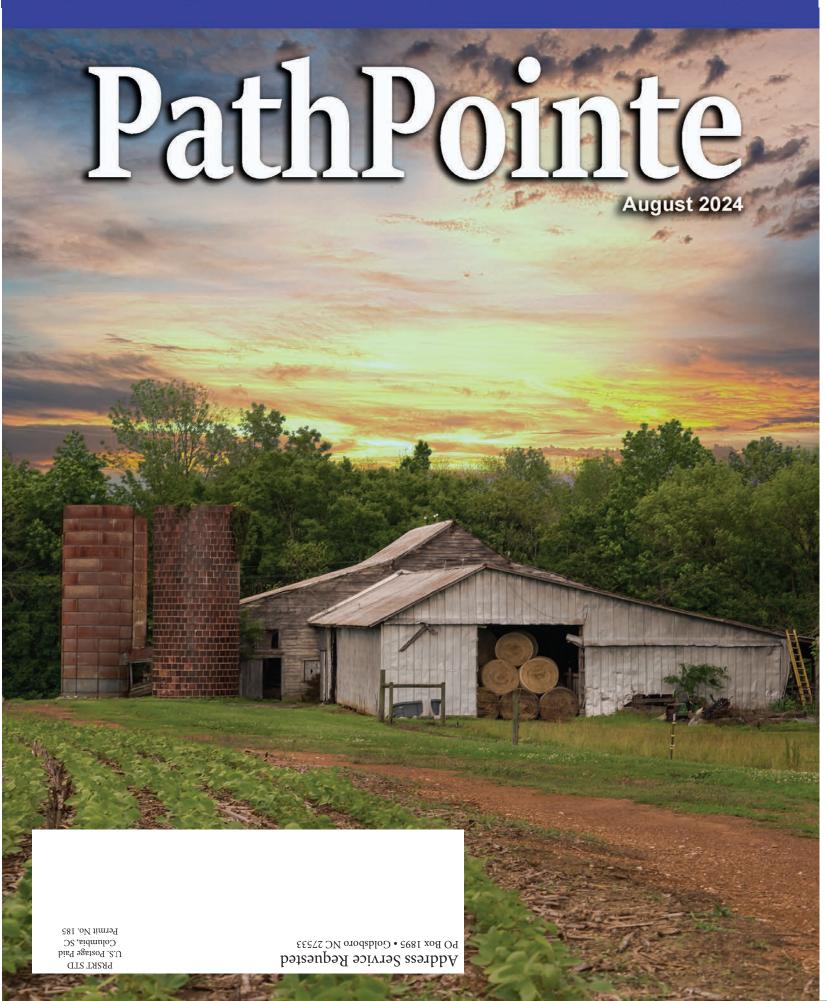
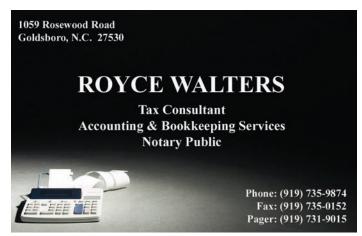
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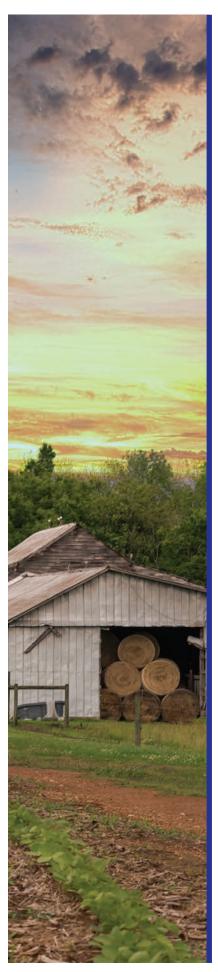












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It is easy to see how children can sin against their parents. Sometimes it is a little more clouded about how parents might sin again their children. The story of Joseph teaches us many valuable lessons. At one point in the story, Reuben rebuked his brothers for their mistreatment of Joseph some 22 years earlier. He said, "Spake I not unto you, saying, do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore, behold, also his blood is required" (Genesis 42:22). The concept of "sinning against the child" should catch our attention. There are many ways parents can be guilty of sinning against their children. Of course, some are pretty obvious.

