) 297-1172, [www.bigsisterleague.org](http://www.bigsisterleague.org)

**San Diego Rescue Mission** — (619) 687-3720, [www.sdrescue.org](http://www.sdrescue.org)

**YWCA of San Diego County** — (619) 239-0355, [www.ywcasandiego.org](http://www.ywcasandiego.org)

**San Diego Family Justice Center** — (866) 933-4673, [www.sandiegofjc.org](http://www.sandiegofjc.org)

**Center For Community Solutions** — (858) 272-5777, [www.ccssd.org](http://www.ccssd.org)

### COUNSELING

**Christian Women’s Counseling International** — (619) 920-9977, [www.christianwomenscounseling.com](http://www.christianwomenscounseling.com)

**Care Counseling at Rock Church** — (619) 226-7625, [www.sdrock.com/ministries/domesticviolence/carecounseling](http://www.sdrock.com/ministries/domesticviolence/carecounseling)

### LOCAL CHURCH MINISTRIES

**HEALING at Rock Church** — (619) 226-7625, [www.sdrock.com/ministries/domesticviolence](http://www.sdrock.com/ministries/domesticviolence)

**FOCIS at New Harvest San Diego** — (619) 326-8450, [www.newharvesteastsandiego.org](http://www.newharvesteastsandiego.org)

**Journey Community Church DV Support Group** — (619) 464-4544, [www.journeycommunitychurch.com/careministries/caregroups](http://www.journeycommunitychurch.com/careministries/caregroups)

# SHEDDING YOUR FREAK

## From control to confidence

by LORI ARNOLD

**W**hile preparing the devotion for our church's recent Rejuvenate worship night gathering, I was thinking about the concept of rejuvenating and what it *really* means.

We go about it in different ways. For some it is hiking, for others it's curling up with a good book or, perhaps, massages, pedicures, vacations.

In our spiritual lives it can look a lot like a worship night in which Jesus is celebrated with songs and candles. At home it could be hitting our Bibles, reading our favorite Christian author, connecting with a spiritual mentor. Although our approaches vary, there is a common denominator: We cast *off* something in order to enter into a place of refreshing. We empty *out* something in order to make room for something new and fresh.

Since our pastor returned from a month-long sabbatical earlier this summer, he has been sharing from the pulpit insights he gleaned from his days of wrestling with God. One of those was the realization that he was operating out of his own power; not relying enough on the One True Power. He also warned us that where the leader goes, so goes the body.

This is where my devotional becomes part confessional: My personal reality is that I, too, had been in the midst of my own wrestling match. It came during a recent bout with pneumonia in what became one of those dark nights of the soul. For days I had been hearing incessant phones ringing in my ear, a couple seconds on, a couple seconds off, non-stop. I was coughing, struggling for a clear breath. I had also been notified by one of my clients that my hours were likely to be cut—again.

This particular night, while physically miserable and coping with the phantom phone ringing. I wrestled until 5 a.m. with fits of how we could possibly “control” the loss of income, while the enemy began ping-pong me with echoes of “you will never be good enough,” “you’ve failed again,” “you will never get ahead,” “how much do you think you can endure?” and “with this track record, who would want to hear your voice?”

Lies, all of them, straight from hell.

But in the wee hours of the morning, one truth did emerge: I too had been operating on my own power. I

was face to face with the realization that my tendency to be a control freak had surpassed mundane household operations to also usurp God's divine power for every inch of my redeemed life.

This revelation—this reality—explains why I've been tethered to a pattern of fits and starts, where I am rallied and motivated by great preaching, worship and divine insights from many of my church peeps, only to be stymied in the follow-through.

It's like putting cheap gas in a Maserati.

It also occurred to me that the battle with control also inhibits the confidence that God promises to his people. Until we can truly relinquish control, we will never be able to walk in the radiant confidence displayed by Paul in Philippians 3:10-14 (NIV):

*“I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.”*

*“Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”*

But how do we move from our false, self-centered starts to a consistent confidence?

Blogger Nathan W. Bingham, who is director of Digital Outreach for Ligonier Ministries, offers his insights through his post “3 Ways to Crush Your Inner Control Freak.”

### Remember the gospel

He tells us the first step is to remember the gospel.

He says, “Remember, the bad news of the ‘gospel’ is that you cannot save yourself. You are guilty before a holy God and are without hope *within* yourself. Redemption is totally outside of your control. However, the good

## The promises of Isaiah's Invitation to the Thirsty

*"For my thoughts are not your thoughts,  
neither are your ways my ways,"  
declares the Lord.*

*"As the heavens are higher than the earth,  
so are my ways higher than your ways  
and my thoughts than your thoughts.*

*As the rain and the snow  
come down from heaven,  
and do not return to it  
without watering the earth  
and making it bud and flourish,  
so that it yields seed for the sower  
and bread for the eater,*

*So is my word that goes out from my mouth:  
It will not return to me empty,  
but will accomplish what I desire  
and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.*

*You will go out in joy  
and be led forth in peace;  
the mountains and hills  
will burst into song before you,  
and all the trees of the field  
will clap their hands.*

*Instead of the thornbush will grow the juniper,  
and instead of briars the myrtle will grow.  
This will be for the Lord's renown,  
for an everlasting sign,  
that will endure forever."*

Isaiah 55:8-13 (NIV)

news of the gospel is that another, God Himself, has taken control of redeeming a people for His glory. God is the One who is active in sending His Son to redeem a people. Jesus is the One active in the sense of willingly living, dying, and rising to redeem a people. The Holy Spirit is the One active, like the wind which 'blows where it wishes' (John 3:8), drawing a people to the Father."

The blogger then goes on to say that we inherited this control mechanism from the Bible's first control freak, Adam, who, once realizing that he was naked after eating the forbidden fruit, sewed fig leaves together to cover himself and then hid from God.

Genesis 3:8-11 tells us:

*"Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, 'Where are you?'"*

*"He answered, 'I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.'*

*"And he said, 'Who told you that you were naked? Have*

*you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?'" (NIV)*

Bingham writes, "His instinct was to cover himself when he should have called out to the only One who could cover him: God."

This passage reminds me of another biblical example of control interfering with our spiritual walk. We saw it with the Israelites after God told them he would provide their needs during their exodus by raining down manna from heaven. The first time it fell, Genesis 16:18-20 tells us:

*"Everyone had gathered just as much as they needed.  
'Then Moses said to them, 'No one is to keep any of it until morning.'*

*"However, some of them paid no attention to Moses; they kept part of it until morning, but it was full of maggots and began to smell." (NIV)*

### Return to prayer

Bingham's second step to crush our inner control freak is to return to prayer.

He writes, "If you don't pray often, or at all, have you considered it may be because you don't think you need to pray? In your mind you've got things under control. Your intellect, charisma, wealth, or whatever, will get you through the day. The act of stopping to pray is an external, physical, symbolic, yet real expression that you *don't* have everything under control. Prayer is you saying, 'I'm not a control freak! God, please sustain me today in Your grace.'

"Sometimes, one of the greatest blessings from trials and suffering is that it forces you to see your helplessness and it moves you to a deeper season of prayer."

