Teaching the Word of God and Teaching from the Word of God. At Faulkner University, we believe that God is the source of all knowledge and boldly provide a liberal arts education centered on God’s truth. Our students receive not only in-depth, sound Bible instruction but also a biblically-based curriculum in all our degree programs including bachelors, masters and juris doctorate. At Faulkner University, all learning occurs through the eyes of faith.
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On March 21, 2012 our dearly loved workmate and supporter, Elizabeth Wright Smith, went to be with the Lord. In addition to filling the role of Special Assistant to the President for Special Projects, Elizabeth served on the Board of Advisors for the Cloverdale Center for Family Strengths at Faulkner University.

More than a colleague, Elizabeth was my friend. I originally came to Alabama Christian College, now Faulkner University, on a baseball scholarship that her first husband, Henry Wright, awarded me. In those days Elizabeth became one of my biggest fans, encouragement that I will never forget. In subsequent years she continued to encourage, support, and mentor me in my work to strengthen families.

Elizabeth Smith. A woman of great worth. Perhaps Solomon had a woman like Elizabeth in mind when he said, “For her worth is far above rubies.” In fact, most of the descriptions in Proverbs 31:10-30 remind me of Elizabeth.

She “willingly works with her hands” (v.13). Early in her career she drove and sold eighteen-wheeler trucks.

She “also rises while it is yet night, and provides food for her household” (v.15). Elizabeth raised a son and also served as a foster mother to two nephews.

“She considers a field and buys it; from her profits she plants a vineyard” (v.16). Over the years she was a successful business person including work in real estate and rental properties.

“She girds herself with strength, and strengthens her arms” (v.17). Elizabeth persistently battled cancer with dogged determination and extreme dedication to a holistic health regimen.

“She perceives that her merchandise is good, and her lamp does not go out by night” (v.18). Her merchandise for over 50 years had been Faulkner University. I have never seen a more tireless worker; there is no way to estimate the number of late night hours she spent contacting potential donors on behalf of Faulkner. The annual Benefit Dinner was her passion.

“She extends her hand to the poor, yes, she reaches out her hands to the needy” (v.20). I remember a young girl that she brought for several years to Sunday School and worship at College Church of Christ. The little girl had parents who were not Bible-believers, so Elizabeth persuaded them of the importance of Bible study for their precious daughter. In her late 80’s Elizabeth visited Tutwiler Prison twice a week and shared the gospel with the inmates there. She appeared before the Parole Board on behalf of several whom she believed deserved a second chance.

She “does not eat the bread of idleness” (v.27). Where did she get her drive and energy!

From 1964-1973 she served as Director of Montgomery Urban Renewal. She was appointed Director of FMHA by President Jimmy Carter (1977-1980). From 1984-89 she was the Executive Director of the Alabama Safety Council. She assisted five presidents of Alabama Christian College and Faulkner University and served on the Board of Trustees. For ten years she took her three grandchildren to summer sessions at Maywood Christian Camp. She witnessed all three being baptized into Christ.

Elizabeth Smith was truly “a woman who fears the Lord” (v.30). She loved the Lord and loved His church. She used her great faith and great energy to share Christ with those around her.

What price can you put on a life like she lived? Solomon said it all when he said, “her worth is far above rubies.” This world is truly a better place because Elizabeth Smith lived in it. I am thankful God allowed me to be among those she called friend.

Still working on behalf of her beloved school, Elizabeth requested memorial donations be made in her name to Faulkner University, Attn: University Advancement, 5345 Atlanta Hwy., Montgomery, AL 36109.
EDITORS NOTE: The following was presented at Elizabeth’s graveside service on March 29, 2012 at Ramer Cemetery, Ramer, Alabama.

I was honored when Elizabeth asked me to speak at her grave. A few weeks before she passed away, I asked Elizabeth what she would like for me to say. I knew that she would want to have input into the closing scenes of her memorial.

I have known Elizabeth Hobbie Wright Smith all my life, so I already knew much of her life story, but she and I had one long, last conversation in which she reviewed the events of her life and the lessons that she learned along the way. Although I said several times during the three and a half hours that we talked that I was afraid our conversation was too tiring for her, she wanted to tell her story. At times her voice was strong and firm, and at times it was soft and wistful. At times she laughed her distinctive laugh, and at times she was solemn. As Elizabeth calmly, peacefully, faced the ending of her life, she reflected on its beginnings, and her life passed before her as if she recalled a dream.

Elizabeth was born on April 24, 1924. She grew up on the Hobbie farm near Snowdoun, Alabama. She thought of her grandmother, Fanny Livingston, as a role model. Her grandmother was ambitious, yet she was kind and gentle. Elizabeth also found comfort and encouragement from her Uncle Will Hobbie, whom she called “Uncle” and his wife, Katherine Jolly Hobbie whom she called “Aunt Nannie.” Aunt Nannie also paid Elizabeth’s tuition to take some business classes at Huntingdon College and then to go to Massey Draughn Business College. Elizabeth loved her aunt and uncle and was grateful for their help, and she remained devoted to them all their lives. From her grandmother and aunt and uncle she learned the warmth of kindness.

From her parents Elizabeth learned to work hard at all kinds of work on the farm. She was the oldest of their seven children. One time when she was a child, her father was cutting firewood; he told her to use the circular saw to cut some wood. She was afraid of the dangerous power tool and tearfully protested saying, “Daddy, I can’t do that! I’m scared!” He said to her firmly, “Don’t you ever say that you can’t do a job! If you don’t know how to do something, then you learn how, and then you get the job done!” He pointed down to the ground and said, “‘Old Man Can’t’ is dead and buried right here! YOU CAN!” And she did.

Elizabeth later saw how God used her parents’ demands that seemed hard and harsh to her at the time to develop in her a strong work ethic, a mental toughness, problem-solving skills that helped her cope with difficult circumstances, and a “can do” attitude that helped her all of her life.

Elizabeth was paid for her farm work in farm products: sweet milk, buttermilk, butter, and eggs. She used her salary of farm products to barter and pay for piano lessons from Miss Bessie Savage. Elizabeth happily received these lessons with talent and enthusiasm. Her piano playing was a source of joy to her and many others throughout the years. She always loved music.

Elizabeth learned the basics of business working in the store on the farm. She wanted to go into business. She went to work in town when she was sixteen years old. While a student at Lanier High School in Montgomery, Alabama, she worked at Mercantile Paper Company every afternoon for five days a week and all day Saturday, making a total of $3.50 a week after taxes. This was the beginning of her business career.

She worked hard at her first small job. The boss told her he was pleased with her work and was giving her a raise to $20 a month. She said she wanted $30! He was shocked at her boldness and said that...

Don’t you ever say that you can’t do a job! If you don’t know how to do something, then you learn how, and then you get the job done! Continued on page 6
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they had a bookkeeper there who had been in there for thirty years who didn’t make that much and she would never make that much money! Elizabeth saw there was no hope for advancement there, so she gave her boss her two weeks’ notice and resigned on the spot.

Henry Wright’s mother helped her find a job making $25 a month working in an old warehouse downtown near the railroad station. Her first day on the job, the boss told her he had to go somewhere, and he wanted her to straighten up the place while he was gone. She said the whole place was sooty and so disorganized it was in shambles. She got the maintenance man to help her, and they pulled everything out of the building, and she washed and scrubbed the soot off the walls and floor and cleaned everything and put it back in the building in good order. When the boss returned, he could hardly believe his eyes! He almost didn’t recognize the place. He was so impressed with her hard work and initiative that he immediately gave her a raise and paid her $30 instead! When she received her first $30 paycheck, she asked her boss if she could borrow his car. She drove back to see the man at the Mercantile Paper Company who said she would never make that much. She drove back and showed him her new $30 paycheck. He shook his head and said that he thought they had made a mistake to let her get away and now he knew it!

A part of her new job included a sideline of selling trailers. Elizabeth worked so hard at that, the trailers became the most profitable part of the business. One day the boss said that he thought they were losing money and he was afraid they would have to go out of business. She ran and got the books that she had been carefully keeping and showed him that his old business was losing money, but his trailer business was making good profits. At the suggestion of that teenage girl, he got rid of the old business and focused on selling trailers.

Elizabeth started thinking that they needed a truck to haul the trailers. That opened the door for her to get into the trucking business. By the time she was 21, she and her business partner were able to get the franchise for selling White Trucks for eighteen counties. That grew into the area covering the state of Alabama. With hard work, thrift, a shrewd mind for business, and the blessings of the Lord, she advanced in the business.

She talked me through her progression from one job to the next. I won’t go through her long, impressive resume, but she summed it up by saying that in every job that she had, she had worked as a problem-solver.

In all of these problems, Elizabeth said she was always praying to God for guidance in all that she did. She told me that she always prayed before business meetings. She said she would go in the restroom and pray. She told me, “When you look in the mirror and check your hair and lipstick before you go into a meeting, don’t forget to pray and ask the Lord to check your heart and make the necessary improvements there.” If negotiations in meetings became difficult, she would sometimes ask to be excused. She would go back to the privacy of the restroom and pray again.

