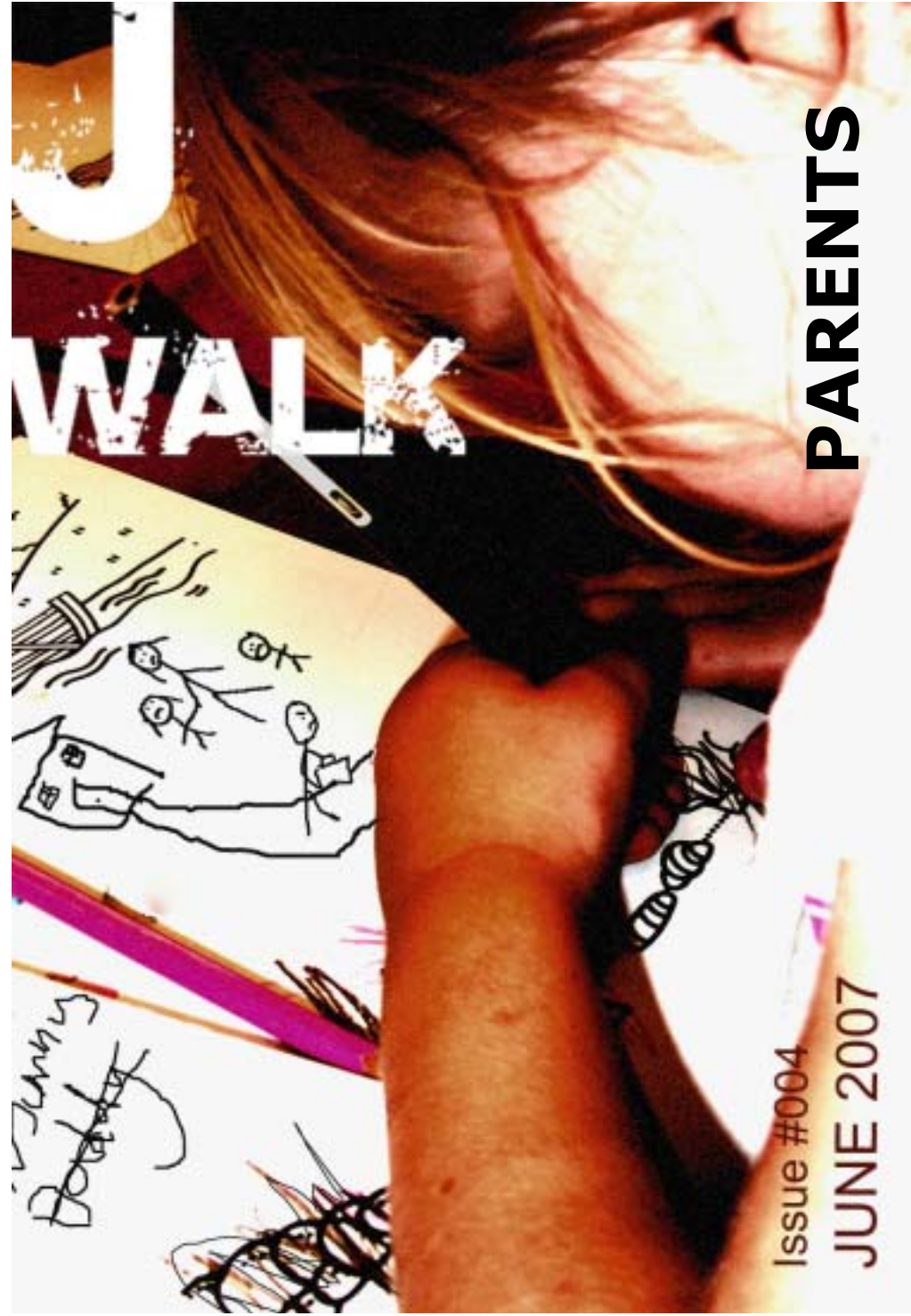




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WALK

PARENTS

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J-walk is the monthly magazine of CCECYOUTH.

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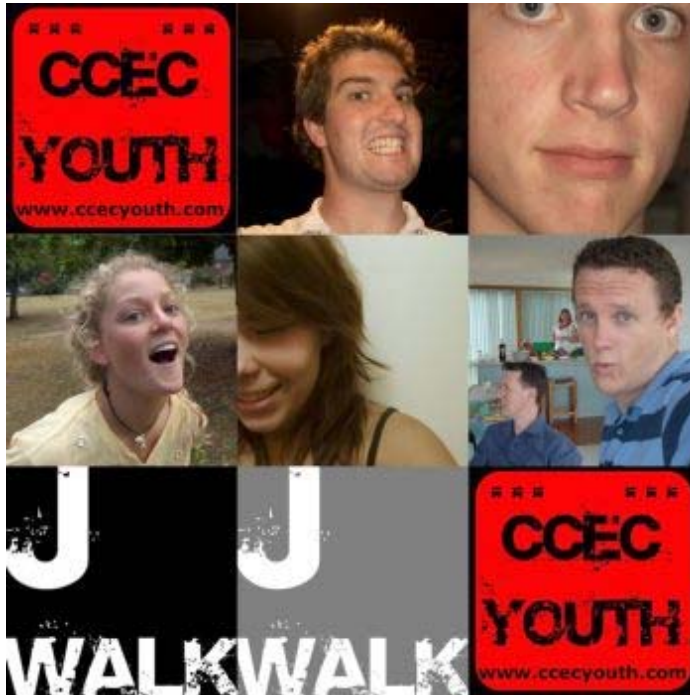
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GLADLY rejoice in Him.

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PARENTS. We all have them. Whether we know them or not—we had to come from somewhere! (If you're not sure where babies come from—ask your parents!)

50 years ago it was normal to have 1 mum, 1 dad, some siblings, a pet and a nice fence around your front yard.

I grew up in Wyong in the 1980s. It wasn't normal in Wyong to have 1 mum, 1 dad, some siblings, a pet and a nice fence around your front yard. From Kindergarten at least half of my class had a different situation with their parents which wouldn't be considered normal 50 years ago.

It is now normal for teenagers to grow up in blended and/or broken families. Divorce rates continue to increase. Divorce and broken homes aren't just limited to the non-Christian world. There are plenty of broken or

near broken families from our church.

If you are a teenager in ccecyouth you could be living under a number of different circumstance—divorced parents, separated parents, step mum, step dad, deceased parents, alcoholic parent, Christian parents, non-Christian parent... the list could go on.

This issue is all about parents. It's not about trashing parents who have made mistakes. It's about understanding that we live in a fallen world where relationships breakdown and tragedies strike.

Our hope is that this J-Walk would encourage you to know that there are others going through difficult family relationships, there are leaders who have been through the same—and we have a God that we can trust in even when times are tough.