### Rest in God's sovereignty

The blogger's third step to crush our inner control freak is to rest in God's sovereignty. Bingham writes "When your energy (obsession) is to focus on controlling things, it's a subtle attempt to be god. You might not be trying to control the universe, but you want to be the god of your own life, or the god of your office, or the god of your current major project. It can be a fine line sometimes, but there is a difference between subtly usurping the place of God, and ruling, managing, leading, serving, *under* God in the area in which He has placed you."

As I work to better implement these three steps in my own life, it occurs to me that I am probably not the only believer who is caught in this tension between control and confidence.

Would you care to join me on this journey toward true freedom? ■

---

*Lori Arnold is editor of Refreshed magazine. If you would like to share your thoughts on control and confidence, send an email to [lori@refreshedmag.com](mailto:lori@refreshedmag.com). To see Bingham's entire post, "3 Ways to Crush Your Inner Control Freak," visit [www.nwbingham.com](http://www.nwbingham.com).*



PHOTO BY JEDEDIAH SMITH

Due to a war that has stripped millions of Syrians of work and most of their possessions, many families are living in the Zaatari refugee camp in Jordan.

# Loving the foreigner

## Seeing refugees through God's eyes

by ERIC METAXAS

On September 9th, Jean-Claude Juncker, president of the European Commission, urged European Union members to distribute 160,000 migrants among member nations.

The unfolding humanitarian catastrophe, which has resulted in at least 2500 deaths by drowning, is largely being driven by people seeking to escape the civil war and the rise of ISIS in Iraq and Syria.

Words can scarcely do justice to the scale of the crisis. An estimated 11 million people, more than half of Syria's population, have been displaced. While most have remained within Syria, nearly

four million of them have fled to neighboring Lebanon, Jordan, and especially, Turkey. The sheer numbers—one in every five people in Lebanon is a Syrian refugee—have overwhelmed these countries' capacity to respond.

And now they're attempting to reach Europe, increasingly via Turkey. More than 30 thousand Syrians are applying for asylum every month and the number shows no sign of ebbing.

That's a brief summary of the numbers. The question is: what do we do about it? The honest answer is: I don't know, not with any certainty. In addition to the sheer magnitude of the problem,

there are other considerations: the economic, political, cultural, and yes, religious impact of the refugees on the countries that will host them.

There are already signs that the influx of Syrian refugees, who are mostly Sunni Muslims, has destabilized Lebanon's already-fragile sectarian balance. And it's an understatement to say that European countries have struggled when it comes to assimilating previous generations of Muslim immigrants.

But none of this excuses indifference or inaction, especially for Christians. After all, the Scriptures make it clear that God cares a great deal about how

## After all, the Scriptures make it clear that God cares a great deal about how his people treat the foreigners in their midst.

his people treat the foreigners in their midst. Leviticus 19 tells us “The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the Lord your God.”

Ezekiel 47 says that the foreigner among you “shall be to you as native-born children of Israel. With you they shall be allotted an inheritance among the tribes of Israel. In whatever tribe the sojourner resides, there you shall assign him his inheritance, declares the Lord God.”

As if to underscore the importance of these commands, the New Testament opens with the genealogy of Jesus, which lists 42 men and five women. Besides Mary, the women listed—Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba—have one thing in

common: they were all foreigners.

Then there’s Matthew 25. The word translated “stranger” in the passage “I was a stranger and you welcomed me” is *xenos*, the Greek word for “foreigner.” What’s more, the Greek word translated “welcomed,” *sunago*, means to join or gather together, as well as to receive into one’s home. It’s the same word from which we get “synagogue.”

But it was Jesus who went beyond Leviticus’ command to treat the stranger as one of our own, and instead, commanded us to treat them as we would treat Him.

As I said earlier, I’m not certain as to what the specific policy response to this crisis should be. There are legitimate economic and security concerns.

But Christians should not allow these concerns to become an excuse for a response that amounts to “yeah, it stinks to be you.”

We should oppose appeals to fear and dehumanizing rhetoric. We may not know exactly what to do about the crisis but we do know how to talk about the people caught up in it. And in an age of careless and often callous rhetoric, that’s a start. ■



Eric Metaxas is the voice of Breakpoint, a radio commentary. © 2015 Prison Fellowship Ministries. Reprinted with permission.

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*Psalm 139:14*



Bob Beckel, left, and Cal Thomas, right, will square off in a dialogue on politics and faith on Oct. 11 at Skyline Church.

## Pancake breakfast to support pregnancy clinic

PARADISE HILLS — Puritan Evangelical Church is hosting a pancake breakfast on Saturday, Oct. 17, from 8 to 11 a.m.

Proceeds from the event will go to support the opening of the Southeast San Diego Satellite Pregnancy Care Clinic.

There will be jumps and games for children.

The church is located at 6374 Potomac St. in Paradise Hills.

For more information, call (619) 479-5053.

## Sleepless in San Diego fundraiser returns

POINT LOMA — The San Diego Rescue Mission's 9th Annual Sleepless in San Diego fundraiser will be held Oct. 10-11 at Liberty Station.

Participants will sleep under the stars to raise both money and awareness about homelessness in San Diego. All proceeds will be used to support the mission's varied programs for the homeless, addicted and poor. Security will be in place throughout the event.

The event, which runs from 4 p.m.

Saturday to 7 a.m. Sunday, will be held rain or shine since, organizers said, the homeless must endure all types of weather conditions.

The sleepover will include live music, videos on homelessness, care package packing stations and an art gallery.

There is a minimum \$20 fee to register. Children ages 5 to 12 will be admitted for free. The event is closed to children under 5. Limited scholarships are available.

Participants can purchase food from local vendors.

Although the mission does provide overnight shelter, its purpose is to rescue homeless men, women and children from the streets of San Diego and to give them the tools needed to permanently overcome the drugs, alcohol, domestic violence, and other critical issues that led them to the streets in the first place.

Each month the San Diego Rescue Mission provides nearly 12,500 nights of shelter, more than 37,000 hot, nutritious meals and more than 82,000 hours of education, work training, rehabilitation and Christian care to the residents in its long-term care programs. Since its 1955 inception, the San Diego Rescue Mission has relied solely on mail solicitations and corporate donations, not government funds.

The event site is located at Cushing and Dewey roads.

To make a donation or for more information, visit [www.sdrescue.org](http://www.sdrescue.org) or [www.sleeplessinsandiego.org](http://www.sleeplessinsandiego.org).

## Thomas, Beckel to appear at Skyline Church

LA MESA — Syndicated columnist and Fox News contributor Cal Thomas will appear at Skyline Church on Sunday, Oct. 11. Thomas, a noted conservative journalist, will square off against his liberal-leaning close friend and political pundit, Bob Beckel, in an informal Q&A dialogue moderated by Skyline pastor Jim Garlow.

Thomas and Beckel are known for

their "Common Ground" weekly column in USA Today. Despite their different political perspectives, the two men are examples of how to hold a civil discourse and to come up with a mutually-agreeable solution.

"There is precious little civil discourse left in present day politics," said Garlow. "This year's election likely marks the greatest dishonoring name calling ever seen in a campaign. Skyline Church is willing to take a risk and invite guests who will demonstrate how the 'right' and 'left' can have respectful conversation."

The free event begins at 5 p.m.

