

Put On  
the  
Character  
of Christ  
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## For The Whole *Family of God* *Overcome Fear By Faith*

### **“Do Not Be Afraid”**

Real and false fears are destroying people today. When the disciples were in a boat with Jesus and winds threatened to blow them into the sea they were afraid. But, when they heard Jesus command the winds to be still they were no longer afraid because the winds obeyed Him and the disciples saw it happen. There would be more times when the disciples would be afraid, but at this moment they knew they were with God and there was no need to be afraid.

### **Put On Christ**

Telling people God is with them is not the same as people knowing God is with them. Only *knowing* God Himself is present overcomes fear. This year in UIM, we are seeking to put on the character of Christ, who is God’s Son. When He cried out “My God, why have You forsaken Me?” He placed Himself into His Father’s hands (Luke 23:46). We need to learn to do the same. We need to learn to be like Jesus, who in His Father’s hands was able to descend into hell and rise again to save us because this is the character of Christ.

### **Trust in the Lord**

How can sinners trust God like Jesus did? How can we help others have that kind of trust? It doesn’t help to hear “Don’t be afraid. God is with you” unless people trust in the Lord. Where does trust in God come from? The Bible tells us that our help comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth. So, going to the Lord is our first step to trusting Him and putting ourselves in His hands like Jesus.

### **Go To the Lord**

If you have ever wondered why or even doubted that we need to read, study, and memorize God’s Word, attend worship every time it is offered, partake of the Lord’s Supper, and be Baptized, the reason is this: As we do, God sends His Spirit to help us overcome fear and help us through every struggle in life. And while it may appear that we go to God when we read His Word and attend Worship, it is actually God who comes to us through these means of grace, and He comes to us because Jesus, Immanuel, who is “God with us,” suffered, died, and rose again to save us from the sin that separates us from God our Father in heaven..

### **“God is Near”**

God comes to us and remains near to us through Christ. He will never leave us or forsake us even when we stray far away from Him. As we read the Scriptures, pray to Him, and attend Worship, He comes to us and fills us with His Spirit. He does all of this because He loves us; desires to be near us and take away our fears. He eagerly waits for us to place ourselves into His hands where He knows we will never be afraid.

### **We Are In God’s Hands**

The ability to trust God completely, to place ourselves in His hands, comes from God as we draw close to Him in Word and Sacrament. He makes us His own children, able to trust Him like little children trust their earthly fathers, but even more because He is our heavenly Father. He becomes *real* to us, like the little boy whose parents told him Jesus was in the room with him when he was afraid at night. He believed so completely, He became afraid of Jesus until His parents introduced Jesus as his Friend and Protector. Like this little boy, many people do not know Jesus and may even fear Him until we introduce them to Jesus. As we do, we will be helping people overcome fear and most importantly bringing them to Jesus for the faith, forgiveness, and salvation that takes away every fear..

### **Christ Shines In Us**

As God draws us closer to Himself through His Word and Sacraments, people will see Jesus in us through everything we do and say. We will become lights to lead them to Him for faith that takes away their fear. Extreme cases of fear may at times require professional counsel, but *knowing* Jesus will give additional help and strength to this counsel. With fear so prevalent and help and strength to overcome it so needed, our sharing Jesus fulfills a genuine and critical need people have for Jesus, whether they realize it or not. As we draw near to God, He will strengthen us in faith that is not afraid and also thoroughly equip us to help others overcome their fear by faith.

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## For The Whole *Family of God*

### *Visits that Build Christian Character*

#### **VISITS AREN'T EASY**

Lots of people today do not have time to visit their friends, much less those who are lonely, sick, or in prison. Yet, the Bible places a high priority on visiting the sick, and prisoners, feeding the hungry (Matthew 25) and offering our hospitality to strangers because Hebrews 13:2 tells us, *"You may be entertaining angels unaware."* Still, our knowing visiting is very important, does not make it easy.

#### **JESUS LEADS US**

Jesus placed the needs of all people above His own. He is our example of care for others, an example we are to follow. And as in everything God desires us to do, He will not only show us the way, He will give us the time. If we are busy, He will give us both an opportunity to visit right along with a heart willing to make time to do so. In short, He will give us His character that will not allow us to do anything but place the needs of others above our own and visit those in need.