In our last conversation, Elizabeth traced all of her successes in business back to her early experiences on the farm and in her first two little part-time jobs. In those early days she learned that success in business involved a can-do attitude, hard work, boldness, giving your employer more work than he expected quicker than he expected to receive it, keeping and reviewing good records, and adapting to what was working and getting rid of what was not making money, and above all, prayer. She knew that all of her successes were blessings from God.

As she recounted the stories of her varied work experiences and how she gave each task her best, I thought of the words of Solomon recorded in Ecclesiastes 9:10: “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might...”

Elizabeth was a businesswoman, but she always realized that her main business was to try to serve God. She also traced her life as a Christian back to those same early years.

She thought back on the beginning of her Christian life and her association with Faulkner University.

While riding the bus to and from work at her first job at Mercantile Paper Company, Elizabeth met and became friends with a young man named Ray Dillard. He was several years older than she. He was getting his Bible degree from Pepperdine University. He was a member of the church of Christ. He talked with her about their religious differences. He took her to talk to his preacher, Cecil Perryman. In 1939 Brother Perryman baptized her. Elizabeth said that she was truly converted to the Lord and to the concept of non-denominational Christianity.
Elizabeth felt a sense of mission. She said that when she came up out of the waters of baptism that she felt like a fire horse that had just heard the fire bell ring. She wanted to run, but she didn't know how or where to direct that energy and religious zeal. When she became a member of the church of Christ with its a cappella music, there was no piano to play. Women did not preach. Although she taught a Sunday School class for young girls, she wanted to do more for the Lord. What could she do? She expressed this frustration to a preacher, Coleman Boyd. She asked him what more she could do.

He said there was a little Christian school on Ann Street named Alabama Christian College. He told her to go out to that school and ask Rex Turner, Sr. what she could do to help. She went and asked Dr. Turner how she could help. He gave her several tasks, which she readily accomplished. In time he asked her to help with the school's benefit dinner, which at that time was called the “Fellowship Dinner.”

Working for that annual dinner became Elizabeth's calling. She said that she believed that by helping with the Benefit Dinner to support that Christian school, which later grew and became known as Faulkner University, she was helping students receive a Christian education. By doing this she believed that she was doing the work of the Lord. This was where she could put all of her energy and talents. She worked for the school and specifically for the Benefit Dinner with fervor the rest of her life.

Through the years as Elizabeth's realm of influence increased, she was able to use her connections in the business world to make friends of influential business people for the school. By 2012 the Benefit Dinner was considered the main fundraiser for the school.

The beginning of Elizabeth's business life and the beginning of her life in Christ and her work with what is now Faulkner University all began in the days of her youth.

She thought back on the beginning of her own home.

Elizabeth also began a new family when she married Henry Wright. They had one son, Henry Hobbie Wright.

Elizabeth worked to put her husband, Henry, through school. He received two Master's degrees. He was the first graduate of Vocational Education at Auburn University, and he earned a degree in Education and went to work for Alabama Christian College as head baseball coach and assistant basketball coach with Willard Tate. Henry also taught economics.

Sadly, Elizabeth and Henry divorced. Elizabeth forgave Henry for the hurt that she suffered because of the choices he made that led to their divorce. You see, she believed that forgiveness was essential for spiritual health and for physical health as well. She believed that when you don't forgive and hold onto anger and pain, you poison yourself spiritually and physically.

She requested that Henry's inurned ashes be interred here in her family burial plot so their son and grandchildren could visit their graves in the same location. A marker was placed here in Henry's memory.

Elizabeth loved her family, and she was proud of each member. She told me that she was so thankful that Hobbie has become a man who is such a hard worker who does such high quality work, and she was so happy that he has just been made president of a newly formed construction company. Hobbie was Elizabeth's only child by birth, but Hobbie's wife, Tracy, has been the daughter that Elizabeth never had, and she loved her like her very own.

Elizabeth was blessed with three grandchildren, Hobbie Sloane Wright, Justin Taylor Wright, and Lindsay Elizabeth Wright. She loved each one with all her heart.

Hobbie and all three grandchildren attended Faulkner University, and Elizabeth was very proud of that fact. Each one has been baptized into Christ. Elizabeth said that her greatest wish and dearest prayer is that some day she will see each one in heaven.

In 1989 Elizabeth married J. Sam Smith of Huntsville, Alabama. They were married for two years until his death. He was a kind Christian gentleman who was very good to Elizabeth and very generous to Faulkner University. Elizabeth enjoyed living in Huntsville for five years and made dear, life-long friends in the Mayfair Church of Christ.

Elizabeth then came home to Faulkner University where she has worked tirelessly as a member of the Board of Trustees and Special Counsel to President Billy Hilyer.

Elizabeth thought back on the beginning of our friendship.

She said that when she was added to the church of Christ, she also found her spiritual family. Among those new spiritual family members were my grandparents, Guy Renfro and Eunice Davis Renfro. Elizabeth often told me how much she appreciated them and their encouraging her in her life and especially for their encouraging her to stay faithful to the Lord.

When Hobbie was very young and Henry was deployed with the military, Elizabeth and Hobbie often stayed in my grandparents' home. This was so they could go to church at night and would not have to drive home along dark country roads that were in poor repair.

Elizabeth credited my grandmother with teaching her about the importance of vitamins and the principles of holistic medicine. Soon after Hobbie was born, Elizabeth complained of being weak and tired. My grandmother told her where to go to buy vitamins, the person to ask for to help her, and the specific vitamins Continued on page 8
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to buy. In two weeks Elizabeth said that she felt so much better that she became a firm believer in the benefits of vitamins and good nutrition. She followed those practices more or less the rest of her life.

My grandmother was a cancer survivor. When she received a grim prognosis, she did not have the treatment options that are available today. Instead, she learned and followed a holistic health regime. By the grace and kindness of God, her life was extended for twenty good years.

Thirty years ago when Elizabeth was diagnosed with cancer, she was told that she had about four months to live. She didn't know what to do. She remembered my grandmother's example. Elizabeth was praying about what she should do when she saw a flier advertising the Hippocrates Health Institute. She researched the Institute and then went to the campus located in Boston, Massachusetts and learned their plan. That health plan became Elizabeth's way of life, her pathway through surviving cancer twice, and her mission in helping and encouraging others who had been diagnosed with cancer or those who wished to live a healthier life. God was kind to Elizabeth, and He extended her life for thirty good, productive years after she received that first death sentence.

My parents and then I continued the friendship in Christ with Elizabeth that began with my grandparents. Elizabeth reminisced about the early days of University Church on the “new campus.” In 1967 my father, Clyde Fulmer, was very ill. He was hospitalized in the old Professional Center Hospital downtown. My mother and I were sitting beside his bed. The situation looked dismal. The door opened and Blois Clifton came into the hospital room.

It was immediately clear that this was not a social call. Blois spread out a blueprint before my father. It was a plan for College Church of Christ. It would later be known as University Church of Christ. Alabama Christian College had recently purchased a cotton field on the Atlanta Highway, and on it they had built their main building, the Rotunda.

We had been present at the groundbreaking ceremony for the new campus. My mother taught at Alabama Christian in the High School and College. We were also friends of the Turner family, so we knew about the plans for the future of the school, but we did not know about the plans for the church.

By the grace and kindness of God and with the challenge of helping to build this church, my father recovered his health and began preaching for the College Church of Christ as an associate minister with Eulie Brannan. Elizabeth and I recalled those early days and how at first there were so few members that we met in the lobby of the Rotunda so we would not have to heat or cool the whole building. We set out folding chairs before each service and folded them up and put them away at the close of each meeting. We usually had between twenty-five and fifty people in attendance.

With the blessings of the Lord and the hard work and generosity of many people, the congregation grew, and within ten years they had built the new building; it was filled with people. In time, circumstances called Eulie Brannan away, and a young preacher was hired, who was named Billy Hilyer.

As Elizabeth thought back over her illustrious life of eighty-seven years and the beginnings of the various aspects of her life, I thought of the words of the prophet Zechariah. In Zechariah 4:10 he asked, “Who has despised the day of small things?”

Let us never despise or discount small things. The small beginnings of a young girl on a farm; her little jobs, her youthful friendships; a little, struggling school; a small group of people who want to begin a new congregation; little hopes and big dreams with great prayers, when placed in the hands of God, can flourish and grow into things that accomplish much good and cause great joy.

Solomon said in Ecclesiastes 12:5, “For man goes to his eternal home and the mourners go about the streets.”

We have been separated from Elizabeth Wright Smith by death, and we have now come as far as we can go with her earthly remains, but her soul has already gone to the home that the Lord has prepared for her, and as we go our various ways, the memory of her remarkable life will always be with us.

I pray that we learn from the lessons of her life and its small beginnings: lessons of hard work, and Christian service, lessons of dedication to the Lord and His church, to family and to friends, lessons of healthful living, of forgiveness, and of hope as we, with God’s help, move forward from our own small beginnings.
A Tower of Strength

Stan and Tina (Singleton) Foster first became best friends at Faulkner University in 1986 and began a lifelong commitment to each other on March 10, 1989. Stan was then employed by Lifetouch National School Studios as a photographer while Tina taught kindergarten in the Montgomery County Public School System. After five years of service with Lifetouch NSS, Stan trusted in the Lord’s provision and guidance and opened his own portrait studio, Foster Photography in Montgomery. The first studio space was small as was the number of clients. Seventeen years and a few location changes later, Foster Photography is alive and well due to the graciousness of God and some good old-fashioned perseverance.