The church is located at 11330 Campo Rd. in Rancho San Diego.

Learn more at [www.skylinechurch.org](http://www.skylinechurch.org) or call (619) 660-5000.

## Jenkins to keynote writers' conference

RANCHO BERNARDO — New York Times bestselling author Jerry Jenkins is the keynote speaker for the Oct. 24 San Diego Christian Writers Guild Conference. Agents, editors, and best-selling authors will offer workshops and consultations. The conference, for experienced and beginning writers, is Saturday, Oct. 24, from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at Maranatha Chapel.

Jenkins may be best known as the co-author of the bestselling Left Behind series with Tim LaHaye. He has written 186 books, 21 of which have been New York Times bestsellers.

Other faculty include literary agents Blythe Daniel and Tawny Johnson; Senior Acquisitions editor for Bethany and Chosen Books, Kim Bangs; best-selling novelist Susan Meissner; LampPost publisher Brett Burner; writing coach Dr. Sandra O'Donnell; "The Organizing Pro" Marcia Ramsland and other writing professionals. Faculty will offer private, 15-minute consultations.

A book signing with Jerry Jenkins



### FALL CONCERT CALENDAR

- Oct. 4** The Gaither Homecoming Tour, Skyline Church
- Oct. 13** Matthew West, Francesca Battistelli, Rock Church
- Oct. 24** VeggieTales Live!, Balboa Theatre
- Oct. 25** The Hoppers, El Cajon Wesleyan Church
- Oct. 26** Matt Redman, Rock Church
- Oct. 29** Michael W. Smith, Skyline Church
- Nov. 22** Liberty Quartet, El Cajon Wesleyan Church
- Dec. 16** Chris Tomlin, Crowder, Adore Christmas Tour, Balboa Theatre

Learn more about all these concerts at [www.refreshedmag.com/calendar](http://www.refreshedmag.com/calendar).



and chat with faculty is from 4:30 to 5:15 p.m.

The annual conference is designed to help Christian writers meet editors, agents, authors and fellow writers, and equip them to become more successful.

Learn more at [www.sandiegocwg.org](http://www.sandiegocwg.org) or call (76) 239-3269.

## Slam Diego tourney benefits local foundation

SAN DIEGO — Slam Diego, a golf tournament to benefit Hope Leadership Foundation will be held Oct. 29 and 30 at the Fairmont Grand Del Mar Resort and Golf Club.

The two-part event begins with a kick-off gala featuring The Katinas. The Thursday evening program includes testimonies by students who have benefited from the work of the foundation.

Hors d'oeuvres and refreshments will be served.

The gala begins at 6 p.m. after a pre-event meet-and-greet with sponsors, professional athletes and other celebrities. A live and silent auction are also planned.

The golfing portion of the benefit begins with a shotgun tournament starting at 12:30 p.m., on Friday. The professional athletes and celebrities will return to golf with entrants. Lunch will be provided.

The event, presented by Thrivent Financial, closes out with a post-tournament mixer and silent auction.

The foundation serves children from kindergarten to college by offering mentorships in educational support, sports opportunities and spiritual development.

Learn more at [www.slamdiego.com](http://www.slamdiego.com).

## Conference pursues divine inspiration

SAN DIEGO — Bless it Assurance Ministry will present the Divinely Inspired Conference from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Oct. 24 at Bethel Seminary. The event is hosted by Release Worship Center.

Workshop topics and speakers include “Divinely Inspired Leadership,” with Arthur Benjamin;-- “Divinely Inspired to Master my Marriage,” with Mitchell Campbell and Donna Scott; “Divinely Inspired to Succeed in my Singleness,” with Summer Fuller; and “Divinely Inspired,” with Theola Campbell.

The event worship leader is Laneé Battle Johnson.

The seminary is located at 6116 Arosa St.

For more information, call (619) 818-7138 or send an email to [lena61@att.net](mailto:lena61@att.net).

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**Craft fair seeks vendors**

SAN DIEGO — The women’s ministry department at Mission Valley Christian Fellowship is seeking vendors for its Nov. 14 Craft and Collectibles Faire.

The event, set for 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., is a fundraiser to provide scholarships for its women’s retreat. Food will also available for purchase, with proceeds from that going to support the congregation’s home school sports teams.

A 10-by-10 booth space is \$35.

The church is located at 6536 Estrella Ave.

For more information, call Linda at (619) 683-7729 or send an email to linda@mvcf.com.

**Chonda Pierce’s story on the big screen**

LA JOLLA — San Diegans will have an opportunity to see comedian Chonda

Pierce’s inspiring story, “Laughing in the Dark,” during a one-night theatrical release at three area movie theaters.

Presented by Fathom Events and Fuseic Entertainment, the theater event will be shown at 7 p.m. Oct. 27 at the AMC La Jolla 12, Mission Valley 20, and Mira Mesa 18. Nationwide, the event will be shown in nearly 480 movie theaters through Fathom’s Digital Broadcast Network.

The film takes an intimate look at the life of well-known comedian Chonda Pierce and how she has overcome many of life’s obstacles through faith and humor. In addition to the docu-comedy, there will be a post-event show, “Finding Light in the Darkness,” where audience members will join celebrities including Roma Downey, Kevin Sorbo, Sherri Shep-



herd, Monica Crowley, Corbin Bernsen and Duck Dynasty’s Miss Kay Robertson as they discuss what they found inspirational in Chonda’s story. Audience members also have the opportunity to send in questions for Chonda to answer.

Tickets are \$12.50 and can be purchased online or at participating theater box offices. Online tickets are available at [www.fathomevents.com](http://www.fathomevents.com).

To email questions to Chonda send them to [question@chonda.com](mailto:question@chonda.com).

**EVENTS ONLINE**

For more Community News and an online Calendar of Events for San Diego County, please visit [www.refreshedsandiego.com](http://www.refreshedsandiego.com).

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## OCTOBER 11 | 5PM

*ON THE LEFT*



**BOB BECKEL**

Former Co-Host  
“The Five” Fox News Channel

*ON THE RIGHT*



**CAL THOMAS**

USA Today Columnist  
Fox News Contributor

Host  
**Jim Garlow**  
Pastor, Skyline Church



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Guest Appearance  
**Mark Larson**  
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# Fall Fun San Diego

With children back in school, the football season under way, deciduous leaves starting to turn, and the cool images of tan sand and blue waters giving way to hues of orange, yellow and brown, it's evident that Halloween is soon approaching.

Dozens of area churches are hosting alternative events to provide local communities with safe alternatives to haunted celebrations and sometimes-risky door-to-door trick or treating.

Here's a sample of what's going on around the county.

**Mission Valley Christian Fellowship** — Noon to 4 p.m. Oct. 31. The Harvest Festival will include candy prizes, games, inflatables for the children, entertainment, food, drinks and entertainment. The church is located at 6536 Estrella Ave. San Diego.

[www.mvcf.com](http://www.mvcf.com)

**Pathways Community Church** — 5 to 8 p.m. Oct. 31. The Light the Night Festival includes trunk or treating, rides, inflatables and games. The church is located at 9626 Carlton Hills Blvd., Santee.