TEAM J-WALK

- Alex Hartley
- Dave Miers
- Jackson Stace
- Josh Bones
- Nicole Maloney

Guests this issue:

- Adrian Haynes
- Kelly Haynes
- Rowena Miers
- Daniel Godden
- Aaron Plunkett
- Michael Corbett-Jones
- John Dickson
- John Piper

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EDITORIAL

**By
Dave Miers**

We sing a song called 'Blessed be your name'. It's all about how God is to be praised in both tough times and good times.

As we look at the cross of Jesus we see that God knows suffering and that God has done something to put an end to suffering.

May we be those who agree with Job 1:21

dnm

ps Thanks to all our guests for sharing.

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THE ART OF DISOBEDIENCE

By John Dickson

Before becoming a Christian, much of my time was spent disobeying my teachers, scout leader, soccer coach and, of course, my mother. In fact, the only person I decided not to disobey was my martial arts instructor. There were some very sane reasons behind that decision.

Although my Mum was, and still is, a very caring parent, I was a real jerk and tried to turn disobedience into an art form. When I became a Christian however, I knew that things had to change. I was confronted with a very awkward Bible passage which read:

**“Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.”
Colossians 3:20**

I tried to convince myself that you only had to obey your parents if they were

Christians, but no matter how I looked at it, the truth was clear—I had to learn to obey Mum and respect her wishes above my own. I was much better at disobedience than obedience but my attitude certainly did undergo a major change. I learnt that obeying parents pleases God (it also pleases them) and that’s a good enough reason to do anything.

On a practical level, this means not deceiving them. It also means doing the jobs around the house. From time to time, it may even mean changing your social schedule to fit into their wishes! Yes, even the social schedule!

Now a question arises at this point: “What if my parents want me to do things that keep me from God?” This is a very difficult question to answer in a book this small but I will relate some examples which may help to make

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the issue clearer.

Example number one: Suppose you are in your room praying one evening and your dad calls from the kitchen, “I want you to help me with the dishes... now!” What should you do? Should you do the ‘spiritual’ thing and keep praying? Or should you do the ‘earthly’ thing and wash the stupid dishes? The answer is simple: do the truly spiritual thing and get into the kitchen, quick smart! In cases like this, God would much rather we please our parents than annoy them. Besides, you can always pray while you do the dishes, or some time later. This is a very important point.

Example number two: What if your parents forbid you to belong to a church?

This has never been my personal experience, but I have spoken to a number of people for whom this has been a real problem. There is no simple answer to this question, since each situation will have different circumstances. Generally, though, I think that if your parents absolutely command you not to go to church, you must respect their wishes. This may not be tragic as it sounds. God knows your situation and he is able to support and teach you in other ways. For instance, a Christian group at school or uni can often be a huge source of strength if church is not an option. God may even just bring along some great Christian friends. Either way, he will not leave you alone.

Thankfully, most of us will
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never have to deal with situations this tough, but the challenge still remains to obey our parents in the smaller things from day to day.

To avoid any confusion I must make two further points. Firstly, there will come a time when obeying parents will no longer be strictly applicable. I can’t imagine a thirty year-old married son, for instance, continuing to obey his parents’ every wish.

Secondly, there are some circumstances where children must disobey their parents. For example, God does not expect a son or daughter to consent to sexual, physical or psychological abuse from a parent (or anyone). If this is your situation, tell someone mature and respectable—a teacher, a youth leader, a minister. Don’t let it continue. You must do something about it for your sake and your parents’ Of course, telling someone will be very difficult but problems are never solved by ignoring them and bottling them up.



ps—this is one of Dave’s top 3 books you MUST read before you can graduate from youth group! Read it!

WHEN I WAS FOUR YEARS OLD

By
Jackson Stace

When I was four years old my father, Leighton Stace, drowned in a canoeing accident. From what I know of what happened, he died somewhat of a hero.

For the first four years of my life I lived with my mother, father, and sister (well, actually my sister for two years) at Teen Ranch- Camden, a Christian campsite in south-western Sydney. As I was only four years old at the time, my memories are fairly limited but Teen Ranch was an awesome place to be born into- Horse riding, canoeing, mud slide, dam swing- it had it all. I instinctively remember it being a warm, loving, fun and supportive environment. I remember being loved and cared by numerous people around me, I remember being picked up constantly and 'stolen' by any number of different people on the campsite so they could play with me. These included; the ladies in the kitchen, the couple up the road a bit, an elderly couple in the house next door, teenage leaders, people from across the road, and my mother when she could find me. But except for a handful of small memories, I don't remember my father. I don't remember him holding me, or playing with me, or showing affection to me. Which isn't to say he didn't do these things, it just means I don't remember them.

My father died when he was on a canoeing trip. A girl fell out of her canoe and my father jumped in. He saved the girl and then got sucked under by a current, or maybe he got sucked down some rapids. I don't really know

the details; I've never felt like asking anyone.

I don't think I shed a single tear over my father dying until I was twelve.

As the oldest between me and my sister, I felt like I needed to step up immediately, be the strong one, the happy one, the one who refused to acknowledge that anything was wrong. Refuse to admit that I'd lost my best friend and that my family had been torn apart.

All these sentiments sound quite advanced for a four year old but it doesn't exactly work like that. I can look back now and recognise that that's how I felt, that my teeny toddler brain was working in that way.

And so I grew up not thinking about it ignoring it and storing it away, convinced that doing this was the best thing to do for everyone. I was convinced that it was the 'healthy' way to deal with it. I was proud of myself that it 'had never affected me'. I was proud that when my Poppa, Grandma and Granddad each died, I wasn't affected. When two girls in my year at school committed suicide, I wasn't affected. When a guy in my year died, I wasn't affected. Because if I wasn't affected from losing my father, what were the rest of them to me?

But of course I was affected. It took a long time to figure it out but rather than expelling all the emotion and stress from these deaths immediately (like I thought I was

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doing), I was bottling it up.

I realise now that the pain of my father dying was too much to bear when I was four. Instead my mind basically erased as much of the pain as it could and this meant memories the emotional attachment to those memories, and feelings. It makes sense that this would happen to a four year old. God's purposes in suffering and hardship in our lives is to strengthen us, refine our lives and produce character (Romans 5:3-4). It may be that God blocked that pain from me at the time because dealing with it would not have achieved such a purpose. It may be that the struggle I have had since to deal with these emotions has strengthened my faith and set it on course to endure. Most likely, it's both of these.

It has been a struggle to have unexpected emotions pop out because they can not be stored any longer. To see yourself and emotions out of control for reasons that have taken a long time to comprehend. Over recent years I have been shaped a lot by the way that the pain from losing my father has manifested. I have endured some extraordinarily tough times and through me I have afflicted tough times on others. You may be reading this and have known me for some time and have noticed these things over the last few years and have wondered why, I hope also that you have noticed the positive change that I have gone through this year as I have faced this pain and dealt with it by Gods

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strength.

I can look back now and see so much how God has held my hand through this. I see the way he worked through my family, and friends to be understanding and supportive. He has worked through them lately also as they have rejoiced with me as I have gained my life back so to speak.