Abortion is certainly an example. It would be hard for any rational person to explain how abortion is not a sin against another human being. Then we have some religious

who refuse medical groups treatment for their children. They believe that going to a doctor manifests a lack of faith in God. On some occasions, the children have died. Other parents, sin against their children by physically abusing them. From time to time, the newspaper recounts some parent beating his child until the body is bruised and bones are broken. Stories of small infants who have been the victim of parents who beat them unmercifully, and sometimes even killed them, come up from time to time. Sometimes children are used to satisfy perverted sexual urges. Sometimes this is even done for monetary purposes so the wicked parent can obtain money or other favors.

I would like to think that these horrible things I have just mentioned would be quite rare among decent people, and they should be virtually unheard of among Christians. However, there are some forms of sin against children that seem to be commonplace, even among believers. The first I will mention is...

Verbal abuse. Many a child enters adulthood with a low self-esteem and many mistaken concepts of what it means to be a spouse and parent because their parents have verbally abused them. They are emotional cripples who may never fully recover. Verbal abuse would also involve letting children hear what should not be heard. Of course, what should not be heard, in many cases should not have been said in the first place. But, all too often children hear arguments between their parents, complaints about institutions or authorities, gripes about other adults or family members, or just plain adult conversations. This is sinful. This is verbal abuse.

Spoiling the child. There are several ways this might be done. For example, by failing to restrain them. Eli was condemned for his conduct toward his children because he failed to restrain his sons (I Samuel 2 and 3). The Scriptures command parents to provide discipline for their children. The Proverbs teach: "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him. . . . The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.... Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul" (Proverbs 22:15; 29:15,17).

At one time or another, most of us have been around children that the parents did not restrain. I have seen mothers try to "reason" with their children into obeying them. This may work on occasion, but it is rare. They justify this action by saying, "We love our children too much to spank them." If such a parent truly loved his child, he would see that allowing a child to grow up with the character traits being manifested was unhealthy. Such a child will likely grow into a undisciplined adult who will always expect to get their way. Parents who fail to restrain their children are just looking for the easy way out, and they sin against their children.

Another way we spoil our children is by giving them too much. Children get so much today, so they end up with little appreciation for what they have. When I was a kid, most of my toys were so precious to me that I took good care of them. Today, parents sometimes have to



coax a child into even saying "thank you" for the gift. The child is only interested in going on to the next gift, regardless of how much the giver had to sacrifice. By giving our children everything they ever want, we deprive them of learning to appreciate what they have. We also do not allow them to learn the valuable lesson of working to earn what they want.

We also spoil children by teaching them that the world revolves around them. Some parents spoil their children by making them the center of everyone's attention. They grow up thinking that the whole world is there to satisfy their wants. I have visited in homes where the adults could not carry on a conversation because of the constant interruptions by the children. The parents never stopped the child saying, "You need to be quiet and go off to play while we talk." Instead, the children controlled the entire situation.

Truly this generation is not doing a very good job of teaching our children the respective places of adults and children. As a result, there is little respect shown for the elderly. I have seen elderly men and women stand while a child sat in the best seat in the house and the parent never telling the child to get up so the older person may sit down. Moses wrote, "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God: I am the LORD" (Leviticus 19:32). We shall not improve our society by ignoring divine law.

Spoiling is also accomplished by provoking them to anger. Paul said, "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the **Lord**" (Ephesians 6:4). Parents who provoke their children to anger sin against their children. By "provoking to anger" the Lord did not mean that momentary emotional reaction a child has when he is disciplined. He was describing that deep-seated anger and bitterness which build up in a child through improper correction. We can be guilty of provoking our children to anger by constant fault finding, unjust comparisons with siblings, or punishment that is unjust or inconsistent. We can also sin against the child by...



Not teaching our children good work habits. Paul said, "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (I Timothy 5:8). He also said, "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat" (II Thessalonians 3:10). If my children have not learned good work habits so they can provide for themselves, so they can be the best worker on any job they are assigned, then I have sinned against them.

