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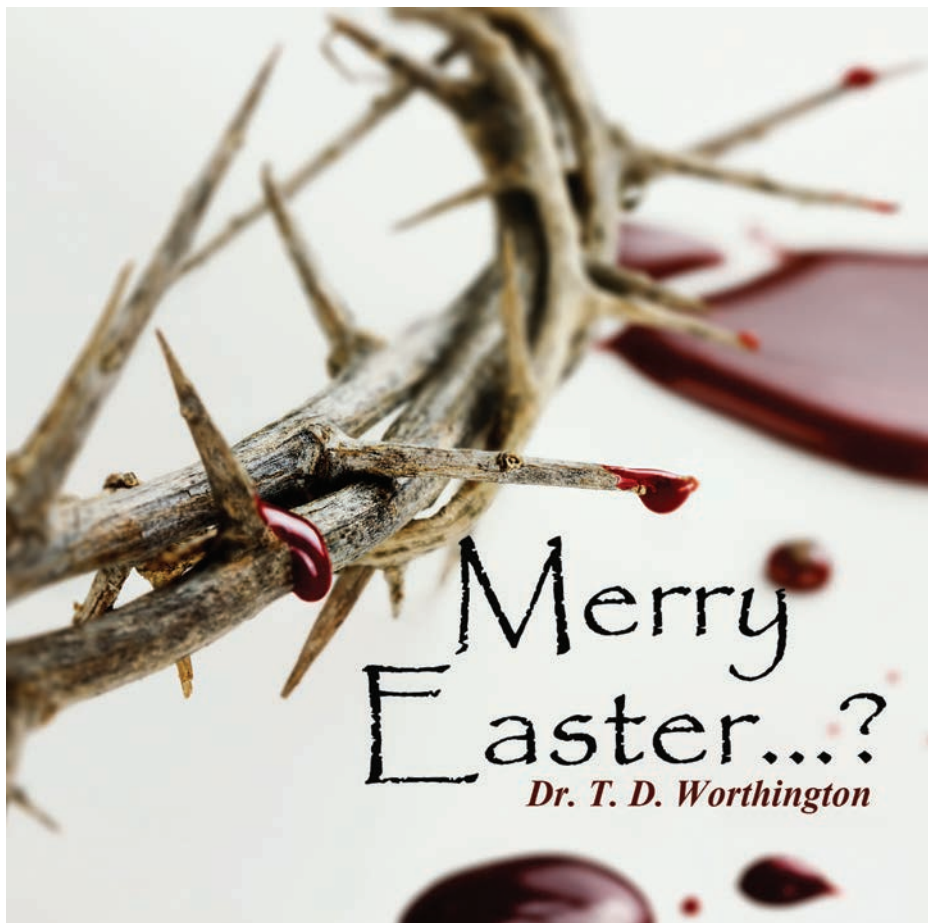
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I have a complaint about how we celebrate this holiday. Something feels a little uncomfortable about Easter to me. For starters, it's not about a sweet, soft, cuddly newborn baby, like Christmas. Even though they make noise and smell bad most of the time, babies are still pretty likeable. Our hearts are pulled to them, to their innocence and to their need for our care. The Christmas story is easy to love with the happy birth of Jesus; the visitation of angels to Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds; the star that led the wise men who brought gifts. All the elements of a beautiful story are present, including miracles and a dramatic rescue from the jealous King Herod. What's not to love about this feel-good story?

But Easter is about an innocent man who was executed, savagely, brutally and without mercy. It's not

a pretty sight. The story is filled with blood, gore, and violence. Even though our culture flocks to R-rated movies, there's an understanding that they are not real. But Jesus' story did happen, and our sensibilities recoil from the harshness of that reality. It was nothing but the cold-blooded murder of an innocent man. It's quite a different image than the Nativity scene.

Something else about Easter feels wrong. It's not an entirely happy story. Jesus lived a life acquainted with inexplicable grief. To be completely rejected by everyone, to be purely innocent yet condemned to death is, and always will be, beyond comprehension. This is not to say Jesus did not have wonderful moments of joy and happiness during His years on earth. He did. But He came to His own, to

His own people, to the planet He created; and I imagine He felt deep loss every day at the broken state of all He created and loved.