He has worked through countless situations that I recognise could have been a lot worse yet weren't. I can say that I am still a Christian purely because God has kept me, because his love and offer of forgiveness is too powerful to ignore.

It may be that you are in a similar situation, that you are experiencing similar things. Your parent's may be separating, one of them may be distant in someway, or you have lost one or both completely. If this is you, work at not ignoring the issue completely. This may not always be possible and so I say that hesitantly, but as much as possible, work through your issue sooner rather than later. Because it won't necessarily go away, it won't be all ok by ignoring it.

But far more than that, it is important to trust and hold on to God. It is always hard but if you are a Christian, God will hold onto you. He will keep you his and you will endure through his strength. He will place people in your life to help you.



And so I lost my father when I was four. But that's now getting to be ok. I have a great family, my mum, my dad (Glyn), my sister and brother. I have some absolutely incredible friends. I have Jesus, my Lord and Saviour and I have my Heavenly Father who will never let me go.



TRUSTING GOD WHEN IT IS HARD

By
Kelly Haynes

Just like every relationship in this world, a parent child relationship is imperfect, broken or fallen. I'm sure that every child can say that their relationship with their parent/guardian is not perfect and that it can be really difficult at times. Personally, I have a pretty good relationship with my parents. When I say that it doesn't mean that we don't have arguments or fights (because believe me we have definitely had our fair share of them), I just mean that I have a close relationship with them and love them very much. But unfortunately for a lot of people this relationship can often be hurtful, challenging and hard. Children can be hurt from this relationship (parent/child) in many different ways; abuse, separation/divorce, difference in personalities. But there is also the challenge and hurt that comes along with the death of a parent and that is what has happened to me.....

Just quickly, I was born on the best day in the year- the 7th of the 11th 1985. I had a Mum and a Dad (pretty obvious) and an older brother. And as I am told we all lived happily on a youth campsite- Teen Ranch. But God had other plans for this cozy little family and when I was a kid my Dad drowned saving some girls at one of the youth camps. Now at the ripe old age of two I don't think I ever really understood or comprehended what had happened. Apparently I was even quite happy to share

and talk to any stranger that walked along about what had happened to my Dad. But then even growing up in primary school and early high school I don't think the pain of losing my Dad had really sunk in yet. It hasn't been until I got a bit older that I really started to comprehend the loss.

Many consequences followed after the death of my Dad; my Mum re-married, I got a little bro, we moved to the Central Coast and I now had a step brother/sister. For me, all this was not really a problem. I got along with my new Dad and I interacted with my new brothers and sister like any normal sibling's would (we fought). But for some people getting new family members and having to start living with them is really challenging. You've lost a parent and now a new parent comes along (maybe even with some new brothers and sisters) and its hard and its hurtful. It's a lot of change to deal with, even if it all happens over a long period of time. Fortunately, God gave me a new Dad that I really love and get along with and who cares for me, but even I found the change of a new family hard to adjust to. I went from having a mum and a dad and a brother, to a mum and a brother, to a new dad and a step brother/sister and then finally a new brother! And for a kid when you just want a "normal" family (whatever that is these days) it's a complicated thing to have to deal with. But like I said, I was given a new Dad that I really got along with. However, if your

not in that situation (which I think the majority kids who have lost a parent and are now learning to live with a new family aren't) keep **praying, work hard** in the relationship and **talk** with a good friend about how your feeling (if it is an abusive relationship of any kind, you should talk to someone you trust and preferably someone older who can help you appropriately).

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Because everything happened to me when I was quite young it just became normal to me (and I actually now have quite a realistic view of death- I know it really does happen! And at any time), and so it wasn't so hard to deal with at the time. For me, although dealing with having step Dads and siblings was challenging it didn't actually hurt me in any way. What hurt is the loss and pain in not ever knowing who my Dad was, not knowing half of who made me, not knowing his voice or personality or what I had in common with him.

What I want to say to people that are in the same or similar situation (or really any hurtful family situation) is **TRUST GOD**. And its such a standard answer that Christians so often give but from experience if you trust him **he will not fail you**. At the time my Dad died, my family didn't understand why this was happening and why God would do this, and we stopped going to church for awhile. But God knew what he was doing and when I look back on it all now I can see that he has grown my

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Mum, my Dad and kept my brothers and me close to him our whole lives- **and that's what is important**. God has a bigger picture, bigger than all of our small, short lives, and he is working it all out. And he also loves us and cares for us and wants us to be his children and so he will also work that out in your life.

Just to finish, when times get tough with your family situation- Trust in God, and this just means to get up everyday pray to him. Live for him and not yourself and constantly remind your self that he is the God of the universe who loves you and died for you so that you can trust in him and trust your life to him. Also, talk to friends (I am a particularly open person about my life- I'll talk to almost anyone about almost anything) and so I was always talking to people about how I was feeling and what was going on with me. If your in a similar situation to me and have lost a parent and are dealing with grieving that loss and also maybe having to deal with getting along with a new family that you might not get along with so easily. If your angry about what has happened or feeling bitter towards God, a parent, or new parents that you have. Obvious answer- but you **NEED** to pray to God, he will work in you. I also defiantly recommend talking to a friend, a leader (someone you can trust and who will listen). Parents are not perfect and so they can hurt you sometimes (we can hurt them too) and so it helpful to talk to a trustworthy person about it so that someone can be praying for you and help

you through problems you may have.

I actually really love my family and am quite proud of them, I think God has worked very graciously in us and I can see his work in all of our lives. You might not be able to see the good work God is doing in the tragedies that you are facing, you might not even be able to see it when you are my age- but I can guarantee that by the time you get to heaven you will understand how God has worked in your life to bring about his good purposes and why he might have taken away one of your parents or both- and you will praise him and glorify him forever!

ADOPTION @ the heart of the GOSPEL

By
John Piper

The Foundation of Adoption

The deepest and strongest foundation of adoption is located not in the act of humans adopting humans, but in God adopting humans. And this act is not part of his ordinary providence in the world; it is at the heart of the gospel. Galatians 4:4-5 is as central a gospel statement as there is: "But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons." God did not have to use the concept of adoption to explain how he saved us, or even how we become part of his family. He could have stayed with the language of new birth so that all his children were described as children by nature only (John 1:12-13, "But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were *born*, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God."). But he chose to speak of us as *adopted* as well as being children by new *birth*. This is the most essential foundation of the practice of adoption.

Eight Similarities

What I would like to do is lay out eight similarities between what God did in adoption and what happens in a Christian adoption today. I pray that whether you have adopted, or are engaged in assisting adoptions, or are pondering an adoption, God will use these comparisons to heighten your confidence that God is graciously involved in our adoptions. He has done it himself.

He knows what it costs. And he stands ready to support us all the way to the end.

1. Adoption was (for God) an is (for us) costly.

When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, **to redeem** those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. (Galatians 4:4-5)

To redeem means to obtain or to set free by paying a price. What was the price that God paid for our liberation and adoption? In the previous chapter, we heard the answer: "Christ *redeemed* us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree'" (Galatians 3:13). It cost God the price of his Son's life.