During this period of growth for their business, Tina continued to teach kindergarten until, at the end of twelve years, she began working with Stan at the studio. Also, during this time, Stan and Tina moved from Montgomery to Stan’s hometown of Fort Deposit, just south of Montgomery. They began working with the Fort Deposit Church of Christ where Stan also served as youth minister for several years. Life was happy and full, but not quite complete. Though many petitions had been offered to the Lord, they remained childless. Then, while out of town on business, they received a phone call from AGAPE of Central Alabama that forever changed their lives. As God’s plan was beautifully revealed, they learned of not one, but two babies in need of a forever home! On February 3, 2002, Stan and Tina welcomed into their hearts and home William Luke and Anna Grace; four-week-old twins. Ten short years later the Fosters continue to love, learn, grow and play together. Anna and William are excelling in their fourth grade Home Education program while participating in team sports and the Lads to Leaders and Leaderettes program. Stan serves as a deacon in the church and both he and Tina teach Bible classes.

Through faith and perseverance, the Fosters continue to build a strong tower founded on God’s abiding love and provision with the hope and expectation of an eternal reward.

EDITOR’S NOTE:
The Stan Foster family of Fort Deposit, Alabama received this year’s Tower of Strength Family Award which is given annually at the Faulkner University Lectureship Friends For Faulkner Luncheon.
Does your spouse make you happy? Do you sometimes wish that something about your spouse was different? Do you think things like: “If my husband could just be more attentive like John” or “If he would help me with the children like Joe helps his wife, then I would be happy.”

Do you men secretly think, “Well, if my wife would just keep herself looking hot like John’s wife,” or “If she were as interested in sex as Joe says his wife is, man, then my marriage would be great!”

So, back to our question. Does your spouse make you happy? The correct answer is: No!

Surprised? We often expect the person we marry to make us happy. But it’s not possible. Your spouse cannot make you happy. Oh, he or she can certainly make it easier to be happy – or harder. But ultimately, another person cannot make you anything. Only you can decide whether you will be happy. Only you can choose whether to live happily ever after.

An ancient secret

It’s OK if you want to argue with those last statements. Many do. But they are based on an ancient secret. A Biblical secret. A secret that holds the key to living happily ever after.

Mrs. Maxwell discovered that secret. Speaking at a conference in Atlanta, nationally-known leadership expert John Maxwell described a conversation he overheard in which someone asked his wife, “Does John make you happy?”

John puffed out a bit and smiled to himself, expecting to hear some glowing praise from his bride about what a wonderful husband he was. He nearly choked on his grin when his wife replied, “No.”

“In the first six months of our marriage,” she continued, “I realized that he would never make me happy.”

Poor John was wilting and wishing he had never eavesdropped on this conversation. But, his wife went on, “I realized that the only person who can make me happy is me.”

She was right. And she was simply restating what Paul wrote in Philippians 4:11-12:

I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.

There’s a secret for being content in every situation – in every marriage. Even the ones with problems (because that is the only kind there are). Paul had certainly experienced some depressing times – shipwrecked, beaten, stoned, arrested and jailed repeatedly. In fact, he was sitting in prison when he wrote these words about being content!

What a secret this must be! This man knew tougher times than any we face. Yet, there he sits on death row writing about how to be happy! He fills his letter to Philippi with words about joy and rejoicing. If he could be happy there, he could be happy anywhere. If we can learn his secret, then we can be happy anywhere.

What’s the secret?

OK, so Paul was on to something. He had discovered a great secret for living happily ever after. What’s the secret? Does he tell us?

Yes, but we have to pay careful attention. Paul says we must know where to look for happiness. And, it’s not “out there” somewhere; it is inside. What he says in Philippians 4:11 loses something in the translation. The phrase “being content” is a translation of a word, which gives deeper insight into Paul’s secret.

The word he wrote there is “autarkeis.” You may recognize the prefix of the word. We are familiar with automatic transmissions, which shift themselves. Or, “autopilot” which means that a plane is flying itself. In this case, Paul is saying that he learned the secret of being self-governed – that his happiness is self-controlled. It isn’t a product of what is going on around him, but rather of what is going on inside him.

He, not his circumstances, not his situation, and not his spouse (or in Paul’s case, his lack of one) is in control of his own happiness. He chose to be happy even in the worst of times. He followed a few simple steps to put that choice into practice, and he lived happily ever after.

The good news is that you and I can follow those same steps (and we’ll explore those more in coming issues of Our Families). It is we who determine how happy we will be, not the things that happen to us and not our spouses. We decide whether we will live in joy or in misery, regardless of what we have or what we lack, regardless of whether we are suffering or celebrating, or to whom we are married.

As stated earlier, a spouse can certainly make it easier to be happy – or harder. But, ultimately we decide. And, only when we accept responsibility for our own happiness will be stop comparing our mates to others. Only then will we stop longing for greener grass elsewhere and begin watering our own inner lawn.

Two Important points

You may be a little skeptical at this point. OK, maybe you are a lot skeptical. This business about controlling our own happiness sounds good, but can we really do that? It sounds too easy. Can it really be done?
God thinks so.

Notice something else about Paul’s letter to Philippi. Four times, Paul tells the church in Philippi to “rejoice” (Philippians 2:18; 3:1; 4:4). This isn’t presented as an option; it’s an imperative - a command. As an apostle, Paul is requiring these Christians to rejoice! Yet, he doesn’t mention any current event, which they were supposed to be enjoying or celebrating.

Two conclusions are inevitable. Since command implies control, we conclude that we can, in fact, choose to rejoice – to be happy. God would not demand something of us that we cannot control. When Paul says he learned to be content, he is saying that learned to do what God commanded – to choose joy.

The second conclusion to be drawn from this command is that our circumstances, including those of our marriage, do not determine our happiness. The only circumstance connected to their rejoicing was that they were to rejoice “in the Lord.” Paul didn’t command them to rejoice when their husbands remembered to take out the trash. He didn’t say, “Be happy when your wife is attentive.” He said, “Rejoice always.” Whatever your spouse is like, rejoice.

No, that may not be easy, but the two conclusions are undeniable and they are inescapable if we want to be happy. We must understand that we choose to be happy (or not), and that a spouse does not determine our joy.

Only when we accept the two conclusions are we free to find the happily-ever-after that our Creator intends for us. If we continue to blame other people for our unhappiness, we can never be free to find joy. It is not up to someone else to make me happy. It is up to me. And, it is up to you to choose happiness for yourself.

We can be happy! If God commands it, then we can do it. If Paul could do it with all the obstacles in his path, so can we. We just need to know where to look.

**Water the Grass Where You Live**

It’s a well-worn maxim that the “grass is not greener on the other side.” It is greener where it’s watered and, when it comes to “happily ever after,” we water our own lawn. Anybody, anywhere, at anytime can help happiness grow within.

Robert Fulghum, author of *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*, lived briefly in a Buddhist temple in Japan in the 1960’s. He hoped to find enlightenment there but was told by the temple master to go home. “You are like a man standing knee-deep in the river, dying of thirst,” the priest claimed.

We all are. What we seek is not somewhere else. We are standing in the water. It may be a muddy puddle instead of a sparkling river, but there is still a way to drink of happiness.

You really can live happily ever after! But, your spouse cannot make you happy. And, you cannot change your spouse. You can only change you. Commit today to accept responsibility for your own happiness. Break the habit of thinking, “If only ........., then I would be happy.” Begin today to reshape what is inside of you to turn it into joy. Start each day with a reminder to water joy in your own heart and help it to grow.

Let’s live the happily ever after that the marriage Maker meant for us! 💫

Keith Wishum preaches for the Williams Road Church of Christ in Americus, Georgia, and is the author of *Journey to Joy: Ancient Secrets for Happiness*. He can be contacted at kwishum@bellsouth.net.
It's been over forty years now, but I can still remember a large jug of liquid that my dad stored in the utility room of our basement. I can't even tell you what was in the container. I don't remember its color or size. But I do remember something about the label. There was a picture of a human skull and a pair of crossed bones on it. I remember learning that that was the universal sign of poison. It was the manufacturer's way of warning everyone—literate and illiterate, adult and child—not to swallow the stuff inside. It was clear that—unless I wanted to assume room temperature prematurely—I had better not mess with that bottle of liquid!

As I visit churches around the country presenting the No Debt No Sweat! Christian Money Management Seminar I run into a lot of people who don't realize that there's a skull and crossbones warning on their money.

In a less literal, yet equally important way, I want you to think of this as a "skull and crossbones article." This is where I hope to challenge you to get a God's-eye view of money. I want to warn you of some of the pitfalls of having money. Teaching people money management, debt control, and investing for the future can be like playing with a beautiful candle in a room full of dynamite. It is so easy to turn virtue to vice, and allow a healthy interest in asset management to become an unhealthy focus on materialism.