[www.pathways.cc](http://www.pathways.cc)

**LifeBridge Church** — 6 to 8 p.m. Oct. 31. Its Harvest Festival features more than 25 games, two jumpers and free food. The church is located at 7645 West Bernardo Drive, San Diego.

[www.lifebridgesd.org](http://www.lifebridgesd.org)

**Mission Church of the Nazarene** — 6 to 8 p.m. Oct. 31. The Fall Festival includes a trunk-or-treat, petting zoo, inflatables, food, pony rides, balloon artist, photo booth and giveaways. The church is located at 4750 Mission Gorge Place, San Diego.

[www.missionnaz.org/#!events/c17et](http://www.missionnaz.org/#!events/c17et)



**Newbreak Church, Mira Mesa** — 4 to 8:30 p.m. Oct. 30 at Hage Elementary School. The church is partnering with Hage to present its Fall Festival. The event will include games and a DJ. The school is located at 9750 Galvin Ave., San Diego.

[www.newbreak.org/events/2015/10/](http://www.newbreak.org/events/2015/10/)

**Newbreak Church, Pacific Beach** — 2:30 to 8 p.m. Oct. 30 at Crown Point Elementary School. The 6<sup>th</sup> annual child-friendly event is part of a partnership with Crown Point Jr. Newbreak is sponsoring the carnival games and a movie in the auditorium. Other activities include a Haunted Library and a costume contest sponsored by the academy. The school is located at 4033 Ingraham St., San Diego.

[www.newbreak.org/events/2015/10/](http://www.newbreak.org/events/2015/10/)

**Newbreak Church, Tierrasanta** — 5 to 8 p.m. Oct. 30 at the church. Each host car will also provide a brief, interactive activity for the children. The event will also feature inflatables and free food. The church is located at 10791 Tierrasanta Blvd., San Diego.

[www.newbreak.org/events/2015/10](http://www.newbreak.org/events/2015/10)

**Calvary Chapel La Costa Hills** — 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. Oct. 31. The Harvest Celebration offers numerous games, a jump house, food, a cake walk, music, raffle prizes and, of course, candy. The church is located at 1739 Melrose Drive, Suite 102, San Marcos.

[www.calvarychapelacostahills.com](http://www.calvarychapelacostahills.com)

**Fletcher Hills Presbyterian Church** — 5:30 to 8 p.m. Oct. 31 at the church. In addition to candy-filled trunks, the event offers vari-

ous games, prizes and food. The church is located at 455 Church Way, El Cajon.

[www.fhpc.org](http://www.fhpc.org)

**Redemption Church** — 6 to 9 p.m. Oct. 31 at E.B. Scripps Elementary School. The annual event includes games, decorated cars, jump houses, food trucks and live music. The school is located at 11778 Cypress Canyon Road, San Diego.

[www.redemptionsd.com](http://www.redemptionsd.com)

**Bonita Valley Community Church** — 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. Oct. 31. In addition to the trunk candy distribution, the event will include food trucks, inflatable jump houses, a rock climbing wall and mechanical bull. The church is located at 4744 Bonita Road Bonita.

[www.bonitavalley.com](http://www.bonitavalley.com)

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## Tree 63 releases long-awaited album

South African rock band Tree63 emerges from its seven-year studio hiatus on Sept. 11 with the release of its new album, *Land*.

The project follows a series of reunion events last year in South Africa and a successful Kickstarter campaign earlier this year.



The project features “The Storm,” which the band released as part of its Kickstarter campaign. Vocalist and guitarist John Ellis calls the anthem an honest look at man’s need

for something bigger than himself as the lyrics capture a man treading water while crying out to God after being swept overboard.

“My own recent experience leads me to the realization that even though we believe we will reach our destination across the hazardous sea God asks us to cross, it won’t be an easy voyage, and often we arrive shipwrecked and battered,” Ellis said. “The guarantee, however, is that we at least arrive.”

Other songs on the album, “Ship” and “Standing on It,” continue with the stormy sea theme, creating what Ellis called “a kind of Jonah-like deliverance tale.”



Bethel Music singer-songwriter Amanda Cook has released her debut album ‘Brave New World.’

## Bethel artist enters Brave New World

Redding, California-based Bethel Music has released the debut album of its artist Amanda Cook. *Brave New World* features 13 original songs which the label describes as “melodic and ethereally rich atmosphere of worship.”

Bethel Music, affiliated with Bethel Church, is known for its worship music and a committed community of songwriters.

The album showcases her song, “You Make Me Brave,” which became the anthemic title track to Bethel Music’s *Billboard* Top 10-selling album released last year. The message and process of writing, recording and leading the song in worship, Cook said, gave her the opportunity to explore what it is like to live in a world without anxiety, a world absent of fear in the presence of God’s perfect love.

“If we were on a ship in the ocean, every water drop in that ocean is a testimony of His nature and His goodness,”

Cook said. “The vastness of that picture is what I want people to encounter in this album. These songs are droplets, and they are precious to me, because I’ve spent time in that water. I hope that these water droplets invite people in. We have a kind God, a merciful God, a God who doesn’t hide his heart in pieces. I want to expose the little pieces I know in my heart to be true.”

## Manifesting light

Manafest, whose talents as a singer, rapper, songwriter, author and skater, keep him busy, has released “Shine,” his third single from his *Reborn* album.

The song features the signature rock vocals of longtime Manafest collaborator and Thousand Foot Krutch frontman, Trevor McNevean. Like its two predecessors, the lead single/video, “Let You Drive,” and the album title track, “Shine” is available as an immediate download with each iTunes pre-order of *Reborn*. The album was set for release on Oct. 2.

“Shine” is about living each day to maximum capacity and ‘beaming your light’ along the way.

“My artist name, Manafest, means to shine a light in a dark place, and when something is made manifest, it’s because of the light,” the artist said. “I believe life is a gift and we owe the debt of love and to shine as bright as we can while we have breath in our lungs. Trevor nails it with the metaphors in the chorus: ‘Shine in the light, glow in the dark, strike like a match on a burning heart.’ That’s what we do with our music in hopes of shining light into peoples’ lives when they’re in those dark moments.”

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## Football-themed ‘Woodlawn’ hits theaters Oct. 16

by MICHAEL FOUST

The best sports movies aren’t really about sports. In fact, in the *very best* ones, sports are simply a backdrop for a larger, more significant story.

Such is the case with the upcoming faith-based film “Woodlawn,” which hits theaters Oct. 16 and tells the true story of racial integration in 1973 Birmingham, Alabama, spotlighting the Woodlawn Colonels, which become the spiritual spark that changes not only the high school but also the city.

“Woodlawn” was made in part by the Erwin Brothers, the tandem that also brought us “October Baby” and “Mom’s Night Out,” the latter of which is one of the funniest films you’ll ever see. Kevin

Downes, known for his on-screen role in “Courageous,” produced “Woodlawn.”

When the film opens, Birmingham is on edge, with fights regularly breaking out throughout the school over the subject of integration—and the superintendent even threatening to shut Woodlawn down if school officials don’t get control of the situation.