So how do we celebrate the Easter of death and sacrifice? Society has tried to soften the harshness with baby chicks, bunnies, white lilies, and bright, colored eggs. I guess that may have a place. After all, Easter is about new life and all of these happy symbols represent that truth. It is no coincidence that Easter is a spring holiday; when all of the earth is awakening from its winter slumber. But, I wonder, shouldn't there be more?

Christmas is essential, no one can deny that, for it is the beginning. But without Easter, Christmas would have likely been forgotten not long after it had begun. So then, why does Christmas get all the attention?

Maybe Easter ought to be more celebrated than Christmas, for truly it is the pinnacle of the Christian faith. Yet, you may say, "*but Pastor you seem to celebrate Christmas more than Easter. Even here at church we have far more Christmas decorations than Easter.*" That is true, but there is also a reason. Christmas, although a holy day in its own right, is more of a vacation season; a festival of celebration, a fun season, and since it is about the birth of a child, it is focused on kids. Most of us celebrate birthdays in a far different fashion than we celebrate deaths. Christmas often involves family, Christian and non-Christian family alike can fellowship with us at the cradle. Easter is more for the Christian, not many non-believers

are interested at fellowshipping around the tomb. Today, Christmas is a federal holiday in the US, but “Easter” gets no such treatment.

I guess there are many reasons why Christmas gets most of the attention. One reason for the difference in the way we treat these holidays may be the ancient roots of the Christmas celebration, which by the Middle Ages had become an immoral feast, somewhat like the Mardi Gras is today. Cotton Mather, among the most notable New England preachers, lamented how *“the feast of Christ’s nativity is spent in reveling, dicing, carding, masking, and in all licentious liberty ... by mad mirth, by long eating, by hard drinking, by lewd gaming, by rude reveling!”* Christmas became a time when ordinary behavioral restraints could be tossed out, at least until the season was over. In fact, the holiday caused such disturbances, the city of Boston outlawed Christmas celebrations from 1659 to 1681. Following rioting in New York in 1828, the city recast the holiday as a time for peace and family, leading to many of our current cultural attitudes about Christmas.

So, what changed? What made Christmas all fuzzy and warm? Well, Christmas got reinvented, but Easter didn’t. In the 19th century, Christmas, the secularized, domestic “family” holiday as we know it today, was reinvented. Christmas came to be identified with the celebration of childhood. Childhood itself was, of course, a relatively new concept. It was linked to the rise of a growing prosperity which did not require as much child labor as in the past.

Kids, had time to play. Merchants were quick to promote the new holiday as a time to think of others, to be generous, and to spend money at their stores. Actually, nearly everything we think we know about Christmas, from the modern image of Santa Claus to the various Christmas traditions, derives from the 19th century, specifically, Christians, who redeemed Christmas by rendering it an appropriate, G-rated neat and clean family holiday, primarily for the kids.

But no such redemption ever happened for Easter. While it received a minor family-friendly makeover, Easter didn’t have the massive public relations machine behind it that Christmas did. Instead, with its theological significance intact, Easter has maintained its status as a religious holiday and — the Easter Bunny and eggs aside — largely avoided modern make-overs. It is estimated that for a number of years Easter

and Christmas were referenced about equal in printed papers and books. By the 1860s, references to Easter were half that of Christmas. By 2000, Christmas was referenced almost four times as often as Easter. To get down to it, the birth of Christ is the beginning of hope, but Jesus was not a threat when He was born, except maybe to Herod. Christmas, with its celebration of the birth of a child, is a natural fit for a secularized celebration of childhood. Christians and most non-Christians alike can agree that Jesus Christ, whether divine or not, was actually born and that His birth is probably worth celebrating. Plus, the subject matter makes it ideal for a child-centered holiday. The family, Mary, Joseph, and the Child huddled together in the warm glow of love, translates pretty easy into a holiday centered around family, children, and childhood.