Hopefully we can explore the way God wants us to view money and material goods without going to either of the extremes that are so prevalent in today's church. Without a godly viewpoint, we are easy prey for those who preach a non-biblical theology of money. Usually it plays out in one of two extreme teachings: On one end of the spectrum are those who pitch a form of “Christian prosperity” that isn't much more than a sanitized form of greed; and at the other extreme are those who would urge a vow of poverty. As is the case with God and all His creation, balance in the area of money is critical.

Jesus' Lifestyle

Jesus had a curious approach to money—He didn't seem to care whether a person had a lot of it, or not. Jesus looked at hearts—not check books. From the widow and her mite to the numerous street people, the Gospels are full of stories about Jesus befriending and ministering to the poor. He associated with lowly people and recognized their value before God even when the rest of society (including established religion) viewed them with contempt. He championed their cause and urged His followers to love, feed, clothe, and show them hospitality.

Jesus also had wealthy friends. I have long suspected that Mary, Martha and Lazarus must have had a large home in order to accommodate Jesus and His apostles when they came into town for a visit. And, let's not forget the story in Luke 8:3, of “…Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod’s steward, and Susanna, and many others who were contributing to their support out of their private means” (NASV). Apparently, women who had both pedigree and piles of cash financed Jesus’ ministry! And do you remember Matthew, one of Jesus’ apostles? He was a tax collector and, based on his ability to entertain, probably pretty well-heeled financially. At Jesus’ death, a wealthy disciple named Joseph supplied the burial chamber.

In His parables, Jesus made use of wealthy people. It took financial resources for the good Samaritan to minister to the injured man beside the road. The Bible says that he “…brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said, “Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I return, I will repay you” (Luke 10:34,35 NASV). This good man had more than good intentions—he had the resources to check his injured friend into a hotel. And, folks, we all know that you can’t stay at a Hilton for free!
The Gift of Giving

Sooner or later you will run into some well-intentioned Christian who implies that your ability to earn money is somehow less worthy than the ability to preach the Good News or serve in a foreign mission field. When that happens don’t retreat into a cave feeling like a spiritual pigmy! Simply ask the good brother to tell you where he thinks the money comes from to finance great ministries, pay the missionaries’ salaries, build Christian schools, and feed the hungry. Then, flip over to this spot in Romans 12:3-8:

“For through the grace given to me I say to every man among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment; as God has allotted to each as a measure of faith. For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given us, let each exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness” (NASV, emphasis mine).

Here, Paul lists seven spiritual gifts. Many Bible teachers believe that all Christians are blessed with at least one of these gifts. If these gifts are distributed throughout the community of believers—then the fellowship will be strong and healthy. The fifth gift in this list is the gift of liberality. (The New King James Version translators render it by saying that if his gift “is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously.”) Well, excuse me, but doesn’t it just make common sense that if one gives liberally—he first has to have something to give? And, in order to have something to give, it is reasonable to assume that this individual probably is good at making and investing money.

The Critical Balance

Please remember this: If we allow anything to get between God and us, we are in trouble. In today’s materialistic, money-driven society Christians must be cautious. The culture tells us that our value and worth is based on our wealth and clout. All around us we see friends, co-workers, and even other Christians who have built lives focused on acquiring the stuff of this present world.

One of the places in Scripture that always makes me tremble when I read it is the parable of the sower in Matthew 13. Here Jesus analogizes the way five groups of people respond to God’s message by comparing them to various types of farmland soil. One of the soil types was thorny ground. Speaking of this person, Jesus says this “is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it (the word), making it unfruitful” (verse 22, NIV, emphasis mine).

Wealth can be a blessing from God, but it is also a burden. With money comes responsibility. Jesus warns us that “from everyone who has been given much shall much be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more” (Luke 12:48b, NASV).

Christians with money have temptations and spiritual battles that other people don’t face: “How much is too much?” “How will I teach my children not to love and trust money?” Where is my own faith: in God, or in money?” “How can I avoid elitism, and remain close to hurting people?”

As long as you’re struggling with questions like these you’re probably doing pretty well. Remember, Jesus tells us to store our treasures in heaven. The truth is: The guy who dies with the most toys is still dead. ☼

Steve Diggs presents the No Debt No Sweat! Christian Money Management Seminar at churches and other venues nationwide. Visit Steve on the Web at www.stevediggs.com or call 615-834-3063. The author of several books, today Steve serves as a minister for the Antioch Church of Christ in Nashville. For 25 years he was President of the Franklin Group, Inc. Steve and Bonnie have four children whom they have home schooled. The family lives in Brentwood, Tennessee.

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“Just a Little Tighter”

By Andy W. Brewster

For Lena D. Brewster and, our son, James W. Brewster
(April 18, 2012 - May 1, 2012)

Hold ’em Just a Little Tighter
Hold Your Children Close to You Today
Hold ’em Just a Little Tighter....
You Never Know When That Chance Might Be Taken Away

Hold ’em Just a Little Tighter
Some Will Be Blessed with Love for Many Years
Hold ’em Just a Little Tighter
While Others Will Be Lost in a Flood of Tears
Hold 'em Just a Little Tighter
When Your Children Are Loud and Annoying and a Nuisance
Hold 'em Just a Little Tighter
There Are Many Who'd Gladly Accept this, if Only Given the Chance

Hold 'em Just a Little Tigher
Take Time to Love Your Children,
To Be a Mom or a Dad
Hold 'em Just a Little Tighter
When the Hugs and Kisses Come, I Promise You'll be Glad

Hold 'em Just a Little Tighter
Hold Your Children Close to You Today
Hold 'em Just a Little Tighter
You Never Know When That Chance Might Be Taken Away

Hold 'em Just a Little Tighter
At ages 94 and 92, Robert & Hazel Williams are not quite able to write their story. Although they are both sound in mind and were able to answer the questions for me that I didn’t know, they were grateful for the opportunity to do so. As their granddaughter, I am also grateful for the opportunity to write this for them.

August 3, 1935, at the old Tishomingo County Courthouse in Iuka, Mississippi, Robert Williams and Hazel Armstrong began a life together that has taken them through many joys and trials. Neither of them had a vehicle and they were driven the 22 miles to Iuka, by a neighbor, in her Model T Ford and paid her $1.00 for taking them. The judge hesitated to marry them, but the neighbor who took them told him to “Hook ‘em up; they’ll be fine.” They had met when Robert’s dad rented farmland from Hazel’s dad. Hazel’s dad had long been known as one of the hardest working men in the county, and was noted as being one of foremost farmers of the time. Thus came the story of Robert and Hazel’s prosperous life for the next seventy or so years.

The first car that they owned was a 1941 Chevy. Robert farmed with Hazel’s father and they sold some of their mules to buy their first tractor. Not only were they farming for a living, but they also built their own first home, with the help and oversight of Hazel’s father, “Poppy” Armstrong. In 1944, Robert and his father-in-law, along with several other men from the community went to Erie, North Dakota, a small town just outside Fargo, to work in the wheat fields to help make a living for their families.

Hazel was also considered a mid-wife around where they lived. She helped the local doctor to deliver several babies when there was no other help to be found. She always has said, “We just had to do what we had to do to get by and to help others.”

Around 1955, they began to work at Blue Bell, a local garment factory. Hazel worked there until she decided to start her own business. She took a correspondence course and started her business as a florist. She worked many long, hard hours and made the business very successful. Although Robert continued to work at Blue Bell until he retired, he also helped Hazel in her floral business when he got home in the afternoon.

As with most other people who retire, they worked just as hard as they ever had. Ask anyone in this area and most people who know them will tell you that they are the hardest working couple they have ever known.

They will quickly tell you that through all their years, they have had many challenges. Opening the flower shop was quite an expense, trying to keep crops up, and just the everyday situations that arose were stressful to them. They admit that it was very hard to make ends meet, but were always able to pay their bills and make sure their family had what they needed.

When asked about what advice they would give to others about marriage and being able to stay together so long, they said, “Don’t let anything push you apart; both of you live right; and fight the fight together. That’s what counts. Always put God first in your lives, and everything else will take care of itself.”

They said the hardest and saddest thing they have ever had to
face, was the loss of a child. They lost their oldest son to cancer in 2005. They have two other sons who live nearby, Wallace, and wife, Glenda, and John and wife, Betty. They have six grandchildren and twelve great-grandchildren. They state that they are very proud of their family and enjoy every opportunity that they get to see their children and grandchildren.

Robert and Hazel are members of Second Street Church of Christ. They attended church for as long as they were able and enjoyed being with their church family. They were always involved with activities in the church, from cleaning the building to cooking for fellowship meals. Everyone always looked forward to “mawmaw’s” fried apple pies and candied sweet potatoes.

Robert and Hazel are no longer able to live by themselves and have been in assisted living for just over a year and a half.

They stated that other than losing their first child, it was the hardest thing they had to do. They have had a difficult time giving up some of their independence and letting others help take care of them. Up until the time they had to leave their home, they still had a garden every year, planted flowers, and worked in the yard. They were always happiest when they could be outside and they could always find something to do.