In the midst of this is a football team that also has been integrated, even though whites get all of the playing time. Then one day a chaplain (played by Sean Astin) walks into the school and asks Coach Tandy Geraldts (Nic Bishop) if he



C. Thomas Howell plays “Shorty” White, coach of Woodlawn High School’s chief rivals in “Woodlawn,” an exhilarating football drama about how a spiritual awakening in 1970s Alabama led to love and unity overcoming racism and hate.

could have a few minutes to speak to the team. Geraldts reluctantly agrees, and—incredibly—most of the players accept Christ. Geraldts, not a person of faith, is shocked, not knowing what to do.

But eventually Geraldts, too, is changed, and he decides to send the most talented black player into the game, running back Tony Nathan (Caleb Castille). Nathan rises above the racism exhibited by not only his teammates but also parents and fans. He becomes a standout player, so much so that legendary Alabama Coach Paul “Bear” Bryant (John Voight) recruits him.

“Woodlawn” director Andy Erwin is hoping the movie will help heal modern-day racial tensions.

“It is the story about the redemption of a cynic through a reluctant hero with the influence of an unabashed optimist,” Erwin said. “And these three men mixed together in the midst of this spiritual awakening that really hit America in the early ’70s called the Jesus Movement. Something special happened, and a city healed.”

It is easily one of the most inspiring and uplifting films I’ve seen, and one that even non-football fans will enjoy. It also contains the most realistic football action I’ve ever seen in a film—a major achievement that even Hollywood films don’t reach.

Learn more at [www.woodlawnmovie.com](http://www.woodlawnmovie.com).

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# Embrace the inner boomer—or not

How did it come to this? My generation, once the largest and most vibrant age group in America, is now in the process of entering the time of life known as aches, pains and the road to retirement. In fact, our demographic has always done things big, so we will be siphoning Social Security and Medicare money at a level never before seen in our history.

That's right, The Baby Boomers, those of us born in the euphoric post-World War II years, 1946 to 1964, have gone from being oh-so-hip to needing hip replacements. The Boomers are now seniors.

I get chills and a wave of nausea just writing the word *senior*.

But here I am. My entire senior (there's that word again!!!) high school class is turning into milestone territory this year, all observing the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of turning 50. So we decided to celebrate this month.

Why? Because at our 40<sup>th</sup> reunion we realized we weren't sure how much fun it would be to wait until our 50<sup>th</sup>. We imagined name tags with 100 point fonts, for example. Besides, our group always loved a good party.

Disneyland and McDonald's burst onto the national scene during the same year we came onto the scene. We were more than 76 million strong and were cool and cutting edge for what seemed like forever...or so we told ourselves. We also occasionally did lots of dumb stuff and learned the hard way. But what a life ... so far.

Then "BOOM!" indeed. *Where did the time go?*

So much of what we knew to be Our Era, ahead of the rest of America, now seems so quaint. "Why, back in our day (hear me saying this in my best geezer

voice), we had three TV channels, rabbit ears to tune in programs in black and white. Remember the excitement of shows suddenly being telecast 'in living color?'" Music on AM Radio was awesome.

We were raised on Captain Kangaroo, Mr. Green Jeans, Bunny Rabbit and Mr. Moose. Davy Crockett hats, too (which reminds me to get mine fumigated... if I can even find it). It was the "Golden Age of Television."



Milestone events come back to our minds like today's news. Elvis, The Cuban missile crisis, the space race to the moon, JFK in Dallas, the Beatles, Vietnam and on and on through the "Summer of Love." It was *our* time, and we were in charge.

If we took a poll of Boomers, most would agree there was not much really great music after sometime in the 1980s. But with our demo spanning the mid-1940s to early 1960s, that timeline can be very subjective. Suffice it to say rap music isn't getting much play at our reunions.

So here we are. One day I'm the

dorky Midwestern 9-year-old in horn-rimmed glasses, riding bikes and falling out of trees and now I'm a still-dorky "senior citizen" with a need to drive faster vehicles.

Experts will say, "You're only as old as you feel." So true, yet difficult to keep in mind when organizations like AARP start sending membership card applications about the time you turn 39. And yes, some days our muscles and joints have another message: *Take a nap*.

My message to fellow Boomers? **Resist**. As long as possible, don't participate in the feeling of being "over."

Don't let the culture dictate your mood. Sharpen your sense of humor. Stay current. Read and relate. Embrace perspective and history.

Keep "short accounts" with God, and chat with the Almighty often. Know what really matters in life.

Be inspired by those who kept the pedal-to-the-metal until the Creator of the Universe said, "Time's up." My grandfather made it to his mid-90s. Ray Kroc starting hitting his prime after age 55, as did Ben Franklin (For those under 30, look 'em up on Google). My friend Walter ran a major company until he was nearly 97.

And by all means, always nurture that 9-year-old geeky kid inside you, to help keep the oh-so-responsible adult in line. I'm working on turning that attitude into an art form.



Larson is a longtime Southern California radio/television personality. His voice is heard on KPRZ 1210AM and his weekday talkshow airs 6 to 9 a.m.

on AM 1170 "The Answer." He's also a news analyst on KUSI TV. Learn more at [marklarson.com](http://marklarson.com).

JON HUCKINS

Jon Huckin's older children, Ruby and Rose, hold newborn twins Hank and Lou.



# To my four kids, from Dad

After five days in the hospital filled with overwhelming joy, paralyzing fear and complete exhaustion in the wake of the recent birth of our twins, I finally found a moment to walk outside the florescent lights and sit under the bright moon. Sitting on a small patch of grass outside the hospital doors, the reality of being a father to four kids finally hit me.

I was both overwhelmed and overjoyed by the gift and responsibility of raising four kids in a world so desperately in need of mustard seeds of hope that might one day blossom into healing and beauty.

As I sat in relative comfort and began to dream big dreams for my kids, I was

struck by the reality that most fathers around the globe are forced to welcome their kids into a world where there is no “ladder” to climb because it has been knocked out from under them by broken systems that are breaking people.

A world where many kids are born into families fleeing violent persecution and being nursed on the trauma of war in battered refugee camps; places where the thought of hope is a distant second to simply fighting to survive.

A world where one’s value is more closely associated with gender (male) than with the beautiful uniqueness inherent in every new life.

But it is also a world pregnant with possibilities. A world where former enemies move beyond their past, share tables and begin to imagine a future together.

A world where the blossoms of new life begin to sprout in the shadowy corners of forgotten neighborhoods.

A world where the diversity of God’s Kingdom begins to awaken our eyes and hearts to the new world God is making.

It is in this world—a world that is both beautiful and broken—that I offer this prayer over my four kids:

*May you see the humanity, dignity and image of God in everyone. Regardless of documentation, orientation or association, may you choose to see the face of Jesus in all those put in your path. May you see those who are different than you not through the lens of judgment, but with a spirit of curiosity and posture of invitation.*

*May you immerse yourself in the muck and messiness of everyday life, seeking to understand rather than be understood. May you move toward broken people and places, catalyzed by hope rather than paralyzed by fear. And, finally, as you move deeper into relationship with these people and places, may you stick around for the long haul, offering radical presence*

in a world of hurry.