We also sin by not setting a good example before them. Jesus taught Christians to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matthew 5:13-16). There is no part of the world so precious as our

children. They should see a good example of what being a Christian is by our lives. Children, are such good imitators, they learn to do as their parents do. What influence am I going to have on my children if I curse or drink, if I am unfaithful to church, watch filthy movies, gossip, and murmur or complain?

We also sin against our children by not teaching them how to be saved. I have a responsibility as a parent to teach my children about God (Ephesians 6:4). If my children reach adulthood without knowing what to do to be saved, I will have sinned against my children. A parent should also teach his children how to live so as to please God.

And finally, we sin against our children by not teaching them the rule of priorities. Jesus said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33). What do we teach our children when we allow them to miss worship for frivolous reasons? Are we guilty of teaching our children that nearly anything takes priority over obeying God? If so, we are sinning against our children. Why would we think they would think obeying God is important in other areas?

children Our are a sacred inheritance from the Lord. As with any stewardship, we must be faithful to the Lord with that which has been entrusted to us. Failure to do this will cost us severely, not only throughout eternity, but even in this life. The wise man wrote, "A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother (Proverbs 10:1). He also wrote, "He that begetteth a fool doeth it to his sorrow: and the father of a fool hath no joy" (Proverbs 17:21).

As we begin a new school year, it might be a wonderful time to begin some new habits around the house. As we implement these ideas we might find the entire household operates smoother. We also might find our children have a better school year, and we will guard ourselves from the earthly sorrow that accompanies us when we "sin against the child."



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"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." John 10:27

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with unmistakable clarity. Peace all you need to do is look around. comes through trusting God no matter what, even when you are uncertain of what's ahead.

However, while we may not always be able to "see" everything that God has planned for us (thus the need for faith), there are still usually ways to "know" which way He is leading.

Often, if you want to know the will of God, it will start with knowing the Word of God. The voice of God can be heard every time you submit to the Holy Spirit illuminating the Scriptures to your heart and mind. Of course, our Lord often uses things in our day-to-day lives to speak His Word to us. Sometimes if you want to hear the voice of God,

He may be speaking through the events in our lives all the time.

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Be of Good Cheer!

America recently had a birthday and we were reminded of the sacrifices of those who fought to give us the freedoms we enjoy so much today. God has truly blessed this nation that was once founded on His principles. Because of those principles enduring from our early beginnings, we live in the freest, most abundant nation on Earth. The land of plenty! Although we are thankful for our country and couldn't imagine living anywhere else, as Christians, we naturally have concerns over the future of our wonderful land.

We have seen a drastic shift towards immorality in so many ways over the past few decades. For those of us that love this country, honor its flag, and long for the way things used to be, it's easy to become discouraged. It can be even more discouraging to know that the answer is so simple, yet no one seems to heed the warnings... we just need Jesus.

So, we pray for our country and its leaders. We pray for those around us and those we come in contact with on a daily basis. We pray for ourselves that our light will shine for Christ to those in need of Him. We get up from our knees with feelings of hope, then we turn on the news and despair rises within us yet again.

Don't forget Christians, the Lord has already told us we would face adversities in this world. He said in **John 15:19** the world despised Him, and it would despise us as well. Thankfully, His Word didn't stop there.

"These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

John 16:33

Regardless of the "tribulations" we face around us, Christ is still in control. Not only should we have peace in the midst of our storms, but we can also "be of good cheer" because Christ has conquered the world for us! We are in the world, yet like Him, not of the world. We're just passing through!



With the anticipation of getting older, I had certain expectations. For instance, I realized I would tire easier, but I thought I would at least last longer than early afternoon. I had the impression only old people wanted to take a nap after lunch. I guess I must readjust my thinking or admit I am getting old. I think I will readjust my thinking.