But the message of Easter, that of an adult man who was horribly killed, only to rise from





the dead, is much harder to secularize. Celebrating Easter demands celebrating something so miraculous that it cannot be reduced, to a heartwarming story about motherhood and family. The Christmas story is still pretty believable even without the supernatural. Discount the virgin birth, the angels, and the star and you still have the nucleus of a great story; and a believable story. If you discount the supernatural from the Easter story, you don't have much left. Without the supernatural, all you have is a story about betrayal, torture, and death.

But the same qualities that make Easter so difficult to secularize are also what make it so profound. Easter, at least to me, is more of a holy day. For it is the holiness of Jesus that gives us new life, the resurrection we commemorate on Easter. Some say we should celebrate Easter just like we do Christmas. I'm not sure I would agree with that. What I would like to see is an Easter, not with gifts, parties, and elaborate decorations, but a genuine day of rejoicing, similar to a stadium full of

enthusiastic people who are jumping up and down cheering because their team won. At Easter, we who believe celebrate a victory unlike any sports team; we rejoice over the unspeakable deliverance given to us by Christ when He conquered sin and set us free. We, too, were dead and now are alive! That victory deserves an extravagant, jubilant acknowledgement.

One of my favorite hymns says, *"My sin, not in part but the whole, is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more. Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, oh my soul!"* That line is worthy of cheering as you would at a football game. Too bad that isn't normal Easter protocol.

Peter in his first epistle writes the following:

"According to his abundant mercy, (God) hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

I Peter 1:3

The bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ is key to our faith. I would like to suggest to you that

Christianity is not just a set of good moral ethics, though it embraces them. Christianity is not simply how we "worship God" though that is an important component of it. Christianity is not about just being a good person. What I would like to suggest to you is that Christianity is about knowing the risen Christ personally.

In his famous book "*Mere Christianity*", C.S. Lewis made this statement, *"A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic--on the level with a man who says he is a poached egg--or he would be the devil of hell. You must take your choice. Either this was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us."*

So, what do you think? Do you really believe He rose from the dead as millions of Christians over the centuries have claimed? If Easter is going to mean anything to you this year, may I ask the question:

Do you know, personally know, the risen Christ?



Dr. Worthington has been in the ministry for over forty five years and serves as President of Pathway Ministries and Christian Bible College.

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Have you ever wished you could go back in time and do something differently? Maybe you wish you'd kept that Mickey Mantle baseball card you used in your bicycle spoke when you were a kid. Maybe you had the opportunity to invest in Microsoft years ago and didn't. Maybe you lost a friend or a loved one and never told them just how much they really meant to you. Regardless of the uniqueness of the situation, we have all missed good opportunities.

Thankfully, with the Lord, every day is a new opportunity to accomplish something great just for

Him. Regardless of your current situation, you can always make a difference.

Over the years, it's been great to have an opportunity to talk to some of our listeners. We hear from people of all walks of life. Some are first-time callers. Some have been supporting *GoMix Christian Radio* for years. We've heard from pastors, teachers, truck drivers, soldiers, and even inmates in local correctional facilities. Even though their situations are different, they all have in common the desire to support Christian radio.

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So, here's a new opportunity for you. Won't you help make a difference? We ask that you prayerfully consider supporting the *GoMix Share-A-Thon* beginning **March 14th**. Whether it's a one-time gift or a monthly donation, every gift is important. It's a new day and a new opportunity to bless others as well as our Saviour. Don't look back on this later on and see another missed opportunity. Mail in your *Pre-Share-A-Thon Contribution Card*, give us a call at **1-877-747-8887**, or visit our giving website at www.givegomix.org. You'll be glad you did!



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Together

Dear Friends and Partners,

We are living in a perplexing time. The downward spiral our country has taken over this past year is unprecedented in modern times. Even as we tried to schedule our *Share-A-Thon*, our printer informed us there was a shortage of envelopes which might delay our mailings. Fortunately, they were able to scout up just enough to send out our Faith Partner letters.