#### **VISIT GOD**

Of course to have the character of Christ, our first visit must be with God, who through Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit gives us all that we need to do as He commands, even if it seems the impossible (Matthew 19:26). He will not only give us the time to visit, He will give us the words to say (Isaiah 51:16).

#### **VISIT THE SICK**

Some people feel uncomfortable and even become ill when they visit hospitals or nursing homes. These people can still call or write notes that share passages from God's Word and their own faith to give God's help, comfort, and strength to people in their times of need. As they do, they should not be surprised to receive power from on High to make in-person visits. The transformation they experience happens as God blesses and builds them up in more and more of the character of Christ - the Christian character we building in our congregation this year.

#### **FOLLOW PRISON VISITOR POLICES**

Prisoners are often very receptive to the Gospel, but their character and faith may need strengthening through our example of Christian character and faith. Still, they are in prison for a reason be it big or small. So, for the best and safest ministry to take place, jails and prisons have policies in place we all need to follow carefully, such as never give your full name, address, or telephone/cell number to a prisoner. Never call or ask a prisoner to call you. Use a PO Box to exchange mail and change your e-mail address immediately if it is being abused by a prisoner. Share your faith freely, but never ever share financial or personal information that can a lead a prisoner to your identity.

#### **BE WISE AND INNOCENT**

In Matthew 10:16, Jesus sent the disciples out with the words, *"be wise as serpents and innocent as doves."* The faith and character to be both serpents and doves at the same time comes from God through His Word. We all need God's Word tucked away in our minds and hearts so that along with His character, we can know all that we need to know to share Christ safely and boldly when we entertain strangers and especially those who hate Jesus because they will also hate and persecute us for sharing Him.

#### **WE HAVE GOD'S PROTECTION**

An elderly lady didn't feel safe letting a man who said he had car trouble inside to use her phone. When he drove away in his car, it was working. Thinking he may have meant her harm, she thanked the Lord for His protection.

Thankfully, most of us will never face dangerous visits. We will only face the danger of failing to visit and miss out on being blest by God and visits where people we visit actually end up blessing us. If we lack time, are unaware of people in need, or are forgetful, etc., God will give us all we need. All we have to do is ask Him. He will also build Christian character in us with each visit that genuinely wants to make more visits.

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## For The Whole Family of God

### *Blessing One Another Builds Christian Character*

#### IN THE MORNING

Bless one another:

- Naming our loved ones in prayer asking God to watch over them and help them through the day is one way to bless them.

- Parents can bless their children each morning with the same Bible Verse for a week or even a month both as a blessing and also to teach it by repetition. Each passage will send children out the door with God's strength and blessings.

- All ages can write notes of blessing or Bible passages to each other. Send them in the mail or by e-mail, stick them in back packs, purses, lunches, on mirrors, even lay them on a breakfast plate, etc.

It is beautiful to see children who have grown up being blessed, reach out to bless others. They have not only put on the character of Christ, they are helping it grow!

#### DURING THE DAY

Bless one another:

- Pray for one another. Think of a different person every time you take a break or even while you are working. Simply ask God to bless a person you name or add a need you know the person has, etc.

- Keep a list of people and their needs handy. Look at the list as you find time and say a prayer.

-Do a chore for the person we wish to bless. Telling that person verbally or with a note "I did it because I love God and you" can be a far greater blessing than the actual chore we do.

The Christian character displayed, built up in, and passed on through those who bless and are blessed will be enjoyed from generation to generation..

#### AT NIGHT

Bless one another:

- Begin your evening meal with a common meal prayer. Eat and ask everyone to share how their day did or did not go: joys, failures, frustrations, concerns,, fears, always encourage sharing the best thing that happened that day.

- Close with devotions and prayer about problems shared or known about, and always end with prayers of thanks over joys and answers to prayers..

- End by asking God to bless each person individually or all those present as a group with His forgiveness, peace, and love to send everyone off to sleep in His peace.

#### WORDS THAT BLESS:

- "God loves you and so do I"

- "I am proud of you."

- "You are a blessing to our family/ to me."

- "I thank the Lord for you every day."

- When people leave you: "May God go with you"."