*My dear ones, may your relative comfort and inherited privilege not lead to complacency, but instead be used to contend for the flourishing of others. May you be willing to sacrifice your reputation, finances and time in order to stand in front of any bulldozer that is flattening people. Like the Jesus we follow, may you return evil with good and choose not to get even, but get creative in love.*

*May you lead out of your identity as ones first and foremost loved by God, so you can give yourselves fully to God and others. If you get anything, please get this: Your identity is not based on what you do, but who you are. All is grace, dear ones, and you are God’s beloved. As such, your mother and I will always love you, contend for you, pray for you and stand with you no matter what choices you make or what you “do” or don’t do.*

*Whether you join God’s mission of reconciliation in the halls of power or the back alleys of forgotten neighborhoods, may you see and participate in the restoration made real in Jesus’ death and resurrection. May you taste, feel, see and experience a Kingdom where the last will be first and the first will be last. For it is there that love lives.*

*And, day in and day out, may we be parents who live and model the kind of lives we are inviting you to live.*

Much love to each of you, Ruby, Rosie, Hank & Lou.

Dad



Jon Huckins is the co-founding director of The Global Immersion Project, Missional Leadership Coach with Thresholds, family man, speaker and author of “Thin Places” and

“Teaching Through the Art of Storytelling.” Follow his blog at [www.jonhuckins.net](http://www.jonhuckins.net).

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People who live in the moment  
tend to be happier, more empathic  
and tend to feel more secure.

## Living in the moment

*“This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it.”*  
— Psalm 118:24

I learned many lessons about life at my first job. Rocky Home Dairy in Lakeside was a great place to acquire the basics of being a good employee. But one particular lesson came from a most unexpected source.

Every week we would get a visit from the Hostess man, a large Greek fellow with a bushy moustache. He would inventory the new Twinkies, Zingers and Snowballs so fast it was hard to keep up. Although he seemed to have a mundane job, he was one of the happiest persons I ever met.

He usually had a bit of wisdom to share, and it often came out of left field. I recall one time saying, “I can’t wait for the weekend. I wish today was Friday.” What followed my statement was a lecture about how I shouldn’t wish my life away, how each moment is precious, and that all we really have is our present experience.

How profound!

Our objective reality is composed of a moment-to-moment existence, much like a tape recorder that is playing music from a cassette tape. Our experiences can be thought of as sequentially unwinding before our eyes as we live out our lives.

Subjectively, though, we worry about the future and ruminate about the past. At work we dream about that upcoming vacation in the mountains. While up in the mountains we worry about all the work piling up on our desks, waiting for us when we return.

Imagine what a tape recorder would sound like if it played music from multiple places on the tape at the same time. I bet it would sound pretty chaotic—just like our thoughts when we live in the past and the future rather than the here

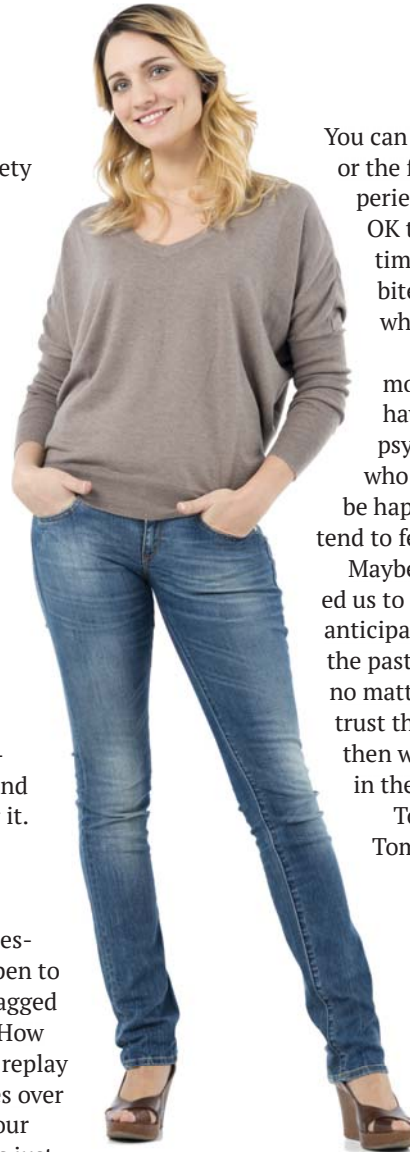
and now.

Worry and anxiety are what happen when we think about the bad things that could happen to us in the future. One of my anxious clients said, “What if the El Niño rains flood me out?” My question back to her was, “What can you do to prevent that from happening?” Rather than worry about it, the solution is to do something in the here and now to prepare for it.

### Consequences of anxiety

Anger and depression are what happen to us when we get dragged down by the past. How many times do we replay painful experiences over and over again in our imaginations? This just adds to the emotional pain and it distracts us from living life in the present.

Have you ever sat down to a meal and rather than savoring the flavors of the food, you are, instead, caught up in a memory about the past or are dreaming about the future? Before you know it the food is gone and you barely remember eating it. You missed what was right before you and are left unsatisfied. There’s a natural tendency to overindulge when this happens.



You can be so distracted by the past or the future that the present experience is squandered away. It’s OK to eat a Twinkie from time to time, but choose to savor every bite and enjoy the moment when you do.

Staying grounded in this moment has been found to have very positive physical and psychological effects. People who live in the moment tend to be happier, more empathic and tend to feel more secure.

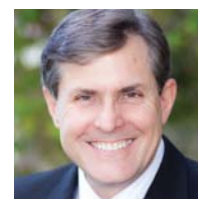
Maybe this is the way God intended us to live rather than in anxious anticipation or painfully replaying the past. If we can fully grasp that no matter what happens we can trust that our lives are in His hands, then we can safely stay grounded in the present.

To borrow a quote from Chris Tomlin’s song, “Sovereign”:

*In your everlasting arms,  
All the pieces of my life,  
From beginning to the end,  
I can trust you.*

If you haven’t heard this song, please take a moment, go to YouTube and listen to the comforting lyrics.

Now is all we have, and with faith, that is enough.



Daniel Jenkins, Ph.D. is a licensed clinical psychologist at Lighthouse Psychological Services in Mission Valley. He is also a professor of psychology at Point Loma Nazarene University. Learn more at [www.lighthousepsy.com](http://www.lighthousepsy.com).

JANICE THOMPSON

# Practically speaking... Pulling the trigger on retirement

“What do you mean we should work longer?” This is a common expression we hear when clients decide they want to move up their retirement date but don’t quite have key foundational pieces in place. Shifting from the *accumulation* phase (saving for your future goals) to the *distribution* phase (spending down assets to replace your paycheck) requires thoughtful planning. Before you walk away from that job for good, let me share some common challenges we encounter as we help clients prepare for this important transition.

## If you want to sabotage your retirement, ignore these:

**Consumer Debt:** It doesn’t matter if it is at zero percent interest, it can eventually cost you! Consider this: If you can’t pay it off now with earned income, what makes you think it will be any easier when you’re living off your assets? Additionally, if you still carry long-term balances into retirement, it’s usually a warning sign you are living beyond your means.

**Overspending:** There is a common disconnect between spending projections and actual spending behavior. Think you can live on \$\$\$? Great! Practice living on that amount for at least six months and see how it works. Too restrictive? Consider what that will feel like for the next 30-plus years. And be aware that the first few years in retirement can be very expensive as you fill your time with things you’ve not been able to do because of work.