I also know the hardship many of our listeners have faced. Some have battled COVID. Tragically, some of our dearest friends ended up losing that battle. Others are having their budgets stressed by rising prices and job cutbacks. Then we have the fact that most rational Americans are concerned about the border, the prospects of war, the price of healthcare, the budget deficit, and the moral decline of our nation.

I could tell you in a matter of hours, days, and weeks everything will get better. That we will eventually be able to look back at this moment in our life, and maybe even laugh about it. But for those who can't look back yet, that will not mean much. However, I do know one thing. I pray that when I do look back that I will praise our Lord for His goodness and be proud for making it through, even when I wanted to give up.

So, hang in there. You're important to all of us. You have a light inside you that, if you allow it to be hidden, the world will become a much darker place.

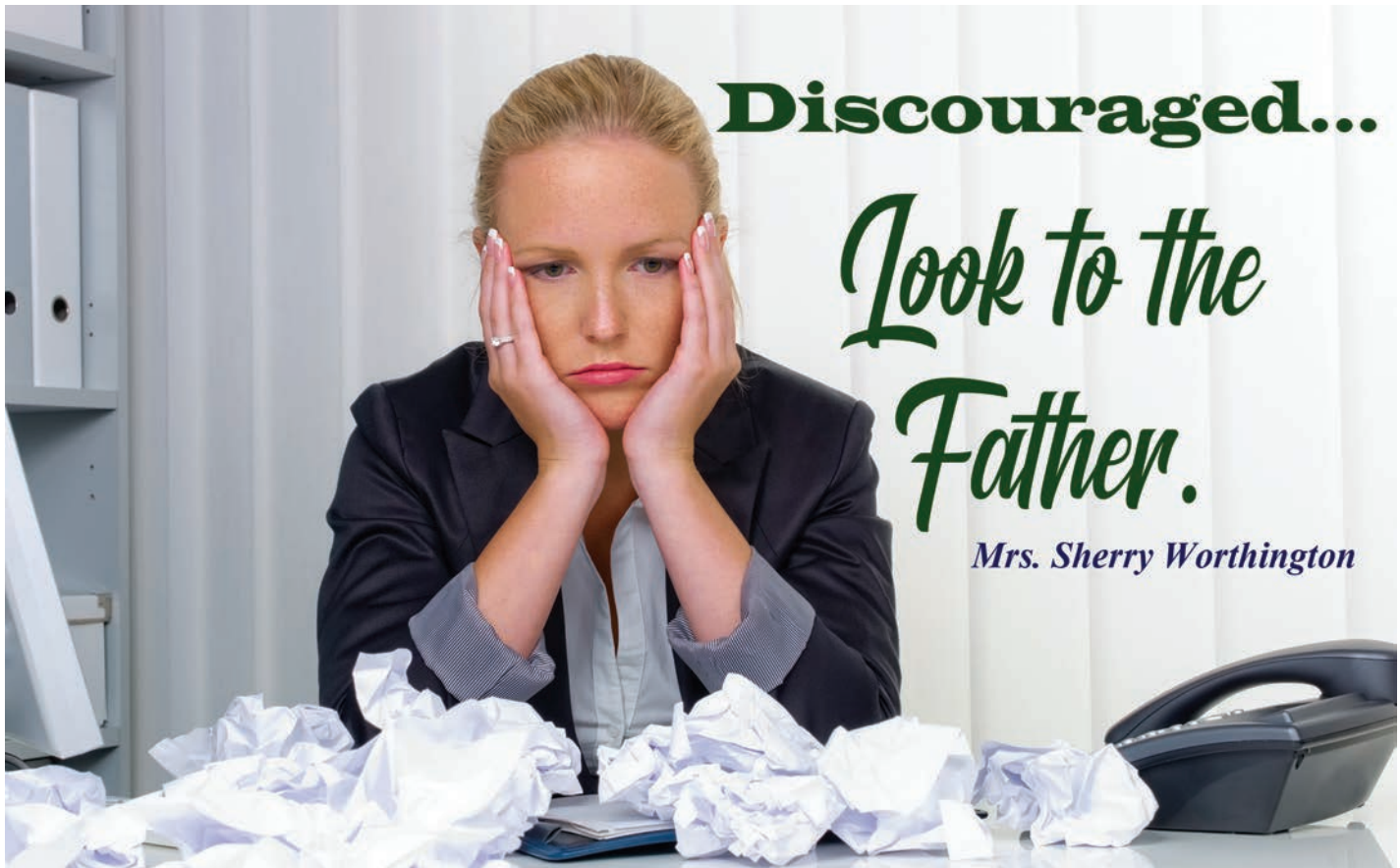
The choice to move forward is difficult, but it's yours. Think about how empowering that is!