There are huge costs in adopting children. Some are financial; some are emotional. There are costs in time and stress for the rest of your life. You never stop being a parent till you die. And the stresses of caring about adult children can be as great, or greater, than the stresses of caring for young children. There is something very deep and right about the embrace of this cost for the life of a child!

Few things bring me more satisfaction than seeing a culture of adoption flourish at Bethlehem. It means that our people are looking to their heavenly Father for their joy rather than rejecting the stress and cost of children in order to maximize their freedom and comforts. When people embrace

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the pain and joy of children rather than using abortion or birth control simply to keep children away, the worth of Christ shines more visibly. Adoption is as far as possible from the mindset that rejects children as an intrusion. Praise God for people ready to embrace the suffering—known and unknown. God's cost to adopt us was infinitely greater than any cost we will endure in adopting and raising children.

2. Adoption did (for God) and does (for us) involve the legal status of the child.

When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And **because you are sons**, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" (Galatians 4:4-6)

There were legal realities God had to deal with. His own justice and law demanded that we be punished and excluded from his presence for our sins. Righteousness was required and punishment demanded. God had to satisfy his justice and his law in order to adopt sinners into his family. This he did by the life, death, and resurrection of his Son Jesus Christ.

This means that the status of being a son legally preceded the experience of the Spirit coming to give us the affections of sons. We are legally sons before we experience the joy of sonship. The object

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work of our salvation (two thousand years ago at Calvary) precedes and grounds the subjective experience of our salvation by the Spirit today.

So it is with our adopting children today: The legal transactions precede and under gird the growth of family feelings. If the legal red tape seems long and hard, keep in mind that this tape is not yet red with your blood, but Jesus satisfied all the legal demands precisely by shedding his blood.

3. Adoption was blessed and is blessed with God's pouring out a Spirit of sonship.

Because you are sons, *God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"* (Galatians 4:6)

You did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received *the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!"* The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. (Romans 8:15-16)

God does not leave us in the condition of aliens when he adopts us. He does not leave us with no feelings of acceptance and love. Rather, he pours his Spirit into our hearts to give us the experience of being embraced in the family. What is remarkable about these two texts is the term *abba*. It is an Aramaic word. Why then does Paul use it, transliterated, in these two letters written in Greek?

The answer is that it was the way Jesus spoke to his Father, in spite of the fact that virtually no one in Jewish culture



referred to God with this endearing word *abba*. It stunned the disciples. They held onto it as a precious remnant of the very voice of Jesus in the language he spoke. In Mark 14:36, Jesus is in Gethsemane and prays, “*Abba, Father*, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.” Therefore, in adopting us, God give us the very Spirit of his Son and grants us to feel the affections of belonging to the very family of God.

In the mercy of God, in our families God works to awaken affections in adopted children for their parents that are far more than legal outcomes. They are deeply personal and spiritual bonds. Adopted children do not *infer* that they are our children by checking out the adoption papers. A spirit pervades our relationship that bears witness to this reality. Like the other children in the family, they all cry, “Daddy.”

Praise God that he give us *both* legal standing as his children *and* the very Spirit of his Son so that we find ourselves saying from a heart of deep conviction, “Abba, Father.”

4. Adoption was (for God) and is (for us) marked by moral transformation through the Spirit.

All who are *led by the Spirit* of God are sons of God.” (Romans 8:14)

God does not leave his children without help to bear the moral image of the family. We may trust that his help will be there for our children as we bring them under the means of grace that God uses to awaken and transform his children.

5. Adoption brought us, and brings our children, the rights of being heirs of the Father.

Because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then *an heir through God*. (Galatians 4:6-7)

The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, *then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ*, provided we suffer with him in order that we

may also *be glorified with him*. (Romans 8:16-17)

Notice that Galatians 4:7 says we are heirs “through God” and Romans 8:17 says we are heirs “of God.” In Galatians, the context is the promise of Abraham—through God, that is, by his sending his Son to redeem us, we are heirs with Abraham (even though many of us are Gentiles!) of his inheritance, namely the *world* (Romans 4:13). But in Romans 8:17, the context is that we, with Christ, are heirs of all that God has, namely, everything. “All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the present or the future—all are yours, and you are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s” (1 Corinthians 3:21).

Just before we left for England on sabbatical, Noël and I went to a lawyer and updated our wills. All the boys are married, and Talitha is the only legal “dependent.” A lot had changed since the last time we made wills. This was a reminder to us that she will inherit like the sons. She is not in a lesser adoptive class. All inherit together. That is the way God did it. That is the way we do it.

6. Adoption was (for God) and is (for us) seriously planned.

He chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love *he predestined us for adoption* as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has

blessed us in the Beloved. (Ephesians 1:4-6)

Adoption in God’s mind was not Plan B. He predestined us for adoption before the creation of the world. Plan A was not lots of children who never sin and never need to be redeemed. Plan A was creation, fall, redemption, adoption so that the full range of God’s glory and mercy and grace could be known by his adopted children. Adoption was not second best. It was planned from the beginning.

In our lives, there is something uniquely precious about having children by birth. That is a good plan. There is also something different, but also uniquely precious, about adopting children. Each has its own uniqueness. Your choice to adopt children may be sequentially second. But does not have to be *secondary*. It can be as precious and significant as having children by birth. God is able to make adoption and A+ plan in our lives.

7. Adoption was (for God) and often is now (for us) from very bad situations.

We . . . were by nature *children of wrath*, like the rest of mankind. (Ephesians 2:3)

God did not find us like an abandoned foundling bundled on the front step and irresistibly cute. He found us ugly and evil and rebellious. We were not attractive. We would not be easy children to deal with. And, what’s worse, God himself was angry with us. He hates sin and rebellion. We were then doubly “children of wrath.”

These are the ones God pur-

continues
on p28

MOVIE REVIEW

By
Alex Hartley

MOVIE REVIEW:
Pursuit of Happyness
DVD 9th May 2007
Will Smith
Jaden Smith

The story about a homeless dad and his son doesn't seem to allow much room for the so called Happyness the title implies. Rather it inspires the query as whether the title was purposefully misspelt or not. This and other questions are answered throughout the film. Will Smith playing Chris Gardner, is effortlessly likeable in this role. He plays a single father, trying to sell unnecessary medical equipment to doctors after his wife leaves him. So in an effort to look after what is left of his family he takes a job as a stockbroker, yet there is a catch. The job turns to be a training program and thus Gardner does not get paid until he gets hired, if this even happens. Scenes of living in homeless shelters, and scrounging for food are heart-wrenching and at times almost seem too much. Causing the audience to question, do situations like these actually even exist? Well the answer is yes. *The Pursuit of Happyness*, is actually based on a true story – aren't they all. Yet this tale is remarkably true to the real story of Chris Gardner. While it has the happy ending we all knew to expect, we must recognise that not all stories have the Hollywood happy ending. We live in a broken world and as Christians recognise that the sin in this world can affect our families. Many of us live with broken families, perhaps without one parent, with separated or divorced parents or even if we seem to have the perfect family we are bound to fight at some point. In such situations it is important to recognise that this is because of the sin in the world. Through this we should pray continuously and trust Jesus in everything for it all is apart of his plan. We are told in several sections of the New Testament to honour our mother and father in everything. This is important in both bringing glory to God but also being an example to perhaps non-Christian friends but also if you have non-Christian parents. Even when times are tough come to God in everything, he is our true father and will never leave us.