I also felt I would be wiser. Well, I am still working on that one. I do handle things better than I did forty years ago. I hope I am not as stupid as I was in my twenties. I must admit something sad, though. I am

still working on some of the same areas I had difficulty with when I was twenty. I am doing better, but I would have thought my besetting sins would have been conquered by now. I sometimes think they are licked, and all of a sudden, they show their ugly heads. I often have to remind myself I am a work in progress, and since God hasn't given up on me, neither should I.

I just knew parenting would get easier. When my babies were keeping me up at night, I could not wait for the day to come when I would get a good night's sleep. It must get easier. But then, my children became toddlers and were into everything. I couldn't take my eyes off them without being concerned about what they were getting into. Let's skip a few years and put them driving cars. I hate to admit it, but I worried until I saw the headlights of their vehicles. I didn't realize how easy it was when they were little. We had so much more control over their environment when they were young.

I really thought once my children got married and had their own place, there would not be as much worrying or fretting over them. But guess what? I was wrong! I think the hurting just gets worse. The love doesn't stop, and the concern grows deeper because instead of five children, I now have ten children plus twelve grandchildren great-grandchild. and one The worrying is magnified a hundredfold. The problems and situations the children have as adults are not fixed by putting on a Band-Aid or grounding them and sending them to their room. The problems they face can be life-changing events. My love and concern have grown over the years, and it can be overwhelming sometimes.

Another area I thought would grow in my life was my understanding of the Scriptures. Don't get me wrong. I know so much more than I did a few years ago, but I am very aware of how far I still have to go. It seems the more I learn, the more I realize I don't know.

I did have a surprise. I was not expecting to learn more about God's love. I believed I understood God's love for me because my earthly father was such a great example of unconditional love. I knew if my father was capable of unconditional love, a perfect God in Heaven would certainly be able to love me unconditionally.

I do believe as I have gotten older, I understand even more about God's love because of my experiences. I was reading **Romans 5:8**, and I became overwhelmed with the sense of how much God loved me. "But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."



I was teaching a class, and we were studying about Jesus' scars. We discussed how He willingly suffered on the cross for us. We talked about how the scars He received from His beating and the nails that were driven into His body proved Jesus was the Christ, and that He was our Redeemer. We began to discuss how the scars also proved Jesus' love for us. The truth of Jesus' love has always been plain to me, but as we discussed Romans 5:8, the first part of the verse overwhelmed me. I kept reading "God commendeth His love toward us." The tears began to flow, and the young people were shocked. What is wrong with Mrs. Worthington?

I became amazed with God's love. As a parent, I cannot imagine how He felt when His Son was receiving those scars. My heart breaks when my children are hurting. It feels like my chest has a hundred pounds

of weight on it. The grief I feel as a mother is indescribable. How was God able to let His own Son go through the pain and humiliation of the cross? The only answer is His great love for us. I cannot imagine loving someone enough to let my child suffer the way Jesus suffered. So, yes! I have learned many things by getting older, but the greatest thing I have learned is how much my Savior and my God love me! I still have a long way to go, but I am enjoying the journey. I probably won't know the fullness of God's love until I reach Heaven.

Do you know anyone who loves you this much? Please trust Him with your life today. He is waiting!



Mrs. Worthington has five children and twelve grandchildren. She serves as Principal of Pathway Christian Academy in Goldsboro.







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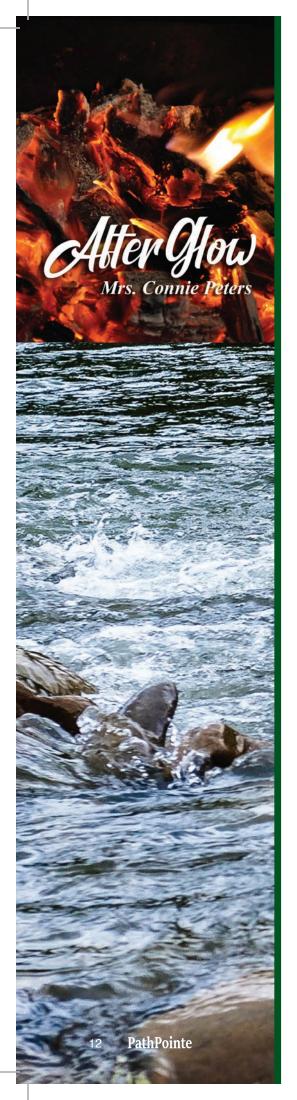