I thank you for your support of our ministry over the years. But, perhaps right now it is our turn to minister to you. Hopefully, the music and special programming you have helped finance in the past might be a special blessing to you right now. Please lean on us anytime you need to. We will be here for you. Of course, as always, if you are able to support our *Spring Share-A-Thon*, your contributions would be greatly appreciated.

By God's grace, we know deep down we will get through this. We will come out on the other side. Even if it doesn't feel like it right now, we will. We always do. My prayer is that this gives you hope to keep going and faith to trust in our Lord's love, As you have given grace to others, perhaps it is time to give a little to yourself.

I will also be praying that we all might find a closer walk with God, even in the middle of these perplexing times. I pray we will not let our adversity define who we are. And I pray we will never forget how important we are to all of the people in our lives.

Blessings,
T. D. Worthington



March winds are definitely in the air. The trees are blowing, and the flags are waving. It is nice to walk around the block and feel the air blowing through my hair. It is relaxing to drive down a country road and see the plowed fields and the seemingly slow pace of the country. When we take a drive, we can forget for a minute the troubles of this world.

My husband and I sometimes watch the show “Mountain Men.” There is a bit of an allure to the show. No, I don’t think I would like to live where the temperatures can dip below zero and where I have to worry about predators coming onto my property. It is amazing how these men and women make their own way with the things on the land. They build their own houses, and they trade with their neighbors to get things they need. These people work hard from sun up to

sundown. They help each other when someone needs a hand. Their homes are miles from the nearest store or restaurant. These families are happy living off of the land and not having the luxuries that most of us hold dear.

The allure for me is the way they seem to escape the evils of this world. Oh, they have to worry about the animals eating their livestock and the natural pests out there. I am sure that they are concerned about some politics because it could threaten their way of life. Their children are homeschooled or go to school with a group that lives in the mountains. They don’t have to worry about what their children might hear at school or see on television. Can you imagine how much easier it would be to parent without internet access? Their children help with the chores and learn how to live off

of the land. No one seems to be concerned about COVID either. It is like traveling back in time.

Many sinful things have existed throughout the ages. In the book of Genesis, Lot lived in the sin-sick city of Sodom. In **Matthew 2**, Herod killed the children below the age of two in order to try to eliminate the Savior. We have experienced the many dark times. Among them were World War I and World War II when Hitler tried to destroy all of the Jews. Our current holocaust is on the unborn. If we look throughout history, we can see travesty after travesty. During no time in history has sin seemed so rampant as it is today.

There is no shame in our world today. The things we see on television are sickening. Need I list all of the sins that are shown as commonplace? When I was a

child, Lucy and Ricky, from “*I Love Lucy*,” could not sleep in the same bed on TV. I remember the first time that I heard a cuss word on TV. My Dad switched the channel. I am over sixty years old now, so tell me how far we have fallen in fifty years. The pendulum keeps swinging and swinging to greater depravity. Now, look at what we accept on TV and the internet. No one seems to bat an eye at a cuss word on television or leud scenes on the screen. The songs that people listen to are filled with sexual innuendos and violence.

I think about our politics and our country. I feel that our founding fathers would be so disappointed in us. They gave up everything for our freedom. Why don't we stand and try to make a difference? I know that some of us do, but if we all stood, perhaps things would change. I am concerned about the world my grandchildren will be a part of. I don't know how to fix it.