4 j-walkies.



SONG REVIEW:
*Song: Stay Together For the Kids/
Holiday*
Artist: Blink 182
Album: *Take off Your Pants and
Jacket (2001)*
Greatest Hits (2005)

Easily recognisable as a Blink song through both melody and the distinctive voices of Tom DeLonge and Mark Hoppus, *Stay together for the Kids* fast became one of the most popular songs of the 2001 CD. This song deals with the notions of separation and divorce from a child's point of view. It portrays the inability of most children in this situation to understand why their parents can't just get along. "We get along so why can't they? If this is what he wants and this is what she wants Then why is there so much pain?" The song is incredibly honest and confronting. The lyrics shift with the music from slow and questioning in the verses to a coupling of power chords in the chorus to really hit home the anger. "So here's your holiday, hope you enjoy it this time you gave it all away. It was mine, so when you're dead and gone will you remember this night, twenty years now lost. It's not right". The song fades out with the words it's not right to a simple piano and drum combination which leaves the reflective point of how divorce is not right. We don't live in a perfect world and so for us these last words ring truth. 'It's not right.' We were never meant to experience such things, but because of our sin and rejection of God we do. While it may be difficult, we at times may have to accept this fact and look to God to help us through. We should not give up meeting together. We are encouraged to continue to do this through everything and also this means we have the opportunity to talk about our struggles with our Christian brothers and sisters. The encouragement that they can offer as a family may prove invaluable to helping us through such times if you are experiencing them.

3.5 j-walkies.

SONG REVIEW

By
Alex Hartley

NEGOTIATING WITH YOUR PARENTS

It is helpful when our parents are aware that somewhere between the ages of thirteen and nineteen, teenagers need to move from a relationship of dependence to one of responsible independence. Ideally parents who recognise this will change gradually from making decisions for their teens to giving them choices and from insisting on compliance to a willingness to negotiate issues, identify differences, understand and accept differences and find win/win solutions.

If your parents haven't been to a parenting course where these things are explained you may still be able to encourage them in this direction by trying some of the following approaches:

1. Understand that your parents love you a lot and care a lot about you. They do not want to see you harmed, abused, exploited or hurt in any way. You can acknowledge this by saying something like,

"In taking that position or point of view I know you have my best interests at heart and you are possibly afraid that x, y or z might happen to me. Am I right? When you parents have agreed continue..."

2. "If you feel I understand where you are coming from, would you be willing to hear where I am coming from?"
In the event of a "no" answer ask "what makes this difficult for you?"
In the event of a "Yes" answer continue by outlining briefly and succinctly exactly what you would like to have happen or have changed and then tell your parents

- a. What makes that important for you.
- b. What your parents could **do** to make this happen.

When your parents respond to that hear them without interrupting then ask them to let you respond to them and to hear you out.

Deeper acceptance of each other's point of view can often make it easier to settle on a way forward that both parents and teens are happy with – a win/win situation.

Give it a go!

If it doesn't work, all is not lost. Give your parents this article to read and ask if you and they could try it out!

By Michael Corbett-Jones

Michael has been a Christian Counselor for a long time. He knows a thing or two!

PARENTS PODCAST

By
Alex Hartley
(manuscript)

Go to

j-walk.ccecyouth.com

To listen to the full version. **MUST** listen show.

(this is edited—so there is more content on the recorded version online... check it out)

Dave: We're talking about families today which is part of our j-walk issue number 4 which I guess is about parents... It's Sunday night just after church, we've just enjoyed some pizza and I thought we'd kick off quickly talking to Dan. Tell us about your parents, we had your mum on the show two weeks ago, two episodes ago... -

Dan: Delightful.

Dave: It was delightful to have your mum on the show she loves you... -

Dan: She didn't sound very much like my mum.

Dave: It was actually Row putting on a voice - good job Wendy, nah it was your mum; tell us about your parents growing up.

Dan: Well, I grew up in a family where my parents saw the most important thing for me being that I knew Jesus. So that for them meant, that right down to the stuff they get me for Christmas, the books that they'd read to me -

Dave: Bible Games!

Dan: Nah, we didn't play any Bible games, but everything that we did as a family they made sure that me and my brother, my brother and I, knew Jesus. So each night we'd pray, mum and dad would come and tuck us in and we'd pray together. We'd read from the bible, lots of different stuff like that. Dad growing up kept getting inspired to start dinner devotion times, and it was too -

Dave: That Tim Godden was is crazy.

Dan: Ha yeah, but he just couldn't do it and so my parents were massive in me becoming a Christian. So although a grew up in a Christian family I didn't become a Christian until I went on my first kind of camp away from my family, and they encouraged me to go on that camp. They encouraged me to get locked into youth groups. The church we were going to before CCEC, they weren't happy with the guy who was running the kids ministry because they didn't think they were teaching the bible so they forced us to sit in church and listen so we got pulled out of kids ministry by my parents.

Dave: And got to critique the sermon?!

Dan: Well actually they gave us books, or Christian novels to read, but they were really helpful. The other thing I found really great was particularly my dad spent good time with me as his son. Dad worked hard at making it a priority that when I was growing up he wanted to pray with me and talk about stuff one on one. It was great, when I had questions I went to him and I remember lots of late night chats up in the attic.

Dave: Now it sounds like you've had a great relationship with your parents, your parents are still together, they're married, and they still like each other -

Dan: Yeah they do! More and more..

Dave: That's sick isn't it?!

J-WALK ISSUE #004

Dan: Yeah it gross..

[Background laughter]

Dan: It has been gross in the past.

Dave: We'll keep moving from there kiddies, keep moving, and if you're in that same situation keep moving.

Dave: Your parents I'm assuming they fight, they're not that brilliant and they're still together. But that's not actually normal, that parents are necessarily together. I mean the statistics, for divorce, separation, adultery are significant and growing every year and so our guess, is there are lots of people in youth group who are in different contexts. You might well have Christian parents, but there might even be problems in your Christian family. So we've worked out there is at least ten different scenarios you might be in, whether you're still a teenager or if you're now 40 - you're too old to listen to this thing but for some reason you're one of our fans. Sorry -

Dan: Shout out to Wendy Godden -

Dave: she'd not 40, she's 41 -

Dan: Waaayyy more.