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The River of Life

On a recent vacation to the mountains of North Carolina, our dwelling place overlooked the Tuckasegee River. I enjoyed sitting on the deck watching the river as it flowed. It brought many fishing boats past my viewing area. The river brought young and old alike downstream as they enjoyed tubing, a popular activity in the area. I noticed how quickly the river was flowing. In only a few minutes everything that had been in front of me was gone from sight. The river never stopped flowing.

I have a basic understanding of the water cycle. Water from the rivers evaporates, forms clouds, and rains, filling the rivers once again. We had a few sprinkles while we were on vacation, but nothing even close to the amount of water I saw flowing downstream. Where does all that water come from if there is not a comparable amount of rain? How does the river keep flowing endlessly? Is there a scientific explanation for such a phenomenon?

God's Word tells us of a river that flows from the throne of God in **Revelation 22:1-2**. That river sustains life and produces new life. It brings nourishment to the trees whose leaves heal the nations. **Ezekiel 47:1-12** describes the river further. It increases in size through supernatural power. It brings life and revival to all and healing to the suffering. The river brings success in ministry as illustrated by the abundance of fish. It brings fruitfulness in all seasons. If I make my heart God's throne and let Him control my life, can that river flowing from His throne not sustain my life, bring healing to my soul, and bless my ministry with fruitfulness? Can we not experience the blessings that the river brings if we have the Lamb of God on the throne of our lives?

Rivers flow continuously from the source, yet the source keeps producing. The river that flows from the throne of God is inexhaustible. There are no droughts in God's kingdom. The riverbanks continue to be watered even though the water that was has now traveled downstream. The blessings that the river brought continue to come abundantly. The bounty of blessings is unaffected by the season or by outside circumstances. Perpetual blessings abound.

Christians are like the trees on the bank of the river being nourished by the perpetual river of God (Psalm 1:1-3). If we are planted

by that river, we will flourish continually. Praise God for those perpetual blessings. Are you thirsty today? Plant yourself on the bank of the river of God. Ponder that!



Mrs. Connie Peters has two children and resides in Princeton, NC. She serves as an instructor at Pathway Christian Academy in Goldsboro.







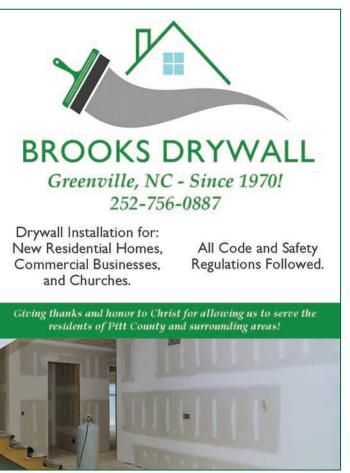


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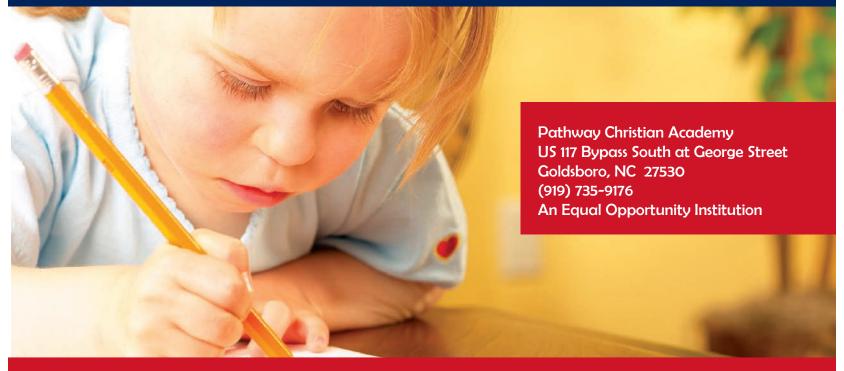
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