Are you depressed yet? If I let myself, I can become very down and discouraged. How do we make our world a better place? What can we do? Well, I know that it is not going to straighten up. Everything is crooked. But perhaps, we can help knock out some of the curves in the sticks and bend our society back in the right direction.

Our Lord went through many struggles and hardships for us. He suffered on a cruel cross so that we could go to Heaven. Jesus preached to the multitudes, but He also preached to the individual. He reached out to Mary Magdalene and the blind



man. He stretched out His hand to the lame man and told him to rise and walk.

We have to reach out to each person that we can. We need to minister to the hurting and the lost. There was a slogan a long time back, “*Each one reach one.*” If each Christian will reach one lost person, we will be able to reach the world one person at a time.

We are too busy complaining about our circumstances and problems. We don't even see the hurting when we walk by. Perhaps we have a friend that is crying out for our help. Perhaps our little ones we are worried about will grow up to be great missionaries one day, either at home or abroad. Every Christian should be a missionary. We should be looking around us to see who God would have us love for Him today.

Paul said in **II Timothy 4:7-8**, “*I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up*

for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing.”

I so want the Lord to say of me one day, she fought a good fight, she served Me until the end, and I am proud of her. There is nothing more important in a Christian's life than pleasing our Lord. Christians through the ages have had battles to face. In our generation, we have great battles to fight. The way to make our Lord proud is to face those battles head-on and keep the faith.

Yes, when we look around our world can be discouraging. But we must be sure we are looking up. The answers are always with the Father. Lift up your heads Redemption draweth nigh!



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

Why Do You Hesitate?

Mrs. Kim Mills



“Why do you hesitate?” This is what the Lord said to me recently. I was in a prayer meeting where we were all sitting around just making small talk. We then moved on to a time of praise where someone was playing the piano, and we all began to sing and seek God. I found myself just sitting there. Have you ever done that?

Then, I saw myself sitting there in my chair and the Lord sitting in the middle of the room in a big chair. He spoke to me and said, *“Why do you hesitate to come to Me? What is it that keeps you from running in here to Me and throwing yourself in my lap? What keeps you from coming to Me to talk about things that are running through your mind or the things that are concerning you at this moment?”*

I began to examine my heart to see why I was hesitating. Why did I not want to readily enter into His presence to commune with Him? I felt a little like a teenager who slinks into a room and sits down in the back or somewhere away from everyone else and just observes what is going on.

Then the Lord showed me a beautiful scene of how it is when my grandchildren come into a room where I am. When they see me they come running and screaming, *“Miiiiii Miiiiii!!!”* They run into my arms and give me the biggest hug they can. I, of course, melt in their sticky little hands! The Lord said to me, *“That’s what to do when you come into My presence.”* So, I quickly repented and got myself straight into His presence, which was wonderful and refreshing.

Later, I thought about what happened. I know that I not only need, but truly want, to be in His presence. But, why was there any hesitation? I feel like the Lord showed me a few things about myself I want to share with you, just in case you ever feel like I did in that moment.

First off, I had to admit my mind was not there. I had allowed a lot of ‘stuff’ to fill my mind and those thoughts, feelings, and attitudes were bouncing around like a beach ball in my head trying to get my attention. I should have checked those things at the door before entering His presence. While He is big enough and certainly more than willing and capable enough of handling my beach balls in His presence, why waste any of that precious time with Him trying to get rid of those distractions?

Secondly, I realized I was trying/striving to get into His presence. I was trying to get myself ‘right’ enough to enter into communion with Him. There is no getting holy enough to get in to spend time with Him. I will never get good enough. I was trying to clean my ‘sticky little hands’ before going to Him. He does not care how sticky or dirty I am before I enter His presence.

Thirdly, I needed an unfettered heart. I once heard a minister say, *“God does not want us to multi-task when we come into His presence.”* Wow! That is exactly what I was doing. I have often found myself trying to ‘do’ so many things while in His presence. You cannot truly give your attention to someone or have a conversation with someone when you are looking at your phone, or watching TV, or reading a magazine, etc. You get the

picture. While I was not sitting there during this time with Him doing any of those things specifically, I was not there 100% either. Those who seek Him will find Him. God wants us to seek Him wholeheartedly. He wants us to come to Him, with no distractions.

“Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.”

Jeremiah 29:12-13

I thought again back to our grandchildren. There is absolutely no hesitation when they come running in our door. They aren't thinking about what they have to do later in the day. They aren't thinking about what they got in trouble about just before seeing me. They aren't thinking about what they need to get at the store later when they leave. Nothing is more important than letting me know they are there and how happy they are to be there.

It is not until after several minutes of hugs and sloppy kisses do we get down to some serious conversation such as cookies, ice cream, going outside to see the chickens, going fishing, or playing in the sand box. The common theme with them is not just gimme, gimme, gimme. After we get the cookies and chickens out of the way, they really just want to spend time one on one. They don't want to eat cookies or go outside to explore all by themselves. They want us with them.

This is what God wants, too. He wants to spend time with us every minute of our day. He wants to be so near and involved in our lives that when it comes time to come into His presence, into the secret place, we are ready. There is no hesitation. There are no distractions. He is our total focus and seeking His face is our heart's total desire.

“Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart...”

Psalm 24:3-4a

We have been prepared already, through Jesus Christ, to go straight in to the King. He is waiting for us to run into His presence and jump up in His lap with praise on our lips, having no distractions, to spend time with Him.

Whether it is during our time of praise and worship or when we are going through our daily lives, He loves for us to come to Him with no reservations and no beach balls bouncing around. He just wants us full of joy and happy to be there!



Mrs. Kim Mills has four children and five grandchildren and serves with Glenn Mills Ministries in Temple, Georgia.



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And Finally...



Embarrassing Moments...

While I was in the bathroom, there was a knock on my front door. My five year old son answered it. He came to me and said, "The man wants to know where daddy is." I said, "Tell him mommy doesn't know where he is today." When I came out of the bathroom, I heard my son say, "Mommy doesn't know who my daddy is." I rushed to the door to correct him, but the man had left. I never knew who it was, and no one ever teased me. In a small town where everybody knows everybody, I was always expecting an embarrassing moment.

L. W.

During the beginning of Covid, I did quite a bit of work from home. This work also included several zoom meetings. One day I had one of these meeting where I was just listening and multitasking. I was also listening to the radio and singing along. After a few minutes, someone messaged me and said my mic wasn't muted. Everyone heard me! I was so embarrassed!

G. F.

A long time ago, I was pregnant and my husband and I were on vacation. We went into a small seaside shop, and I saw a seascape picture on the wall I really liked. I leaned in behind my husband, gave him a hug and whispered sweetly in his ear, "Shall we buy it?" Then I noticed my husband was standing behind me, not in front of me. I hugged and whispered to a complete stranger!

O. Z.

I was in a store trying on dress shoes. After trying on several pairs, I finally found a pair that fit. I proceeded to put the other shoes I had taken back on the display

where they belonged. I managed to arrange them all except for one. I was going around the shop trying to remember where I took this shoe from so I could put it back in the right spot. Then I realized the shoe I was holding was quite worn, and it belonged to another customer in the store.

P. R.

I was in a park and a lady called out, "If anyone wants ice-cream, come get it." I walked over with several others, and she began handing out ice-cream cups. When I got to her she asked, "Who are you?" It took a moment, but it occurred to me everyone else was in her family. It's been almost thirty years since this happened, and I still cringe thinking about it.

A. R.

"Siblings"

We'd like your help for an upcoming edition of "And Finally..."

Write to us in 150 words or less and tell us about a memory with your sibling. The deadline for submission is March 31, 2022.

You can send an email to:
share@gomixradio.org

Attn: PathPointe Magazine

Or write to: Pathway Ministries

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A group of diverse people, including men and women of various ethnicities, are shown from the chest up, all smiling and giving a thumbs-up gesture. The image is cropped to focus on their hands and faces. The background is a plain, light color.

Together

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