#### Bible Verse Blessings

- Philippians 4:7 *And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

- 2 Thessalonians 3:5: *"May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ."*

- John 3:16: *"For God so loved the world (or the name of the person you are blessing), that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life."*

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## For The Whole *Family of God*

### *Rise Above Christmas Blues*

#### **WHY THE LET DOWN?**

More people than we can imagine suffer a big or small let down after Christmas. Most post-Christmas blues come because the joy that seems to overflow during the Christmas season does not last. Post-Christmas blues can even require professional counseling and medications God has helped people create to help ward off Christmas blues.. The suggestions in this insert may also help.

#### **WHERE'S THE JOY?**

Living, not in the worldly joy that only lasts for the season, but in the joy of the Lord that never ends helps chase Christmas blues away. The joy of the Lord *is always ours* because God sent His Son. He offers it as we kneel before His manger and see who He is, what He has done, and what He can do to help us be filled with His joy. It also comes as we seek to be more like Him, to have His character. All who accept His offer are filled with His love that leaves no room for sadness. If it sadness gets in, His joy pushes it out.

#### **SEEK CHRIST**

The fact of the matter is, when we seek the Lord, we will find Him along with all of the joy and love and peace only He can give. So, seek the Lord where He will be found: in His Word, in His House, in prayer, etc. As you do, He will come to live in you, and turn your sorrow into dancing (Psalm 30:11; Jeremiah 31:13). His joy will grow in you and draw you closer to Him. And one cannot be so close to Him and not be filled with His joy, as well as the ability to share Him and His joy. Seek Him and use Him, use His story, use His love, and everything you know about Him to share Him with others. As you do, His joy will not only grow through you, it will grow in you because He will come to live in you. He is your most perfect Gift. He will not break the same day or wear out ever. He has more value and meaning than any gift you will ever receive or give. And with Him comes love and forgiveness and His character that leave no room for sadness, only JOY that grows stronger every day.

#### **Here are some practical ways to rise above Christmas blues:**

##### **DON'T RUSH**

It takes strong Christian character to stop the Christmas rush that can cause Christmas blues.

- Announce that Christmas will be different this year, and make it different!
- Cut down with less or no baking, fewer lights, a smaller tree, and only a few gifts, etc.
- Postpone what can wait and enjoy peaceful times with your family instead.

##### **GIFT OTHERS**

Purchase inexpensive gifts or even no gifts at all for your family.

- With the money saved, take the family shopping to buy gifts for the less fortunate.
- Instead of opening your gifts on Christmas Eve, deliver them or food to the needy.

##### **DON'T COOK A THING!**

Except pizza or order it! If you host a family Christmas, don't cook one thing! Provide dishes, even if they are paper plates and plastic utensils, and some punch: add 7-up and ice cubes to colorful kool-aid in a festive punch bowl. Assign each family invited a portion of the menu to cook or something after the meal to clean up. Enjoy the time this leaves you to enjoy Christ!

#### **PREPARE YOUR HEART**

Before you prepare to change your Christmas celebration, ask Jesus to prepare your heart. Ask Him to help you see and set aside all that is not important to the celebration of His birth and give your time to Him, to His worship and to hear His Word and sing His praise! Thank Him for His Gift of salvation and pray for wisdom and strength of faith and character to help your family and friends make Christ the center of their Christmas. Not only can it help you rise above Christmas blues, you will help to build faith and a beautiful Christian Christmas for everyone around you. It will be the best gift you ever give and it can help you and anyone you share it with rise above Christmas blues.

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Rise Above Christmas Blues.**

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## For The Whole *Family of God* *Christian Character* *Helps Prevent Violence!*

### **CHRIST'S POWER**

Christian character has far more potential than good character to prevent violence because it offers Christ's power to not only prevent and heal, but stop violence. There are many types of and causes for violence. We are going to look at the violence that is growing today because people do not know God or read His Word.

### **THE POWER OF GOD'S WORD**

People are doing many things with the Word of God: changing it, rearranging it, but not enough are studying it to understand what God is guiding them to know and empowering them to do. Through the Holy Spirit, God's Word fills people with the love and power needed to not to be violent in our violent world - to put on Christ - His love - His peace, to obey God and throw off all bitterness and hatred. Sadly, and often tragically, without God's power to love one another, sinful humans use their own power to rule over each other through violence.