Dave: You might have Christian parents; you might have non-Christian parents; nominal Christian parents; which just means they tick the box on the census form; your parents might be separated; divorced; one of them may be deceased; both might be deceased; you might be adopted; you have never met your parents; your parents my be abusive; you might have a parent in goal; you might have parents that fight with one another; you might have parents you fight with; - well we all

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fight with our parents but you may in particular fight with your parents. We have a panel here we'll quickly introduce them by name, we'll get hem to say their name and tell us their favourite thing they've done this weekend in like 2 words.

Aaron: Aaron, bushwalking in the Blue Mountains.

Kelly: Kelly, went to Sarah and Simon's house warming - that was fun.

Adrian: Bushwalking with my brother -

Dave: What's your name Adrian -

Adrian: I was getting to that!

[Improv from everyone]

Adrian: I went bushwalking with my brother and my fathers for my dad's birthday.

Dave: Good times, Nicole what's your name?

Nicole: Nicole, I discovered a really, really delicious grilled toast.

[Laughter everyone]

Dave: Cool that's awesome, where at?

Nicole: Oh at my home.

[More laughter]

Row: I'm Row, babysitting my nephew.

Josh: Josh, I watched girly TV shows.. annnd now everyone knows.

Dave: If you watch girly TV shows send an email to Josh. In the bible in Luke ch13, there's a



heading that say repent or perish, I'll quickly read it:

1 Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. **2** Jesus answered, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? **3** I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish. **4** Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them—do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? **5** I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish."

There are two different stories there; we don't need to go into all the details. I guess basically a big thing to take away from that passage in the context of tragedy, suffering, difficult times, is that there's two ways you can respond to God. You can repent, that is turn to God, or you can turn away from God. Perish is the word used in the passage. So our aim now is to encourage you, no matter the situation with your parents or how tough things are at home as we hear from these leaders on the panel here, not to turn away from God but to turn to God. He's our rock, salvation, comfort, he is the perfect father, the perfect parent, and we can trust him when times are tough. Well that's our introduction so were gonna go for about three hours, but basically were going to go around the table and talk to each of these people, hear their scenario, what it was like growing up, something about their parents and I guess how they felt about it. We don't want these leaders trashing



their parents and we don't want you as a result of this show to trash your own parents. We hope that you just understand a bit more about your parents. That they've gone through what you're going through and they still are.

So we're going to kick off with Aaron, tell us a little bit about your scenario.

Aaron: Mine was very similar to Dan's, both my parents are Christians, and I grew up in a Christian family where they always encouraged me to pursue things of God. Then in about 2003/2004 my parents went through a rough patch, and they separated. But praise the Lord they got back together, recently. And that was fantastic.

Dave: It's quite rare, people might get separated and try and work on things, I don't know what the statistic is but its pretty high that if you get separated it will lead to permanent separation or divorce.

Aaron: Yeah I was stoaked when they did [get back together] and I can see the only reason that happened is that they are Christians and they were committed to working on their marriage.

Dave: So that's really exciting and that may not be your situation but praise God if it is, and pray if you're in a situation where your parents are separated. So you were about 18 years old when -

Aaron: Yeah I was in the middle of my HSC actually.

Dave: So tell us a bit about

how that made you feel at the time.

Aaron: Sad obviously, and I guess my perspective of my parents changed a lot. As a child you always look up to your parents but once it happened I realised they are human. That it's a really difficult job raising kids and working at a marriage too.

Dave: Were you angry?

Aaron: More disappointment.

Dave: How did you cope with it?

Aaron: It put things into perspective, I didn't do as well as I would have liked to in the HSC, but I realised that the HSC wasn't the end of the world. I was tempted to withdraw, to back away from everything to turn away from God but I was encouraged by my mates and my youth leader to keep turning to God.

Dave: Shout out to Adrian, say Adrian I love all your work.

Aaron: I love you Adrian.

Dave: I guess the first thing to say is; if you're out there and having tough times don't give up meeting with Christians, they're your support, the people who keep pointing you back to Jesus. So do you think you've grown through it?

Aaron: Yeah definitely. I think at the time I didn't feel I was growing but as I look but now I think that's when I did most of my growth.

Dave: Hebrews 12 alludes to the fact that you don't enjoy

hard times when their there but when you look back you go, 'wow did I grow'.

Is there anything you want to share quickly about your context which might help others?

Aaron: For people who have mates going through this thing don't feel like you have to have all the answers. The people most encouraging to me didn't say anything at all, they just sat there and listened.

Dave: That's fantastic advice, thanks heaps for sharing that stuff Aaron.

Kelly how you doing?

Kelly: Good thankyou.

Dave: Can you tell us a bit about your parents and growing up?

Kelly: Yup, so I had a mum and a dad and a brother, don't laugh it's not funny. And then when I was two my dad died.

Dave: Kelly and Jackson have done a great thing for us; they've been working really hard in writing down their ideas so were really glad they've done that. For both of them it's still a very real thing and an emotional thing having to talk about that. Do you want to say anything about dealing with that stuff? Tell us a bit about growing up then, because you wouldn't have really known your dad.

Kelly: No, well growing up was pretty normal actually, my mum got re-married - I don't know why I'm crying it's like my wedding day.

[Laughter]



Dave: You always cry at sad things! Sorry Adrian, sorry, sorry.

[Laughter]

Kelly: Mum got re-married when I was probably about five, no that's a lie, I probably about eight and we just lived at home with mum, Glyn, Jackson and my little brother Sam. Mum and dad worked on a Christian camp, and mum and dad were both Christians. So when my dad died I think we stopped going to church and it was just me, Jackson and mum. Then when mum got re-married they started going to church and me and Jackson kinda tagged along every now and again. I didn't have a hard life or a particularly sad life. My dad died when I was two and so I didn't really know him and it didn't really affect me until I was older and realised I didn't really know my dad. Growing up though, both my parents are really great and I've seen a lot of growth in them since they've been re-married. Growing up I didn't have a hard life, I forgot that my dad died, it wasn't something I ever thought about.

Dave: Was there any difficulty, I mean you'd gone without a dad for a fair few years, was it weird getting used to calling Glyn dad?

Kelly: I was a pretty funny kid, I used to call myself

Kelly Kearney which is Glyn's name, so it wasn't hard for me. I remember one time just thinking I'm going to start calling you dad and that was it. I don't think it was because I forgot my dad and who he was, it was just that Glyn became my dad, he was the one who was there growing up and I see him as my dad. He's a good dad.

Dave: Just in closing I'm sure there are people who have lost parents, how would you encourage them to keep trusting in Jesus?

Kelly: I guess for me looking back I can see that God has had a plan from the start, for my family and that came about through the death of my dad. I know people became Christians through my dad dying, which is cool. Just knowing God uses tragedy and death and all kinds of things to make you stronger in him.

Dave: Yeah that's fantastic, reminds me of Romans 8:28 which says: We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him. So God is a good God and has plans. So thanks so much Kelly for sharing that stuff. Adrian welcome.

Adrian: Welcome to you as well.

Dave: Tell us about your growing up, parents and your context.