When they talk about their life and all they have been through, it makes me a little sad to hear them talk about knowing that their lives are coming to an end. Their wish is that they could leave this life together, because one doesn’t want to go on living without the other. They will admit that they have had a very blessed life and were fortunate to be able to have good health and live together for so many years.

Paul Newman wrote these marriage vows to Joan Woodward back in 1958: “Happiness in marriage is not something that just happens. A good marriage must be created. In the Art of Marriage, the little things are the big things. It is never being too old to hold hands. It is remembering to say ‘I love you’ at least once a day. It is never going to sleep angry. It is at no time taking the other for granted; the courtship should not end with the honeymoon; it should continue through all the years. It is having a mutual sense of values and common objectives. It is standing together facing the world. It is forming a circle of love that gathers in the whole family. It is doing things for each other, not in the attitude of duty or sacrifice, but in the spirit of joy. It is speaking words of appreciation and demonstrating gratitude in thoughtful ways. It is not expecting the husband to wear a halo or the wife to have the wings of an angel. It is not looking for perfection in each other. It is cultivating

Continued on page 18
flexibility, patience, understanding and a sense of humor. It is having the capacity to forgive and forget. It is giving each other an atmosphere in which each can grow. It is finding rooms for things of the spirit. It is a common search for the good and the beautiful. It is establishing a relationship in which the independence is equal, dependence is mutual and obligation is reciprocal. It is not only marrying the right partner, it is being the right partner.”

These kind of kept vows are rare and unheard of in Hollywood, but Newman and Woodward were the exception— they stayed happily married up until his recent death. In my lifetime there has been a couple that has stood the test of time, and defines these marriage vows: my maternal grandparents.

Everyone has a story, but some stories are dying to be told. This story begins with a first date at a wrestling match at the Nashville Hippodrome in 1943. Well, technically it started a few days before that, but wrestling matches on the first date make for a great beginning. Who would have thought a wrestling match would lead to 69 years of marriage? YES, 69 years! Apparently my granddaddy knew it would when he first saw my grandmother at work. “That’s the girl I’m going to marry,” he said to his co-worker without hesitation. The charming, bow-legged, dishwater blond, Louise Cooper, completely took his breath away. Elmer Calvin Utley Junior would never be the same.

They worked together at Burke & Co., a sporting goods and clothing store, in downtown Nashville. Louise was a cashier on the balcony retrieving baskets that held order forms and money transferred from the sales clerk working on the floor. According to Elmer she was the prettiest cashier on the balcony.

Their first date, a few days later, was at the infamous wrestling match at the Hippodrome. “In those days there was not much to do at night when you didn’t drink. So we ended up there,” my grandmother explained to me. Professional wrestling matches were held on Tuesday nights, and such “tough” men like Gorgeous George Odwell would battle it out in front of a crowd of Nashvillians. Needless to say my grandparents never went to another wrestling match again, but I understand it was a fantastic first date that ended up with dinner at Ireland’s Restaurant.

The few weeks that they courted, Elmer would take her to Shelby Park which was right where she lived. He would sometimes have to walk the two hours distance home because he had stayed so late and missed the last street car.

Elmer proposed to Louise at her grandparents’ home, which was where she was raised, and six weeks after he first spotted her on the balcony at work, they were married. It was a cool Saturday evening at the Central Church of Christ in downtown Nashville. Brother Douthett performed the ceremony. Since this was a war time wedding and Elmer had enlisted in the Air force only months ago, it was a simple wedding. The bride wore a lovely blue plaid skirt suit. There were no attendants, no cake, and no reception. Just a few witnesses to watch as two hearts became one. Photographs were taken the next day as Louise wore the same stunning skirt suit. She kept it for many years, but (much to my dismay) gave it away some twenty years ago before I was old enough to understand my own personal love for all things vintage.

Ten days after the wedding, Elmer was called off to Miami for training. He was there for six weeks and during this time Louise was hopelessly dramatic and would not eat. It was quite humorous for her younger sister, Katie.

The Air Force then sent him to school at Duquesne
University in Pittsburgh where he took courses in math and physics. Louise joined him there. Afterwards, Elmer was brought home to the Nashville Classification Center for cadets. He wanted to be a navigator but the Air Force wanted him to be a pilot. In the end they said he would be on ground services and sent him to Madison, Wisconsin to be schooled for 18 weeks in radio. He was then made an instructor of the communication equipment to teach servicemen how to service and use equipment. They were in Madison for over two years. This was their favorite place to be stationed during the war because they met great people and had a blast. Louise found a job and a place for them on the first day that she arrived. She has always had such charm that people loved her and northerners were especially captivated by a Southun’ Belle.

Elmer and Louise went to Fresno for a few weeks before he was to be deployed overseas. He had to report to Greensboro, North Carolina where all of the servicemen stood in a line. They were told if you had been a volunteer G.I. for more than 24 months to step forward. Elmer anxiously stepped forward, awaiting his fate. Then surprisingly they honorably discharged them so they could go home! So a relieved Elmer went back to Nashville to surprise Louise. He actually hid behind the door when she got home and jumped out of his hiding spot and startled her. She had the shock of her life and was elated he was home. How cute is that?!

During the war, Elmer realized how important it was for him to get his education. After he returned home he enrolled in the engineering program at Vanderbilt University with his G.I. Bill and he was soon baptized. Constance Lee Utley (now Conni Cole) was born in August, 1948. My granddaddy was right in the middle of a final exam when she came. Elmer graduated in April, 1949 and was one of the few of his class that had a job lined up; he was offered a Civil Engineering position at NACA (which would soon be NASA) in Newport News, Virginia. While living there, my mother, Debra Anne Utley (now Debra Herring) was born in November, 1952.

In 1954 Elmer got a job at Lockheed, and moved the family to Marietta, Georgia. Georgia would soon become where we all call, “home.” The family worshipped at Roswell Street Church of Christ. In 1955 the elders decided to give some money to start a new congregation, Smyrna Church of Christ, our home church, in Smyrna, Georgia.

Aside from getting the Smyrna church going, my grandparents were part of the originators who started Greater Atlanta Christian School: a lovely K-12 private school in Gwinnett. My grandmother also had her hand in LACE, the Ladies Auxiliary of GACS.

They also helped start Camp Inagehi, the first Bible camp in the Atlanta area that is still used today. They were also involved with Georgia AGAPE, along with other members of the Smyrna congregation and they also helped get Sandy Springs church of Christ going.

“There was no church of Christ in Smyrna, no Christian school, no Bible camp- many opportunities for us to help the area grow spiritually. Several of us became interested; we were part of the initial group who wanted to start a Christian school. The church is now Burnt Hickory Church of Christ. Through all this time I was an elder (for 44 years). We were active. We had to be leaders when there were none. That was our life,” stated my granddaddy.

He endeavored to get things going; they constantly were involved. He was one of the few elders that made visitations part of his regular routine and preached at smaller congregations to get them started. Not to mention the woodwork and cabinetry that he built at night. When did they ever sleep? (Gande always said he will sleep when he dies.)

“We were involved in all activities of value in the Lord’s church,” my grandmother added. My Continued on page 20
granddaddy retired from his elder duties in early 2007 due to my grandmother’s health (she has constant lower abdomen pain and is unable to leave home), but is still looked up to by many as the one elder that will stand the test of time.

The greatest challenges they faced were the involvement in the school, since it was not started over night, and it took years of planning and building. Also, my granddaddy did not have another elder to look up to so he and his fellow elders did the best they could.

I asked them if they had advice for what had gotten them through the years. They had plenty to give.

“Be faithful to the Lord -- don’t underestimate the power of prayer,” said my grandmother. She is the biggest cheerleader you could ever have; if she is on your side then you have the support of a rock.

My wise granddaddy advised, “We never went to bed angry, accepting things and moving on. We married with the oath of marriage ‘til death….it had meaning.” He has always been my sweetheart, and always knows exactly what to say, the best advisor of my lifetime.

I asked them if they were soul mates. They said they thought so, but I think there’s so much more to them. If they had the chance to do it all over again it would be the exact same way. “I should do the same general things, but the thing is you can’t do that. I might take things on differently but would always make the same major decisions,” my granddaddy observed.

They feel successful because they see that the things that they helped get started are thriving and operating well (church, school, camp, AGAPE.) not to mention their two daughters and their husbands, eight grandchildren (I’m the youngest of the group,) and three great-granddaughters, so far.

“All are faithful members of the Lord’s church; that is all you could ask,” my grandmother said with a big sweet smile on her face.

In my own life’s quest at the young age of 25 years I have often contemplated the definition of lasting love and the existence of a “soul mate.” Are specific people meant to be together -- only these two are destined and compatible enough to build a lifetime together?

My grandparents were babies when they got married (my grandmother was accused of robbing the cradle!) But they had something special both then and now. Some things are meant to be; marriage vows are more than simple words. “In sickness and in health” means caring for your 88-year-old wife when she can barely see due to macular degeneration and cannot leave the house except for doctor’s appointments due to severe pain. Marriage vows are working on a marriage every single day for 69 plus years. Marriage vows are supporting your husband and being his back bone when he works forty hours and dedicates his weekends and evenings to eldership duties.