**Withdrawing too much too fast:** It doesn’t take very long to deplete even a significant portfolio if you withdraw too much too fast, especially in the early years. Add volatile markets or flat years to the mix, and the odds of outliving your portfolio assets goes up exponentially.

**Life expectancy:** People often balk when we talk about planning well into their mid-90s, but there has been a dramatic increase in the average life expectancy. I don’t see this changing, given our medical and technological advances.

**Inflation:** We’ve been in a low-interest rate environment for quite some time but it wasn’t that long ago when inflation was more than 6 percent for 20-year periods. Don’t underestimate what can happen to your purchasing power if inflation edges up and again becomes a major challenge to a retiree.

**Social Security.** Just because you are eligible to file does not mean it is the optimal time to file. Many variables go into making a wise decision with this important asset. Be sure you consider all the angles before your election.

## If you want an enjoyable retirement later, here’s what to consider now:

**Have a good job?** Think carefully before walking away. Consider easing into retirement by stepping down to part-time work.

**Have consumer debt?** Pay it off before you resign.

**Have mortgage debt?** Pay it off while you still have a paycheck. From our experience, clients who retire free of a mortgage seem to enjoy their retirement more than those who don’t.

**Have a retirement spending plan?** Practice living on it for at least six months before you walk away from your job. And don’t forget to include things like additional travel, hobbies, major home repairs or saving for a replacement vehicle.

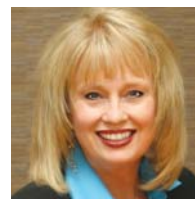
**Have a plan for major medical expenses?** Medical, dental and long-term care expenses are typically higher than anticipated and usually not covered by traditional insurance or Medicare. Evaluate how you plan to handle this



vital need.

**Have a focus?** Since our western version of retirement is more a traditional rather than biblical concept, we always ask people to tell us what they are going to retire TO before they retire FROM the workforce. Missing interactions with colleagues, feeling aimless with less routine or finding it difficult to feel a sense of meaning and purpose in daily life are common themes that surface a few years into retirement if there has been no life planning for this important stage. Exploring a new hobby, serving in a non-profit, or cultivating a long-suppressed passion can lead to greater retirement fulfillment. Just be sure to plan for the cash flow needed to allow you to enjoy these endeavors.

Answering the “Can I retire yet” question requires examining a complex set of variables. What you don’t know now can definitely hurt you later. No two retirement plans look alike—situations are unique and so are the solutions. If you haven’t yet done retirement planning, start now while you can do something about it.



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

professionals, she also serves on the board of directors for Kingdom Advisors. Learn more at [www.onedegreeadvisors.com](http://www.onedegreeadvisors.com).

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# 3 things to tell your kids about 'scary monsters'

It was a quiet evening at our house one spring evening when a voice of terror rang out from my 3-year-old son's bedroom.

"Daaaaaad!" he shouted, begging me to come.

I walked toward his door to investigate, assuming he either wanted covering up or needed a drink of water.

On this night, though, he had something else on his mind.

"I'm scared of the monster," he said, with an innocent look in his eyes and fear on his face.

For once, I was speechless. No one in our house watches scary movies or shows, and we don't even read scary books. The "scariest" story he had ever heard likely was David vs. Goliath.

But he had seen a few cartoonish toddler-friendly "monsters" on TV, and his mind was swirling with creepy thoughts.

Of course, he was and is not alone in being afraid of imaginary objects in the dark—and it's not just kids who are like that.

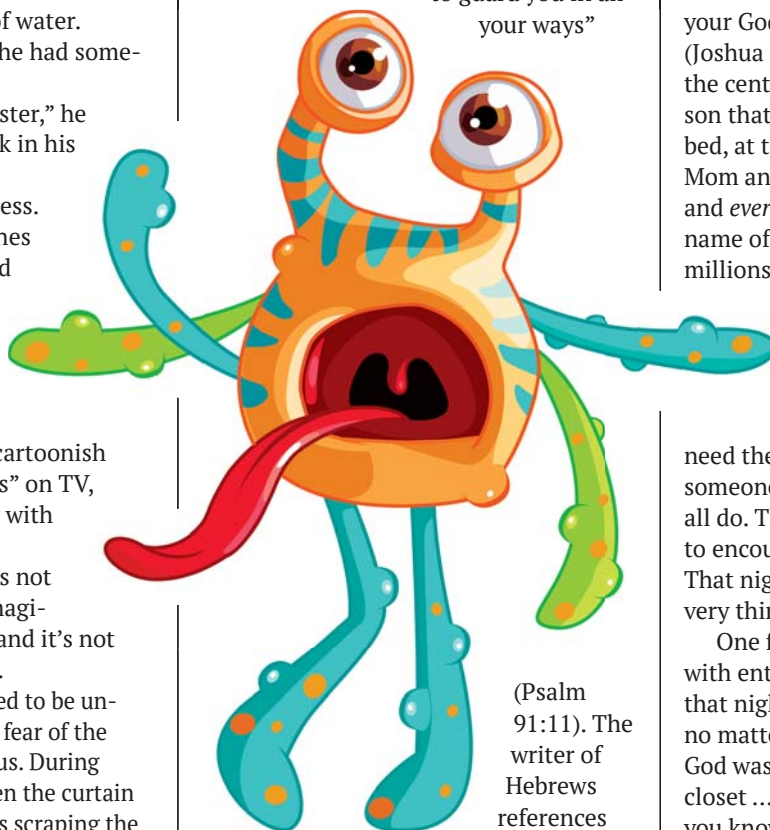
We seem to be hard-wired to be uneasy at night. Why? It's the fear of the unknown and the mysterious. During the day, we easily could open the curtain and see that a tree branch is scraping the window. But at night? We can't see what's outside—and we're certainly not going outside to explore. And so our imagination runs wild, often chasing the most frightening thought we can conjure.

I could have told him that "there are no monsters," but that's only half true. The real-world "monsters"—Satan and his demons—wreak more havoc than any on-screen monster ever will.

As it turns out, what I *did* tell my son—at least, most of what I said—is

what I tell myself when I'm afraid. It's quite simple: **1. Angels are watching over you.** But not the cute kind you see at the local Hallmark store. That's make-believe. I'm talking about angels as described in Scripture: "For he will command his angels concerning you

to guard you in all your ways"



(Psalm 91:11). The writer of Hebrews references angels who are "ministering

spirits sent out to serve" God's children (Hebrews 1:14). My son has read about angels and knows what they are: They were created *by* God and are servants *of* God. Angels in the Bible comforted Mary and then the shepherds in the field. I'm sure they're well suited to comfort my tiny son, too.

**2. God is watching over you.** Sure,

angels are great, but they have their limits. Unlike God, they don't know everything. They also—unlike God—can't be everywhere. If you're going to get spooked at night and can have only one "person," you want God, not just an angel. That's why God told Joshua: "Be strong and courageous ... the LORD your God is with you wherever you go" (Joshua 1:9). And that's why God was at the center of the conversation with my son that night. God was with him in his bed, at the very moment God was with Mom and Dad, his brothers and sister, and *every other person* who calls on the name of the Lord. God is comforting millions of people—all at the same time!

That, itself, is comforting.

### 3. Mommy and Daddy are in the next room.

Obvious, yes, but kids often need the tangible, physical presence of someone from time to time—just as we all do. The Bible says we were meant to encourage and comfort one another. That night, it was my role to do that very thing for my son.