Adrian: I lived on the Central Coast my whole life. I have one brother and we all went to church, a Baptist church. I remember we built a house on the weekend, and that took up our whole weekend

so we stopped going to church. Then after the house was built we never went back. Then when I was in year six my parents got a divorce.

Dave: Tell us how did you feel, how did you make sense of it?

Adrian: It shocked me.

Dave: Did you ever think it couldn't happen?

Adrian: I think my family fought so much at a young age I thought it was normal. So when it happened it shocked me. Me and my brother stopped talking to people, I didn't tell my friends at school for a while. I remember me and my brother were watching *Married with Children* and my mum came in and told us they were getting a divorce. A few weeks later we moved out with my mum and it still didn't feel real. Me and my brother didn't move any of our stuff into the new bedrooms. I remember at night times my brother would come into my room and just sit there talking to each other. We'd only sort of talk to each other about that stuff and how it just seemed like life would never be normal again. But time went on and my mum got re-married and my dad moved away. Only about an hour away but it just meant that we couldn't see him as much. Yeah it was big, but life went back to normal. I just realised that my opinion of my parents changed and that they weren't perfect they were just human

and made mistakes.

Then my brother became a Christian, and through him and a couple of friends from school I became a Christian and now I have a good relationship with my parents. A couple of years ago my mum became a Christian which was great. I was struggling to talk to my parents about Christian things but I'm thankful to God for that. I'm not really sure where my dad is at, but everyone knows how hard it is to talk to your family.

Dave: Thanks for sharing that Adrian, so since your brothers become a Christian your mum has become a Christian, how has being a Christian helped you think about this stuff and deal with it?

Adrian: I suppose by processing that I'm in a fallen world where things aren't as their supposed to be. So in that sense everything that's happened has made sense, I shouldn't be surprised. As a Christian man I guess I want to be encouraging my parents just as much as I want to be encouraging my friends to go to church and stuff. That's really tough I find. If you've got non-Christian parents it's hard to talk to them, but I literally just asked my mum to come to church and just kept asking her to do it. Then the church just took care of her and now she's a Christian and it's great. So just keep praying for your non-Christian parents and if you don't feel you can talk to them just serve them and be a good Christian model in

your home. Invite them to church.

Dave: Thanks heaps Adrian, before I forget I'm sure these guys would be more than happy to talk to anyone who is in a similar situation, and the vibe I'm getting is that it is so important to talk to people. Nicole, now we could have gotten pretty much any leader to talk about what Nicole is going to talk about today. So tell us Nicole.

Nicole: Ok, so pretty much like Daniel, I'm blessed with a family God has given me. They are Christians and they have trusted in God as long as I can remember. I guess as I have gotten older me and my mum realised our differences a bit more and so we started fighting heaps.

Dave: So just to clarify, that's happened as you've gotten older.

Nicole: So probably early to mid high school I guess. We didn't seem to really get along or talk. We just fought and picked at each other and annoyed each other.

Dave: My guess it to whatever degree, most of us are in that boat. Was it she was wrong and you were right?

Nicole: Yeah it was exactly that. I mean I don't even remember what half of it was. Just thinking that you know so much better than them and just things she'd say or want and expect me to do would annoy me.

Dave: Did you annoy her?

Nicole: Yeaahhhh!! Haha

Dave: You're a Christian woman, you've moved out, as you look back, do you now look back and think you have been humbled?

Nicole: Yeah so much and even not just looking back but when you're in it. When I became a Christian I guess it was late high school. So you grow to know God more and read how he wants you to live. He calls us to love, respect and honour our parents and then when you go back to your family it humbles you so much. As you think about the stuff you fight about it doesn't even matter, it's over petty little differences and you've just got to step back I guess and look at the big picture.

Dave: Yeah is true at home you see what our characters are like. Good stuff, so what's your encouragement for every single person listening to this who is a teenager, and who if they have parents probably fight with them?

Nicole: We'll I just moved out.

[Laughter]

Dan: Before you say it, has your relationship with your parents been better since you've moved out?

Nicole: Yeah, it has its changed defiantly; I don't see them as much and you don't have the silly little thing you would argue about. So if I leave stuff around my parents won't get angry at me, so I don't get angry back at them. Stuff like that.

I guess if you've got parents who love you just know that, and you know they might not be around forever so.

Dave: Love 'em while you can. Thanks heaps for sharing that stuff with us Nicole. So Nicole talked a bit about things changing since moving out of home so Row welcome. You're briefly just going to say some stuff about the changing nature with your parents. How has your relationship with them changed with age?

Row: It's probably been about five years since I've lived at home with my parents. The interesting thing was that my parents moved out of home and left me. I felt a bit abandoned to be honest. While I missed my parents at first, I don't think missed me. As I was growing up as a teenager I think I had a fairly good relationship with my parents, we fought to an extent but not excessively. I think growing up, moving out, and getting on with your life can actually be a really good thing for the relationship with your parents. So if you've got a bad

relationship with them now don't think it's a ride off, you might actually find that in a couple of years time you might be really good friends with them. I'm really encouraged by my sibling's relationship with my parents too.

Dave: So yeah stick it out. Sorry, don't stick it out though if you're in an abusive relationship context. There are appropriate people, DOCS, and there are hotlines you can ring. It might be difficult but if you're getting beaten up, your parents shouldn't be doing that. It's not how they ought to be looking after you and we'll actually have some numbers in j-walk that you can ring. Thanks for that, that's a helpful short one Row and out lucky last is Josh.

Josh: Yo.

Dave: Yo yo yo.

Josh: I have to pretend I have soul.

[Laughter]

Dave: So tell us your situation growing up parents and so forth.

Josh: So I grew up in a Christian family and I suppose my experience would have been similar to Daniel's up until tell about year eight or nine. I was the oldest of four kids so this might sound silly but I had a later bed time than all the other kids. Mum and dad started fighting a bit around then but generally it would be later at night so I was kinda the only one who was around to see it. That probably went on for a few years and then dad left, and he came back, and he left again, and came back. It was all a bit confusing. That would have been about year

ten/elevenish and then he left for good, and mum and dad got divorced. Which was during year twelve. So that was pretty tough. Their still not together which is still hard and recently mum got re-married which is really good. I didn't always think so but yeah, now I do. So that's my situation.

Dave: So that seems like it went on for quite a while, how did you feel about it, how did you deal with it?

Josh: So initially it was only really me out of my brothers and sister who knew what was going on. They didn't know, I didn't tell them, I didn't really tell anyone. I don't even know if mum and dad knew initially. So to start with I kinda juts bottled it all up. When it became more obvious, my brothers my sisters spoke to me about it a bit. But it's just a strange and really hard thing to talk about.

It was actually almost better when they finally split up because that took a lot of the tension out of the house.

Dave: So I remember you in year eight in youth group. Tell us about going through youth and church and stuff like that.

Josh: They didn't really have a lot to do with each other. I'd go to youth, but it was generally just to hang out with my mates. I wasn't a Christian in early high school, I thought I was but I only really went to hang out and then I went home.