My life has been so graciously blessed since I can call them my grandparents. Aside from my parents they have been by biggest supporters. They have always been about the Lord’s work and family, but at the end of the day they have each other. Seeing these precious people holding hands after all these years, I know that some people really are soul mates, but not everyone is as lucky as they are though. They are the definition of “sickness and health -- for as long as we both shall live.” Those are wedding vows. That is the story of my grandparents. A story that has always been dear to me, a 25-year-old secretary who is only beginning her own story. ¶
Mother and Daddy attended Belmont High School in Belmont, Mississippi. It was a tradition for the juniors to take the seniors to Shiloh Park for an outing in the spring and the boys and girls would pair off for the day. Daddy chose to spend the day with Mother. A few weeks later Daddy had gone to town to the movie one Saturday afternoon and saw Mother who had gone to the dentist with her mother. Daddy happened to have a quarter with him which was enough to buy two movie tickets and a bag of popcorn so he asked Mother to go and she agreed.

At the end of his junior year in the spring of 1945, the military draft took Daddy to the Army and to Japan. Daddy was discharged in February of 1946 after the war ended. Mother and Daddy were married April 12th and a week later Daddy was “given” a high school diploma because he had served his country during the war.

After four years of marriage they moved close to Belmont, Mississippi. Daddy was not a member of the church but he always attended Bible class with Mother, which is all that the Belmont Church of Christ had at that time, except when some traveling preacher would come through the community. The congregation soon acquired a preacher, Tommy Rosenblum, who had graduated from Freed-Hardeman. Daddy worked at a farm supply store and Tommy had to walk by the store each day on the way to the Post Office. He regularly told Daddy that he needed to “make his salvation as sure as possible.” Daddy listened and was baptized in 1952.

Daddy and Robert Williams (whose story is also in this magazine) served together as deacons at the Belmont congregation for several years. Their wives were the ladies in the church and community who were called upon on numerous occasions to help women who needed care. Some conditions were extremely deplorable but there was never a question about whether they would help or not. If the need was there, they went and let their Christian lights shine. There was barely enough money in our house for the necessities of life but if a need arose my parents would do what they could and knew the Lord would provide. I remember the time a widow’s house needed reroofing. Daddy and Robert went to the banker, a member of the church, and asked to borrow $150.00 for the roof. They got the money without even signing any paper; the roof was repaired and we never missed a meal.

Daddy’s first Bible class teaching experience was a young married couples’ class. Clay Wright, one of the elders, saw potential in Daddy and gave him his first two books for his library. Due to the absence of the local preacher, Clay and another elder, Flavis White, persuaded Daddy to fill-in. This led to other “talks” or short sermons. A few years later, one of the lady’s in Daddy’s Bible class had parents who attended Roaring Hollow, a small congregation of 15-20 members who needed a Bible class teacher and persuaded Daddy to go help them. After a few weeks the men asked Daddy to not only teach the Bible class but also preach for them until they could find a preacher. After eleven years, Daddy decided he had given them enough time to find a preacher and he resigned.

After this, Mother and Daddy visited small congregations doing whatever they could to help. The preacher in Belmont resigned and Daddy was asked to “fill-in.” This tenure lasted approximately eight months...
and he continued to “fill-in” periodically during the next preacher’s stay due to his health which eventually led to the preacher retiring and Daddy again becoming the full-time preacher.

This arrangement of “fill-ins” at various small congregations in northeast Mississippi and northwest Alabama continue today. He is currently preaching for the Mynot congregation in Colbert County near Cherokee, Alabama.

Daddy’s philosophy has been to never take any money for performing weddings or conducting funerals. On many occasions he did not receive enough money to cover expenses. However, there was never any question but that he would be at a congregation as long as he was needed, funds or no funds. He never discussed salary with any congregation because that was not his purpose to preach in the first place.

Mother and Daddy’s church work always included the community in whatever capacity that they saw a need. If food was the need of the day, their famous pecan pies were soon in the oven and other food was prepared. There were usually some pies in the freezer for those short notice times. In addition to their church work, they also worked at other jobs until Mother’s health began to decline. At that time Daddy began to have a larger garden so he could have fresh vegetables to give to those in need. He refuses to take any money for the food that the Lord helps him produce but he sure gets some good casseroles and canned vegetables in return.

Family was always important to them, even if it meant driving five hours one way to see a granddaughter sing in the chorus or the other granddaughter perform in a band concert. On April 12th, they celebrated their 66th wedding anniversary. Their family now includes two grandsons-in-law and two great grandsons.

Their advice to young couples today would be to work together as much as possible, whether it is household chores, yard work, church or family activities.
RAYMOND AND DORIS MOSELEY:  
66 Years Together  
By Bobbie (Moseley) Wingard, their daughter

It definitely was not love at first sight when the farm boy came to watch Highland Home High School play Lowndes County High School in football. He (Raymond Moseley) thought the way to get the cheerleader, Doris Gordon, that he liked to notice him was to walk up and down the sidelines heckling the cheerleaders. She thought that he and his friends were real jerks. It wasn’t until they met sometime later at a party that he got a chance to make a better impression on her.

They began to date and then Pearl Harbor happened. He was drafted into the Army Air Corps and trained as a mechanic before going into cadet training and becoming the pilot of a B-24 bomber. He went overseas to England in the summer of 1944 and flew twenty-seven bombing missions over France and Germany. They continued their courtship by mail.

When the war in Europe was over, he came home and they were married within one week of leave time on July 8, 1945 at her home in Fort Deposit, Alabama. Her mother got up early and killed and fried a chicken for them to take on their honeymoon.

Their first assignment together was in South Dakota, where they stayed until the end of the war. They moved next to Montgomery, Alabama when Raymond went to work at the Aircraft Engine Shop at Maxwell Field.

They began to raise a family with two girls born two years apart, and a son born nine years later. A major crisis in their lives came when at age twenty-four, Doris had to have a radical mastectomy. She was determined not to let the surgery interfere with her daily activities, and it never has.

To save money when they needed a house, Raymond decided to build it himself. He went to the bank for a loan and they asked who the contractor would be. When he said he was building it by himself they refused to give him a loan, so he borrowed the money from his brother-in-law. Despite the bank’s lack of confidence, the house was successfully built, and they still live in it sixty-two years later.

They began to worship at Capitol Heights Church of Christ, and in the sixties Raymond was baptized. After ten years he was appointed as elder and served for twenty-seven years until the age of eighty.

He retired from full-time work in 1970, and he and Doris began to travel extensively, visiting all fifty states, Europe, and Canada with her sister and brother-in-law over the next few years. The retirement years have been filled with work for the church, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, travel, and helping out wherever possible.

Now, at the ages of eighty-seven and ninety-three, and after sixty-six years together, they stay at home most of the time, blessed with a long fruitful life. Their advice to newlyweds for a long-lasting marriage is to never consider any other option than to stay married. Trials will come, but remain committed to God and each other.
Back in the good ole' days on Ann Street at Montgomery Bible College, now Faulkner University, the high school and college were all on the same campus, with some classes actually in the same building. Those of us who were fortunate to be a part of the “early years” of MBC will never forget muddy roads, home-made desks, space heaters, walking to the store at the end of Ann Street, and walking to Panama Street Church for lectures. Tuition was $10.00 monthly for nine months in high school.

There was a car load of students commuting from Tallassee every day. The local preacher at Tallassee Church of Christ was a teacher at MBC who influenced this. On several occasions, a small group of girls would go to Tallassee to add to the small group of young people at church. They would have old-fashioned parties and play games. James Hilyer and Reggie Anthony were good friends and James was dating (going with) Harriet Haynes (Parker). Patricia Perry and Harriet were good friends, so naturally Patricia and Reggie were together a lot. Many college students were G.I.’s, some married with families, so Reggie spent most times with the Tallassee bunch. Before long an unusual romance became known on campus. During the summer, Reggie would go to Montgomery to see Patricia two times a week. Every Saturday night he would bring Patricia a box of candy. All dates were at her house and ten o’clock was curfew.

On Sundays Reggie would preach at Titus in different homes. James usually went with him. It was long-distance from Wetumpka, but Reggie would always call from a pay phone. Patricia was an only child reared by a stay-at-home mother.

Reggie finished high school at Tallassee in 1948 and worked in the cotton mill prior to graduation and continued to save money for college. In 1950, he enrolled at MBC late and got behind in his school work. He was told to go see Brother Rex Turner. After talking with him, he told Reggie to tell his teachers to come see him. So Reggie stayed and graduated from junior college in 1952.

Patricia, now in ninth grade, continued to be Reggie’s steady. As most mothers would, Mrs. Perry tried to break up this romance. On February 29, 1952 they secretly got married on campus by Eulie Brannan with James Hilyer and Carol Allen as witnesses. This was on a Friday. On Monday, the first day of lectures, word got out. So they left Montgomery leaving a note that they were married, to please go tell Mrs. Perry. Patricia finished ninth grade at MBC and Reggie went to school at Auburn University working in the cotton mill four hours daily. Patricia went to Tallassee High School in the 10th grade while they continued to live with Reggie’s mother.