### **CHRIST'S LIFE**

Then there are those who read God's Word, but not ALL of His Word. They read Ephesians 5:22, "*Wives submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord*" but they forget to read verse 25 where husbands are commanded to give up their lives for their wives just as Christ gave up His life for the Church. Likewise, parents are trying to control their children when the Bible tells us to love them. In His Word, God fills us with His love and guides us away from violence and every sin. If we don't read His Word, we cannot know His Word, be filled with His love, and empowered to prevent, heal, and stop violence.

### **GOD'S LOVE**

Violence cannot survive in an atmosphere of reverent love for God. This does not happen under threat of punishment, but out of forgiveness. There is no other place where violence can find forgiveness except at the foot of the cross. And where violence finds forgiveness only the pure love of God remains.

### **HIS POWER**

God's love and forgiveness together empower us to obey Him because our sinful nature does not desire to love God much less obey Him. As He strengthens us through the redeeming work of His Son and the power of the Holy Spirit, we are filled with a humble spirit of love and obedience to God like Christ - we put on His character, Christian character. We become people who do not seek power but are given power - great power - God's power to prevent, heal, and stop violence..

### **OUR CHARACTER**

We may not be violent, but neither do we use the power God gives us to stop violence. We fail to put on the character of Christ and humble ourselves before God, submit to Him, read His Word.. We allow violence to reign each time we leave God's command to love one another at church and neglect to obey it in our everyday lives. We who possess the faith from which Christian character comes must use it in our homes, at work, at school, and every day!

### **SHARE RESPONSIBILITY**

Experts report that violent TV causes violence. Yet, can we blame TV for violence when we did not turn off the last violent TV show we were watching? If we continue to watch violent TV shows, they will continue to be produced and to produce violence. If we read God's Word and receive power to share the

love He offers, violence will be overpowered through His love and peace in us and shining through us.

### **ASK YOURSELF**

While our family may not be violent, have we said an unkind word? - Have we been less than understanding? - Have we refused to forgive as we are forgiven by God? - Can people see God's love in us? - Are they changed by it? God's love can stop the violence and give us and all who humble themselves before the Lord great power to share His love through the Christian character He gives us. As we do, the character of Christ in us will not only prevent violence, it will heal and stop violence.

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## For The Whole *Family of God*

### *The Joy of Putting God First*

#### **THE PROBLEM**

Those who possess Christian character desire to put God first in their faith and lives. The Holy Scriptures command it and the joy of the Lord comes from it. Still, many obstacles stand in the way of it like fun activities, responsibilities, and even church activities can keep us from putting God first. It seems like everything in our lives constantly works against our desire and personal efforts to put God first.

#### **OUR FAILURE**

We may have read books that contain helpful ways we can put God first. We may have even tried to use these ways. And maybe we have put God first, but not for long. As hard as we try, we always fail. And as we do, we lose or fail to even receive the joy of the Lord that comes as we put Him first.

#### **GOD'S SOLUTION**

There has to be a better way, and there is. But we have to stop depending upon our own efforts. We simply do not have the power we need to put Him first. Oh, we can ask God to help us and give us His power, and He will. We just don't depend upon Him to do so. We depend on ourselves to receive it, rather than on the one who gives it. It isn't until we reach the place where He wants us to be - completely trusting Him - that we find ourselves putting Him first. It is the point in our faith and lives when we learn to pray, "We need You, Lord" that makes all the difference. It is a simple prayer and may not seem like it can be enough. Yet, when it is prayed with a heart open and yearning to depend completely on the Lord, it is all that we need to receive His power to put Him first.

#### **GOD'S WILL**

God will always help us put Him first because putting Him first is His will. He will always give us the faith and strength we need to do His will. Then, as we pray with confidence knowing that God will hear and answer us, it is no longer a matter of wondering if He will help us; it becomes a matter of waiting for Him to help us.

#### **THE POWER OF PRAYER**

Confident, believing without a doubt prayer eliminates all of the obstacles that keep us from putting God first because this prayer changes us - our hearts and our lives - often before we realize it. In fact, this prayer that believes God will answer is already full of His power not only to do His will, but to put on Christ and His character that empowers us to put God first.