One final thought: Say all of this with enthusiasm. I got in my son's face that night and excitedly told him that no matter where he looked in his room, God was there—"in that corner, in that closet ... right here in your bed!" And you know what? He fell asleep right away—and does so each time I remind him of God and His angels. It's a heartening thought for a 3-year-old.

And you and me, too.



Michael Foust is the father of four small children and blogs about parenting at [michaelfoust.com](http://michaelfoust.com).

Our souls ... were designed to listen to, and meet, God in stillness.

## Finding rest in the rush

For families, the back-to-school season means new schedules, fresh routines, football, shorter days, and the excitement of focusing again after summer vacation.

As fall kicks off, however, the busyness and stress of juggling life can feel overwhelming at times. Amid the fall frenzy of homework, rides, meals, sports, church, meetings, the arts, approaching holidays, work commitments, and family activities, many of us wonder where to find moments of solitude and silence to restore our souls.

Some of us may ask whether regular moments of peace and rest are even possible anymore?

### Noise and hurry in our age

Reflecting on the frantic pace set by our culture, psychologist Carl Jung once remarked, "Hurry is not of the Devil. Hurry is the Devil." Jung noticed how, as modern people, we resist slowing down, quieting our lives enough to truly listen to the stirrings of our own souls.

But silence can be scary. In silence, our fears, pain, loneliness, failures and broken relationships come to the surface. Instead of facing such inner realities, it is sometimes easier to stay plugged into ear buds, flat screens, smartphones, an endless flow of media, and packed schedules.

Avoiding the voice of God and our own personal struggles, however, is not a recipe for contentment. A full schedule does not automatically translate to a full soul. In fact, our attempt to pack more noise and hurry into our lives often leaves us feeling emptier and emptier.

Someone once asked John D. Rockefeller—one of the richest oil and railroad tycoons in all of American history—to answer the question, "How much is enough?" Our country's first billionaire, who seemingly owned everything, re-

plied by saying, "A little more." Even with all his wealth and his incredible accomplishments, Rockefeller longed for more out of life. He was trapped in the cycle of needing "a little more" in order to feel like his life contained "enough."

### Finding true satisfaction

Satisfaction of the soul is not found by packing more things, noise or hurry into our schedules. Doing so only creates what author C.S. Lewis calls an ever-increasing appetite for an ever-diminishing pleasure. In other words, if we try to satisfy the hunger of our souls with anything other than God we will experience a craving that cannot be appeased. After each encounter, we end up hungrier than when we started. Reflecting on his own life journey, St. Augustine declared, "Our heart is restless until it finds its rest in Thee."

Time alone with God, in the stillness of silence and solitude, provides the only place where the human soul can be satisfied. In Psalm 23, David writes that the Lord, "makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside still waters, he restores my soul."

Are you willing to let God still the waters of your soul this fall?

When someone finds peace with God, silence becomes a friend instead of something to fear. As we set up our fall schedules, why not build in time to experience God through silence, solitude and time in His Word? Investing time to establish a counter-cultural schedule with room for rest would be well worth the sacrifice.

### Learning to enjoy silence

When I speak to groups on this topic,



I often let people experience 60 seconds of pure, uninterrupted silence while I stand quietly up front. This rare gift feels like an eternity for some. Others get nervous and glance around because we are simply not used to it. In presentations and production, we are taught to avoid silence at all costs.

Our souls, however, were designed to listen to, and meet, God in stillness.

With practice, we can learn to tolerate and then appreciate time alone with God.

Carving out 20 minutes each day to listen to God in silence and through His Word can bring renewal and joy to our souls.

God challenges us, and promises us, that we will not go away unsatisfied when we come to Him. Psalm 34:8 declares, "Taste and see that the LORD is good."

I want to invite you to give God a chance to satisfy your soul this fall. Will you take the challenge to spend 20 minutes alone with the LORD, listening in silence, and reading His Word?

Your soul will not be disappointed.



The Rev. Nate Landis, Ph.D., is president and founder of Urban Youth Collaborative. He serves as Pastor to Schools at New Vision Christian Fellowship, a multi-ethnic congregation

in North Park.

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## Confessions of an office supply addict

I spent a half hour today sharpening pencils. I enjoy the act of standing at an old-fashioned sharpener and turning the crank, hearing the blade grind the wood and graphite to a fine point and watching the shavings build into a pile at my feet. It helps me clear my head when I'm stressed, on a column deadline or stumped by the Saturday crossword.

I picked up the yellow No. 2 pencils while I was out running errands. I limited myself to just one box because the truth is that if I didn't, I would have skipped the milk and bread and spent the grocery money on school supplies.

Never mind that I don't have kids in school anymore or that I'm not in school myself. It's "Back to School" time, which means supplies are on sale, and that's a dangerous time of the year for me.

Because I'm an office supply addict.

I have an abnormal addiction to pens, paper, pencils, notepads, journals—you name it. I rarely walk out of a store without having purchased some sort of stationery item—paper clips, file

folders or a snazzy new pen.

I have a notebook in every room in my house, one in my car and one in my purse, so when I have an idea I can write it down quickly, before I forget it. I keep a supply of pocket folders in a range of colors to suit my every mood. I have a panic attack if I can't find my stapler.

I think my addiction is rooted in my childhood. As a kid, I loved getting ready for the new school year, the smell of autumn and new possibilities in the air, my book bag filled with folders, freshly sharpened pencils and clean, white notebook paper just begging to be filled with stories, notes and essays.

Every fall, I would vow that this would be the year I would stay organized. This year, I would put the science notes in the science folder and the English notes in the English folder. This year, I would save all of the quizzes so I could study for the cumulative final. This year, I would record every homework assignment in my pocket calendar and never again be scrambling at the last minute to complete a project.

But it always ended the same. In less than a month, I had geometry theorems mixed in with grammar notes. I would show up to science class with my Spanish textbook ("Wait," I'd ask, "que hora es?") and had taken to writing homework assignments on my hands (I had the first Palm Pilot). My locker always looked like a tornado had blown through a paper factory.

It's 30 years later and I'm still not organized. I'm continually digging through a towering pile of folders on my kitchen table to hunt for research notes, paper clips and pens. I

have three calendars within arm's reach, but I never know what day it is.

I know what you're thinking: there's an app for that. Calendars on your phone, e-books, virtual folders and documents. But I'm not interested.

It's not just the fact that I can't keep up with the latest technology on a writer's budget. The truth is that I like doing things the old-fashioned way. I like putting a real pencil to actual paper and scribbling away, crossing out words, rewriting sentences, and doodling in the margins when I'm mentally blocked. I think better that way.

And science backs me up on this. Study after study has found that students who take notes longhand actually comprehend and retain information better and longer than students who take notes on a laptop. Researchers think it has to do with the cognitive process necessary to listen to someone speaking, digest the meaning in their words, and then succinctly condense the information into notes. Our brains process that differently than when we're typing the words verbatim on a laptop.

In other words, a valid rationalization for me to buy more office supplies. Thank you, science! Pencils and notebooks are still on sale! Who needs groceries, anyway?



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](http://www.joannebrokaw.com).



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