In 1953, Reggie began teaching at Reeltown High School and going to Auburn on Saturdays for class. Patricia was in the 11th grade there. In 1954, he began teaching at
Wetumpka High School, where he stayed for 11 years. Reggie began preaching at Lightwood Church of Christ and stayed there until 1959. Patricia graduated from WHS in 1955. They returned to Tallassee Church of Christ for a period of time. He was later asked to fill in at Mt. Hebron Church of Christ in Eclectic until they could find a full-time preacher. He stayed there for 38 years. Patricia taught kindergarten for several years for Tallassee City Schools. He spent the next several years at Elmore County High School where he served as teacher, counselor, assistant principal and principal.

In 1985, Reggie retired from ECHS due to the sickness of his mother. She passed away in December of 1985. Alabama Christian Academy called him to work part-time in January, 1986. He stayed there as part-time counselor and then served as principal before retiring in May, 2002. He has baptized and done numerous marriages and funerals for students, former students and church members.

In November, 1958 Paul Perry Anthony was born. He attended Alabama Christian College for two years then Auburn University - Montgomery. He began his teaching career in Tallassee and continued in Elmore County. He married Aleen Norris in November, 1986. They have three girls: Madison, Makenzie and Makaila. In January, 1962 Elizabeth Ann Anthony was born. She attended Alabama Christian College for four years and then AUM. She started her teaching career in Holtville and is currently working as a counselor at Dalraida Elementary School. Beth married Billy Camp in 1987. They have two children, Savannah and Mason. The grandchildren have been so blessed to have the best grandparents in the world. They have spent countless hours and dollars spoiling all of the grandkids.

So many unforgettable people have been part of their lives over the years and they treasure those memories dearly. Reggie now has some dementia but he still tells Pat night and day that he loves her. He still likes to hold hands, which was a no-no in public in "52".
EDITOR’S NOTE: Blois and Lucy Clifton received this year’s Tower of Strength Marriage Award which is given annually at the Faulkner University Lectureship Friends For Faulkner Luncheon.

One day night in the middle fifties Turner Paseur and I decided to attend worship services at the Capitol Heights Church of Christ to visit Martha Sue McCain and hear Paul Brown lead singing. Martha Sue and Paul were friends of ours at Alabama Christian College. After the benediction and as we were leaving the building I spotted this mature-looking lady wearing a red jumper dress with a long-sleeve white blouse. She stood out among those leaving the building. It could have been because I was in the market for a future wife. After the services in the front yard of the church building Martha Sue introduced us to Lucille Bowles, the lady in the red dress, and her brother James. Martha Sue invited us to go with her and them to a little soft ice cream place down the street. We got to know them that night.

I had finished Alabama Christian College in May of 1956 with one of the first degrees offered in Business Administration and had been appointed Bursar of the college by Dr. Rex A. Turner. I had actually been in the position for several years while in school. I was in the accounting classes of Truman Boyd and worked as a student employee in the Business Office where he was at the time the Bursar. Brother Boyd resigned his position to work for the Montgomery Water Works Board and suggested to Dr. Turner that I manage the Business Office. That started 32 wonderful and rewarding years for me in that position that led me to be the Comptroller, Business Manager, and Vice President of Finances. This became a way of life - being with so many wonderful Christian people.

I continued to think about the “lady in the red dress.” Turner and I decided to place membership at Capitol Heights Church. I noticed she sat with Dora Stubbs in the front part of the building. I discovered she lived with her brother around the block from the church building. I continued to find out more and more about her. I became impressed.

A valentine banquet for the students and staff of the school had been planned for several weeks to come. I finally managed enough nerves to call her at the Goodyear Tire place downtown where she was the accounting person. I asked her if she would like to attend the upcoming banquet with me. She accepted the invitation and immediately started making herself an evening gown. Sewing has always been her hobby. We chatted on the telephone often at that point. When I picked her up for the banquet my heart fluttered. She was wearing a long, white gown with layers of materials with tuffs around the bottom which had small red velvet bows.

The next Sunday she started sitting with me at church. Her brother invited me to have a Sunday lunch with them. I learned that day she was a good cook and an immaculate house keeper. I started calling her “Lucy” at some point and the name continued to this day with the exception of her relatives.

We went together for a couple of years and were later married April 10, 1959 at the Capitol Heights Church by the minister, Clyde E. Fulmer, in a beautiful ceremony. Lucy made her wedding gown.

We spent our honeymoon in New Orleans. At an evening dinner in the Court of Two Sisters Restaurant we were served a platter with a large, broiled fish (including the eyes) as the main course. We were so in love we barely looked at the fish. We have been back to that restaurant a number of times during our 53 years. Being there brings back such fond memories of the time we started a wonderful life together that continues to this day.

Many people have told us we were made for each other. We have naturally disagreed on matters but have really never had a big conflict. We have always surrounded ourselves...
with Christian friends and Christian education. Through
the years we have supported Christian education. All three
of our children are graduates of Alabama Christian Academy
and Faulkner University. They married Christians and are
all faithful members of the church. All of the grandchildren
who are old enough are Christians. We are blessed that they
all attend University Church where we worship. I have to
give my mom, Grace Clifton, the praise of instilling into me
the Christian principles at an early age. Many times she told
me that often she and one old man would be the only two at
church and they had walked several miles to get to the church
building. I heard her pray with us often.

I think the following decision that we made has helped
us make our marriage a success. We decided that we would
not start a family for several years. We wanted to spend time
with just ourselves which was most valuable and then also
have time to prepare ourselves financially to purchase a house
and be able to meet the needs of raising and educating our
children. We accomplished it in the main with no difficulties.
Lucy was working for the Vital Statistics Department of the
State of Alabama when we married and continued there for
the next four years at which time we were able to build a new
house with the help of my Dad, a retired carpenter, and one of
my brothers. Two years later we had our first child, Stephen
 Gregg, followed three years later by Lana La'Shawn and then
five years later with Shannon Lee. Lucy was able to be a stay-
at-home Mom, a decision we had made early in our marriage.

The day our youngest, Shannon, started to school in the
kindergarten, located in the church building, Lucy started
back to work as a part-time secretary for the church. At noon
they both left for home. This provided her the opportunity
to work and still be at home when the children were out
of school. During the time Lucy was at home with the
children and even for years later she operated a wedding
catering business which helped us a great deal financially. It
also afforded us the opportunity to enjoy and be of service to
many members of the church and the schools, as well as, get
to know other people in the city. Her business began to grow
to the point we could not handle it without sacrificing time
with the family. The week she did thirteen wedding cakes
for tables at a country club, we decided it was time to close
the business to the public, although we continued for many
years doing the graduation and professional receptions for the
university and occasionally a wedding reception for friends.

Lucy, Gregg and I are charter members of University
Church that was constructed in 1968 on a front corner lot
purchased from Alabama Christian College, now named
Faulkner University. We worshipped in the Cullom Rotunda
while the church building was being constructed. She taught
children’s classes for a number of years. I served for a period
of time as a deacon and then as an elder. I was the church
treasurer for many years. I initiated the move to change the
name of the church from College Church to University
Church. We were involved in almost everything at church for
many years.

Although Lucy and I have both worked since we were
sixteen years old with the exception of her stay-at-home time,
we always found time to do things with our children. We
often went to the mountains, attractions in Florida, sports
activities, musical performances that they were in, Lads
to Leaders competitions, youth devotions in our home,
cookouts and even a Faulkner University club luau in our
backyard. Gregg went to work at the early age of fifteen,
pulling the dead blooms from the Petunia plants on the
grounds of the Wilson Estate. We always considered teaching
our children to work an essential part of rearing them.

Proper discipline was also an essential part of rearing our
children. Lana has often told that we would make them go to
the backyard hedge row and pull their own switch. To have a
happy home life, one cannot allow children to dominate the
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BLOIS AND LUCY CLIFTON
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valuable family time with their improper conduct. We never showered them with expensive gifts. We had them in church almost every time the doors were open. “Train up a child in a way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it” Proverbs 22:6.

I would be amiss if I did not state that Dr. Rex A. Turner was a father-like image and Christian mentor to me. Not only did he allow me to become a part of the Christian schools which influenced the future direction of my life, but he was also the ultimate in being a Christian leader and my friend.

In 1983 Lucy and I accepted positions of Manager and Assistant Manager of Elizabeth H. Wright Apartment for the elderly located on Faulkner University campus. After spending 32 years plus in service to the University youth, when the management positions became available, we decided working with the elderly would also be a good ministry, which it has been. We, especially Lucy, have touched the lives of so many wonderful elderly people needing attention. Every day I hear, “Where is “Miss Lucy?”; tell ‘Miss Lucy’ to call me.” I probably could help them but many felt comfortable dealing with Lucy. Proverbs 12:4, “A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband.” She has not only been a loving crown to me but has been such to so many other people. Some of the grandchildren will pass me, “Papa,” to get to “Granny.” We could not have asked for a better life together. The Good Lord has blessed us immensely in all of our endeavors. I am so glad I spotted “the lady in the red dress” that night at Capitol Heights Church. We have been blessed by putting God first in our lives and seeing our children and grandchildren follow in our paths.
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BRAXTON AND MARTHA JONES:
A Wonderful 53 Years Together
By Martha Jones

Braxton and I met in August, 1958. We had a four-month courtship and were married at the home of my parents December 31, 1958. We were introduced by his cousin, who happened to be my best friend in school.