#### **THE POWER OF GOD'S SPIRIT**

And powerful prayer empowers us to put God first as we speak. We do not need to decide to give up everything that keeps us from putting Him first, because we will. In fact, we will not be able to do anything less than put God first.

#### **THE JOY OF THE LORD**

Family and friends may think us strange when we tell them we will join them after Worship and Bible class. Their reaction may have bothered us once, but not now. It will only inspire us to help them put God first so they can be filled with His joy. And while some will reject us, others will follow us to the Lord and receive the power, faith, and character we all need to put Him first and be filled with His joy in the best and gravest of times.

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## For The Whole *Family of God*

### *Witness Miracles - Love the Unlovable*

#### **LOVE CHANGES**

##### **THE WORLD**

Loving one another certainly has the potential to change people all around us. But we are going to talk about loving the unlovable - those who may disgust us. Those who may not want our love. Those who openly reject our love and, in our estimation, do not deserve our love. Most of us know how hard it is to love unlovable people, but we are going to talk about why loving them is so worth our while.

The answer lies in thinking about the problems and pain caused by lack of love in the world. Then, think of the problems and pain that can be prevented and healed by loving the unlovable. If the unlovable are hurt by lack of love, think how loving them can help make them more lovable. And, if one person can be helped by our human love, think of how many people can be helped by God's powerful and lasting love working in and through us every day.

#### **INSPIRE LOVABLE**

A mother of seven whose children were all successful and loving as adults was asked to share the secret of her parenting. She said, "I always gave the most love to the child who was the most unlovable." She shows us how loving our unlovable children can help them to become successful and loving adults. We have much to learn from this mother who was also a Christian. Her help to love the unlovable came from the Lord. Today, help to love the unlovable continues to come to us from the Lord along with every good and perfect gift from above (John 1:17); gifts like the Christian character we are learning to build this year. While good character can love much, God's love that permeates Christian character has no limit. This means there is no limit to all Christian love and character can do in us and through us to change the world for good and for Christ..

#### **CHANGE ONE PERSON**

Perhaps we can't love all of the unlovable people around us, but God can. And through His power and love in us, we can love an unruly child or a cranky neighbor. We would not be the first to see an unlovable person change, if not right before our eyes, then in time as we show them more and more of God's love and ours. As we display our Christian faith and character at home, work, school, and wherever we go, God's love changes people all around us. We may see the neighbor who always complains about the kids make a complete turn around when those kids rake all her leaves because we showed His love to the neighbor and to the kids..

And, don't forget the person who does not like you and has told you so or who told someone else who told you. I have met more than one of these unlovable people. I was never pleased to find out they did not like me, but God always turned out for good (Romans 8:28) by helping me go out of my way to love them (I would never have done it on my own). They changed and I changed for the better. But the most amazing part of the experience always came as these people became my friends! Our God surely works in mysterious ways His wonders to perform.

#### **WITNESS MIRACLES!**

If you want to see God perform a miracle, let Him help you reach out in His love to love the unlovable. As you do, He will fill you with His love through the power of His Spirit and you will love people you never thought you could love. I can promise this because it happened and continues to happen to me. Yet, rememberer that while it is always a blessing to make friends with people who do not like us, the miracle happens because as sinners we do not even think about much less reach out to love the unlovable without God's help and strength..

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Love the Unlovable**

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## For The Whole Family of God

### *Learning Christian Patience*

#### **GOD IS PATIENT**

We may chuckle over the irony in the prayer, "Dear Lord, please give me patience, NOW!" Yet, we live in a world of fast food, twenty minute cooking, quick cash, and instant everything. We don't often need to wait. And if we do, we become impatient *and we do not chuckle.*

Yet, God is patient with us. It is His nature - His character. He patiently teaches us to be patient by making us wait for the answer to prayer. We may feel impatient waiting, but when waiting makes us trust in Him we learn to be patient. The Scriptures teach patience: 1 Cor 13:4; 1 Thess 5:14; Gal 5:22-23; Eph 4:1-2 and we all know the problems caused by sinful impatience in traffic, a waiting line, not taking our time, etc. Because God knows how important it is to be patient, He teaches us to wait on Him (Psalm 27:14; 37:7-9; 130:5 Isaiah 40:31). As we wait on the Lord, He grows faith, Christian character, and patience in us..