Things were bad and it was distinct. I never really thought, 'oh God, or my mates could help me through this'.

When I got older and became a Christian that was probably when it started to get the worst. I became a Christian about year ten and then end of year eleven is when they started to split up. To be honest I think because I'd been internalising it for so long I kept doing that a bit. I don't think I even really prayed about it much. There were stages when I did which would help at the worst times but then I would forget about it when things got a bit easier.

Dave: We know there are people going through the same things you went through. What encouragement would be helpful; particularly to guy but girls as well in this situation?

Josh: It's important to talk. It can be really hard, especially if you're in the habit of not doing it. I found that when I did start talking to people it made it a lot easier, just being able to get it out. It was in the hardest times I did turn to God and he did get me through, it was just in the easier times that I turned away. So I'd really encourage you to lean on your Christian mates but to lean on God because God will always be there for you. Don't just, when it gets easier, forget about it. God is here for us always.

Dave: That's really helpful Josh, is there any other stuff

comes to mind as far as how you deal with it. You did sort of assume a kinda of father role over siblings, how do you make sense of that?

Josh: It was weird, it's probably not the way were built to be. I'm their brother, not their dad. Mum's a nurse, really busy job which meant she wasn't around for a lot of the time. So I had to step up and take a lot of responsibility by default. When I was in it I probably didn't really think about it much, it's just what you do. Looking back it forced me to grow up really early which now that I have more space has meant I've kinda reverted a bit, which is fun because I get to still swing on swings. What it has done has meant I've got a really, really close relationship with my brother and sisters which is a huge positive that's come out of that.

Dave: Thanks heaps Josh and everyone. So for everyone listening we want you to use this and be encouraged by it whatever your circumstances. All of our leaders have different stories to tell they want to talk to you and for you to talk to them. So I just want to encourage you in times when life might be hard, keep trusting in Jesus.

Row: In this world we might not have a good circumstance. We might not have a family or parents who, the relationships with aren't what God would want them to be. But in any time that relationships fail in this world we have a complete relationship with Jesus. We have a father in God who loves us. We have brothers and sisters as Christians as well. We have

family. Even where relationships might fail, we have it all in Jesus and one another as well.

Dave: Amen.

Dan: Bring on Heaven.

Dave: Yeah bring it on. There's the promise that there's a better time coming. That there'll be a time for those who trust in Jesus, everything will be perfect. Relationships will be restored. There won't be broken homes. We'll be hanging out with Jesus, gathered around his throne worshipping him who died and rose again for us. There are people who say 'what would God know about suffering and tough times', the answer is Jesus. Jesus humbled himself and became a man. He became obedient to death upon a cross. He died a death that he didn't deserve, and he died a death that we deserve. God knows suffering. Good took suffering upon himself to bring an end to suffering. So let me encourage you to trust in Jesus find out more about him.

Peace out we hope you enjoy this j-walk issue. For Christ died for sins once for all the righteous for the unrighteous to bring you to God.

TOP TEN WAYS TO LOVE YOUR PARENTS

By
Jackson Stace



- 10** - Try and do what they say. Even if this is sometimes hard, at least let them know you're making an effort.
- 9** - Put yourselves in their shoes... and see how long it takes for them to find them.
- 8** - Surprise them with good stuff. Tidying your room after your mum has asked you seven times isn't treating her well. Keeping it tidy or tidying it before she asks is.
- 7** - Every now and then pretend that your parent's attempts at engaging with your generation actually work. "Yeah dad, Myplace is a cool zone to unload pictures from my songpod onto the world wide web"
- 6** - When you go to leave the house- let them know where you are going, when you are about to get into a "strangers"(ie. Your friend from school who just got his p's) car- find out **exactly** where you are going, which route you are taking, how many roundabouts you will be going through and how well the "stranger" can handle roundabouts, his license number, his address, his parents number- are they reputable?, and of course- what time you will be home.
- 5** - Tickle their feet. My mum likes it anyway!
- 4** - Try and find out what they like to do and do it with them. After all, they've sat and watched mind numbing children's movies like Flubber with you since you were five.
- 3** - It sounds so obvious but try this one on for size..... tell them you love them!
- 2** - I've seen photo collages work well a few times. Yep, there's nothing like a piece of cardboard soaked with craft glue with pictures of you from the age of two to draw tears from an unsuspecting parent.
- 1** - Whether they're Christian or not, share Jesus with them and allow them to see God working in your life.

Old people have heart check ups. Young people need heart check ups too. How is your heart? Is it beating? Maybe it's time to start a REVOLUTION in your heart? Jesus.

coast youth
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radically changed by the goodnews of Jesus

[Friday 8th June 2007]

[7-930pm]

[\$7 @ the door]

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Speaker:
Tim Baldwin

Band:
Garage Hymnal

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sued in adoption. Therefore, all of God's adoptions crossed a greater moral and cultural divide than any of our adoptions could. The distance between what we are, and what God is, is infinitely greater than any distance between us and a child we might adopt. God crossed the greatest cultural barrier to redeem and adopt us.

Consider too, that according to Romans 9:4, the people that God chose in the Old Testament, the Israelites, were adopted out of a terrible situation. *"They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises."* But how was this adoption effected? Hosea 11:1, "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and *out of Egypt I called my son.*" They were slaves in Egypt. But not only that, they were often also rebellious against God. "Our fathers, when they were in Egypt, did not consider your wondrous works; they did not remember the abundance of your steadfast love, but rebelled by the sea, at the Red Sea" (Psalm 106:7).

Therefore, God went and took a son from Egypt who was both enslaved and rebellious. The pattern is set: adoptions do not just come from nice, healthy, safe, auspicious situations.

8. Adoption meant (for all Christians) and means (for Christian parents) that we suffer now and experience glory later.

The whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, *groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as*

sons, the redemption of our bodies. (Romans 8:22-23)

This strikes us as strange. Aren't we already adopted? Why does Paul say that we are "waiting for our adoption"? Yes, we are already adopted. When Christ died for us, the price was paid, and when we trust him, we are legally and permanently in the family. But God's purpose for adoption is not to leave any of his children in a state of groaning and suffering. He raised Jesus from the dead with a new body, and he promises that part of our adoption will be a new resurrection body with no more disabilities and no more groaning. Therefore, what we wait for is the *full experience* of our adoption—the resurrection of our bodies.

There is much groaning in the path of adoption on the way to full salvation. But the outcome is glorious. It is worth it all. "I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us" (Romans 8:18).

This is especially relevant for parents of children with disabilities. They know the "groaning" of this life. All of us have children with some sort of disability, and some of us will live to get very old and watch our children age and die before we do. Others will see their children struck down in war or by accident or disease. Others will care for a disabled child till one of them dies. All of this groaning is groaning in hope because we are adopted by God and destined for a resurrection and an eternal future of health and wholeness and joy. It will be worth it all.

**By John Piper. © Desiring God.
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