According to statistics, our marriage would not last. He was twenty-one and I was fifteen. I was a Christian and he was not. He was unemployed and I was a school girl. Additionally, we lived in the house with my parents so I could help care for my ailing mother. Braxton served in the Alabama National Guard and found a job at a local lumber company. We moved out of the house with my parents and began a home of our own. Braxton was baptized into Christ October, 1959.

We were blessed with two sons, Gerald Braxton Jones Jr., August 3rd 1961 and Lonnie Buster Jones, March 10, 1963. Our world centered around each other, our beautiful little family and the church.

We experienced some trying times. My father passed away unexpectedly and my mother’s health grew progressively worse. Braxton changed jobs several times and eventually went to work at Barber Pure Milk Company. He began having health problems and after numerous tests and various treatments, he was diagnosed with Rheumatoid Arthritis. I had always been a homemaker and stay-at-home mom, but found it necessary to seek public employment because of Braxton’s health and his being unable to work. I was soon blessed with a very good job. Braxton’s health improved; he was able to go back to work, and all was well again.

We had the wonderful privilege of watching our sons grow into dedicated Christians, gospel preachers, and successful professionals. Both married beautiful Christian ladies and now have families of their own. We also had the glorious privilege of seeing Braxton’s parents (age 57) obey the gospel and living faithful Christian lives until they were called “home.”

Braxton retired from Barber’s Milk September, 1990 due to recurring health problems. I continued to work at the Calhoun County Revenue Commissioner’s Office until I retired October, 2005. Our lives are still centered around the church, each other, and our wonderful family. Braxton enjoys hunting and fishing with the “boys,” camping, and gardening. I enjoy cooking, reading, writing, computer skills, and teaching Bible Class. Of course, there are many things we enjoy together - travel, spending time with the family, watching movies, fellowship with good friends, church activities, and playing with the grandchildren. We have had a wonderful fifty-three years together and would not trade places with anyone, anywhere. God has blessed our lives richly. We are gently reminded of His love for us and how we should love each other: John 15:12, Matthew 7:12 and 1st Corinthians 13.
I had the honor last year of hosting a High School Graduation Brunch for a precious friend, Abby Latham. Abby is the daughter of my husband's college roommate, Scott, and his wife, Michelle. Scott and Michelle and their children, Abby and Caroline, have been friends of my husband, Dennis, and me for many years.

When it came time for Abby to graduate I wanted to be one of the first to help send her off to college with great memories of a special day with family and friends. A brunch seemed fitting for such an occasion. It was a great theme to use the pink, yellow, blue and green party decor that makes being a girl so fun. I could not have done this party without a lot of help. Along with some of Abby's adult family and friends, we planned a lot of activities for this special morning in Abby's honor.

For the invitations I used my die cutting machine to cut out various shaped tags. For this invitation project, blank tags can also be purchased from your local craft store in different shapes and colors. On the first tag was the announcement that there was going to be a party for Abby. The second tag included the party details and the third tag had a map to my home. The tags had holes punched in one end and were tied together with a coordinating organza ribbon. The invitations fit nicely in an invitation envelope and could still be mailed with regular postage.

Upon arrival, guests were served Mocha Punch in pink party cups. This is a great recipe I like to use when an appetizer is not needed, but you want a little something for guests to sip on when they arrive. This is such a delicious beverage that guests return often for refills.

The party was a mixture of girls from Abby's home congregation and her high school friends. I wanted an activity that everyone could participate in at the beginning of the party, and maybe help them to get to know each other a little better. Arrival time was the perfect opportunity for the guests to write special notes to Abby and words of encouragement and introduce themselves to each other as well. I used a bronze wire tree that I hung blank tags on, cut from scrapbook paper. Also, from this same bronze tree hung scrapbook paper tags that included words and phrases about Abby's favorite things. The guests didn't know that this part of the tree would be used later for a game.

The table was draped in a pink tablecloth accented with scrollwork designs. Above the table hung a pink paper umbrella, floral cloth flowers, and paper lanterns coordinating with the color scheme. A mix of colorful, fresh, flowers were arranged in pastel, painted teapots, sugar bowls and other whimsical containers. I had intended to wrap the fork in the cloth napkin to make it easier for the girls to maneuver this brunch buffet, but that seemed rather dull for a girls' shabby chic party. So I folded a napkin several times lengthwise and then wrapped it around the tongs of the fork and tied it closed with a pastel green ribbon. The napkin formed a rose bud shape at the top of the fork, and the ribbon became the leaves. I placed all of these pastel rose buds in a tall wide mouth bowl and it became a bouquet of roses. Clear glass luncheon plates completed the table.

Since many of Abby's friends and family helped with the menu planning and food preparation, the menu provided many choices for guests, and was a great way to include some of Abby's adult friends in the party festivities. Brunch menus are very versatile and since it is typically served between breakfast and lunch, the Breakfast Casserole, Hash Brown Casserole, Cream Cheese Grits, Tea Biscuits, jellies, donuts, and fruit provided a variety of menu choices.

Orange juice and milk were served in recycled Frappuccino bottles that I borrowed from my sweet friend, Melissa Lester. Melissa loves to host a party as much as I do, and is always willing to share her stash of party goods. She used these bottles for several parties at her own home and had acquired quite a collection. I thought this was such a clever idea that I couldn't wait to use them for a party myself. Each drink bottle was wrapped in a different shabby chic scrapbook paper strip and then tucked inside the individual bottles was a pink or green polka dot paper straw that I had ordered online from The Sugar Diva.
Before Abby opened her gifts we played two games. For the first game, the guests were given paper and pens and were asked to write down as many things as they could think of that Abby would need to take with her to her new college home at Freed-Hardeman University. I had prepared my own list ahead of time of items that my son and daughter needed or used when they were in college. For each item that they had on their list, that also matched my list, they received a point. The one with the most points received a prize. For the other game, the girls were asked questions about Abby. Remember the tag tree with the hints about Abby’s favorites? We removed this tree out of site before playing the game. The girls were asked particular questions about Abby such as her favorite food or dessert, her favorite store, her favorite song, etc. The questions could be endless. The one that had the most correct answers, showing how much they knew about their sweet friend Abby, was the winner. The games were simple and only required paper and pen and a lot of imagination from the players.

Before the girls left we let each of them pick out a pair of fun-colored anklets that had been rolled and tied with a ribbon as a take home favor, along with some great memories of a party in honor of a special friend. Recipes are below to help you get started on your own brunch party to honor someone special in your life.

**BREAKFAST CASSEROLE**
1 lb sausage  
6 slices white bread  
6 eggs, beaten  
2 cups milk  
1 cup shredded cheese  
1 tsp dry mustard  
1 tsp salt

Cook and drain sausage. Cube bread and lay on the bottom of the dish. Put cooked sausage on top of the bread cubes. Mix the remaining ingredients together and pour over the bread and sausage. Refrigerate at least 8 hours. Bake at 350 degrees for 45 to 50 minutes. Prepeared by Wanda Warmack

**HASH BROWN CASSEROLE**
2 lbs. frozen cubed or shredded hash browns, thawed  
1 cup melted margarine or butter  
1 can Cream of Chicken Soup (can add some Cream of Mushroom if you like it soupier)  
2 cups shredded cheddar cheese  
1, 8 oz. sour cream  
1 tsp salt  
1 tsp. pepper

**Topping:**
1 – 1½ cups crushed cornflakes  
1 stick melted margarine or butter

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Mix together all ingredients in a large bowl. Butter a 9 x 13-inch pan and fill with casserole. Mix together cornflakes and melted butter and put on top of hash browns. Bake for 45 minutes. Prepared by Debra Norton

**CREAM CHEESE GRITS**
Quick Grits prepared according to package directions  
salt to taste  
1 stick butter  
2, 8 oz blocks cream cheese

Prepare grits according to package directions. Add the butter and cream cheese to the cooking grits when they are almost ready. Stir until smooth. If the grits begin to thicken add milk. This makes them even creamier. Serve with crumbled bacon and shredded cheese. Prepared by Nancy Itson

**MOCHA PUNCH**
4 cups strong coffee  
2 cups chocolate syrup  
1 gallon plus 2 cups milk  
1 cup sugar  
1 tbsp. vanilla  
1½ gallons vanilla ice cream

Mix together the coffee, chocolate syrup, milk, sugar and vanilla flavoring and pour into gallon milk jugs and chill until ready to serve. Just before serving, shake the milk jugs to mix the mixture. Scoop softened vanilla ice cream into a punch bowl and pour mocha mixture over it. Carefully fold mixtures together. Makes about 60 punch cups. Prepared by Nancy Itson

Do you have a favorite family recipe? We would love to hear about it! Send in your recipe with a letter describing any special meanings or memories about your recipe to: Recipe Corner, c/o Our Families Magazine 5345 Atlanta Highway, Montgomery, AL 36109 or by email to nitson@faulkner.edu.
The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion. Proverbs 28:1