#### **PATIENCE IS HEALTHY**

Patience lowers blood pressure and the many risks to health high blood pressure can cause. Strokes and heart attacks can be triggered by the stress impatience can place on the body. So, it is not healthy to be impatient, and there isn't any reason to be impatient. Being impatient does not make things move faster. In fact, sometimes impatience can cause mistakes or accidents that slow everything down or stop them completely.

#### **PATIENCE HAS POWER**

On the other hand, being patient can help calm everyone around us. In homes where patience is taught, and learned, families can prosper. In school, a teacher's patience can help students to be patient, less frustrated, and more productive. At work, the calm patience of a boss and workers help even very difficult projects to be carried out more efficiently and safely and successfully..

#### **IMPATIENCE IS FORGIVEN**

God was patient with Adam and Eve, Lot, David, Peter, etc. He is patient, today, forgiving our sins over and over again through His endless mercy and grace. Yet, His patience does run out (Rom. 2:4-5; 2 Peter 3:8-10). The good news is that just as God used Israel's 400 years in the desert, and Jonah's three days in a fish, etc. to bring about repentance, He continues to use the painful consequences of our sinful impatience to bring about our repentance and grow patience in us through the forgiveness of Christ.

#### **PATIENCE MUST BE LEARNED**

Even though patience is a desired commodity, people fail to take steps to learn it. They think it is simply out of their reach. But patience is never out of reach. Believers and unbelievers alike can learn how to be patient to help keep their blood pressure down and stay healthy. Believers do learn God's patience, more powerful than human patience,. as they put on the character of Christ by partaking of His Word and Sacraments and as they pray. But the only way patience can be out of reach is if people refuse to learn to be patient.

#### **GOD'S PATIENCE IS YOURS!**

Last and most amazing of all! When we pray and ask God for patience, there is no waiting! God answers believing without doubting prayers as we speak and gives us more patience every time we pray them. The very next time you think your patience is running out or at least running very thin, thank God for the patience He gives you when you pray, because that is exactly what He does. From that moment on, you will be learning to be more patient every day because that is what God, Himself, is personally teaching you to be.

**Share this Resource  
to help generations  
learn and pray for Patience.**

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## For The Whole *Family of God*

### *Fight Childhood Boredom*

#### **BORED OR TOO BUSY?**

Some children are bored, but others are actually too busy. They attend activities every night and become overstimulated. They play computer games to fill void when they are not busy. When they have time free of activity, their bodies want to be active. When they are not active- their minds and bodies react as if they are bored. Parents can fight the feeling these children think is boredom by teaching them how to relax. *Warning:* Some parents may first need to teach themselves to relax.

#### **RELAX!**

Everyone relaxes in a different way. Ask your children to help you make a long list of ways they would like to relax. Refer to this list when boredom arises. Make sure the relaxation chosen is not one of the constant activities that cause them to feel bored. The more people relax, the more they will be able to relax without feeling bored.

#### **BORED BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT BUSY**

When children suffer from over-activity or sit around with nothing to do, work with them to make a long list of activities they like to do. Be sure they can realistically do the activities by themselves. *For example:* If they are at home with no way to get to the pool, they can't go swimming.

Your list should include chores. In fact, use chores to get children to do fun activities. When they claim they are bored, give them the choice of finding a fun activity to do or doing a chore. They will almost always find a fun activity to do. If not, you will get some chores done.

Experts report a rise in obesity due to inactivity in people of all ages. So, try to make those fun activities active. Keeping children busy and active is a task we need to take seriously. It will help to keep them happy, healthy, and not bored.

#### **FIGHT BOREDOM WITH FAITH**

Boredom tends to arise when children lack something. Faith fills their void. Children who have the faith and character that fill their soul are least apt to get bored. This is why it is critical for children to be built up in their faith and have the character of Christ - be more like Him. So, always give them Bible passages to memorize and even Bible Stores and passages in the Bible to read according to their age and ability. If they are old enough to be home alone, set a time aside for them to build up their faith and Christian character every day before they do fun things or chores. Also have older children read passages and stories to younger children. Those who have faith in Christ lack nothing because through Christ they receive all that they need. They are best able to balance activity and relaxation because they have an enormous portion of God in their souls.

#### **FUN OR CHORES?**

Children should spend far more time having fun than doing chores. Having fun truly can keep children healthy and happy. And health and happiness can work wonders against boredom.

#### **PLAY WITH CHILDREN**

Helping children learn to play can require playing with them. We may be surprised at the number of parents who do not, themselves, know how to play. If you are one of them, just ask to play with your children and they will show you how to play. Parents who play with their children will be happy and healthy just like their children.

#### **MAKE CHORES FUN**

In the spirit of play, turn chores into family fun: do them together, laugh, joke around, help each other out, start a water fight doing the dishes, or do whatever makes chores fun for your family. Families who can play together never get bored.

#### **Share this United Intergenerational Ministry Resource to Help Generations Never Get Bored.**

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## For The Whole *Family of God*

### *Stop the Hurt of Bad Language*

#### **EMOTIONAL HURT**

Bad language hurts the spirit and deeply degrades emotionally. It can hurt more than getting hit with a rock and the hurt can also last longer. Both people who use bad language or have it aimed at them can feel degraded. Degradation is a deep emotional hurt that can cause people to do bad things that hurt themselves and others. This emotional hurt can be passed on for generations.

#### **SPIRITUAL DEATH**

Bad language is so common it is easy to forget that it is sin and that unforgiven sin causes death - eternal death. When children use bad language because we use it, we cause them to sin. Scriptures warn that it would be better to be thrown into the sea with a millstone wrapped around our neck than for us to cause a little one to sin (Luke 17:2). Spiritually, bad language can degrade all ages so badly that they turn away from God and from doing what is good. This leaves them doing what is bad for themselves, others, and in the world.

#### **EMPTY VOID**

Did you know that we sin each time a bad word appears in our mind even if it never comes out of our mouth? Bad words separate us from God because they are sin, and this separation leaves us with an emptiness many people feel, but do not realize comes from being separated from God. They do not understand they need God to fill their void with His peace, love, and the never ending joy that can only come to us through the forgiveness of Christ.

#### **GOOD NEWS**

The good news is that when we clean up our language, our lives begin to clean up. Good language produces good relationships and good feelings. The bad feelings that caused us to think and do bad things - to fail - to use language that turned people against us and that separates us from the joy of the Lord can all be gone with our bad language. Then, all good things from God can come in to us and fill us as we confess and receive forgiveness for our sins through Christ.

#### **GOOD THINGS**

However, good language does not fill minds and hearts simply because people desire it. It comes as we become new creations through Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17). As new creations, we seek to have the character of Christ - to speak like Him and think like Him. We desire to get rid of bad language in ourselves and in others. Above all, we do not depend upon our own wisdom and determination. We know we are not strong enough or wise enough to stop using bad language. We firmly believe that as we depend upon the Lord, He will act. One day we will no longer think bad words, much less use them. Then, we will be the Lords with every thought we think and every word we say.

#### **LEAD TO CHRIST**

Many problems and tragedies and lots of bad language happens today because people do not know Jesus. Did you know our using good language can lead people to Christ? Good language builds self-respect for those who use it in those who hear it. People who respect us will listen to us. When we use good language in Jesus' name and for His sake, people will see Jesus in us. Our words will point them to Him and He will fill their empty souls.

#### **HELP STOP BAD LANGUAGE**

If others around you use bad language, silently begin to pray for them each time they do. Let them see Jesus in you through everything you say and do, including not using bad language. More times than not, they will stop using bad language without you saying a word to them about their bad language.

If you try to use good language and fail, publically apologize to those who heard you and privately ask God to forgive you. He will forgive you and your public apology may cause others to use good language more than you think..

Try not to condemn bad language unless you have no other option to defend the name of Jesus. Even then, pray for God's Spirit to help you speak the truth boldly in love

(Ephesians 4:15)

**Share this Resource to Help  
Generations Use Good Language  
to lead people to Christ.**

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## For The Whole *Family of God*

### *Overpower Addictions*

#### **THERE IS NO CURE**

The most horrifying fact about an addiction is that there is rarely a complete recovery. People tend to recover for a lifetime, but those who hold the course and return every time they fail do gain ground they can more easily stand on. Those addicted will always be tempted but they control the addiction rather than the other way around. Most frustrating is the fact that we who love them feel helpless to help them.

We cannot help because people addicted must gain control of their own addiction. We can support and encourage them, but they usually need more understanding and patience than we can give to help them. People who have been able to control the same addiction in themselves are most often best able to help the people we love control their addiction. While we may not be able to help our loved ones control their addiction there is help for them and there is also help for us.

#### **THERE IS HELP**

We do not need to and should not face the addiction of a loved one alone. There are people who can give help with handling addictions waiting to help us and our loved one. One of the worst mistakes we can make is to try to handle the addiction of our loved one alone.

To receive help, addictions do not need to be broadcast for the whole world to know. However, they should never be covered up, excused, ignored, or treated as if they do not exist. Help can be obtained in a confidential manner through social service agencies. A support group can be found for most addictions. The key to help and healing is not to keep the addiction a secret, but to actively seek and get help for the person you love and for yourself and your family. *One point cannot be emphasized enough: The key to helping your loved overcome an addiction is to get the kind of help for yourself that allows you to help and not hinder your loved one in their recovery.*

#### **DON'T TAKE CONTROL**

The best way to help the person we love take control of an addiction is to make sure we do not try to control the addiction ourselves. Many loved ones try to constantly watch out for and keep the addicted person from contact with what they are addicted to. When other people take control, there is no need for the person with the addiction to take control.

#### **HELP THE ADDICTED TAKE CONTROL**

Place the responsibility for control of an addiction on the person who is addicted. Gather evidence that the person is addicted. Confront him or her with the evidence. Be loving, yet firm. Use words like: "I found this...." "I saw you do that...." Never judge or condemn. Only report what you know to be true. Explain that you cannot help the person. Then, personally escort him or her to the help needed over and over again, each time praying it will help.

#### **GIVE GOD'S STRENGTH**

Build up self-esteem by telling those with addictions how proud you are of every step forward they can take. Build up their faith and Christian character by taking them to the Lord for help. Go with them to church, study God's Word, pray, and share God's love and your faith with them.

#### **PLACE YOUR LOVED ONE IN GOD'S HANDS**

People we love who are addicted can make us feel angry and frustrated. We think they should know better. They should gain control of their addiction if not for themselves then for us and all the people who love them. This line of thought places too much pressure to heal on the addicted person. Pressure can feed the addiction and cause it to grow. Place the person you love and their addiction into God's hands. This will free you to love the person as God loves you in spite of *your addiction to sin*. Most importantly, know that God will do exactly what needs to be done to help the addicted person you love and to help you. Because that is what our God does for all people..

### **Share this Resource to Help Generations Deal with Addictions**

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## For The Whole *Family of God*

### *Christian Confidence Gives A Different Kind of Success*

#### **CONFIDENT PEOPLE SUCCEED**

Many people suffer one failure after another simply because they lack confidence. It is not part of their character. People need self-confidence to succeed. Success is important, so we are going to look at building up self-confidence. At the same time, we are going to discover the greatest success does not come from human confidence.

#### **COMPLIMENTS BUILD UP**

Kind words, praise, compliments, and other uplifting words build confidence in people. Building up others actually builds character in us. This is especially true when we have to work to be kind to those who lack confidence. They are often the ones the Bible calls the “least of these” and society deems not worth our efforts. It requires strong Christian character to build these folks up. Yet, as we compliment them, they grow in confidence and we grow stronger in character.

#### **HARSH WORDS TEAR DOWN**

In one second, a harsh word can tear down confidence that can take years to build back up. And some people are not confident because they have been subjected to harsh words all their lives. These people become harsh and use harsh words that make others lack confidence and become harsh for generations. This becomes a harder cycle to break with every new generation.

#### **EARTHLY SUCCESS**

Since we are dealing with many people who lack confidence, our best course is to say one thing nice to all the people we talk to each day. Compliment everything from what they are wearing to their smile. At the very least, take time to smile and even say “Hi.” This is how we can build confidence and lay a foundation for earthly success. But there is success that is far more valuable than earthly success.

#### **KINGLY SUCCESS**

Kingly success comes to those who are children of the King - Christ the King. They possess His character. They are confident and successful, not because of who they are or anything they can do, but because of *whose* they are and all that He has done and continues to do in their faith and lives. Their success from the Lord is different from any kind of earthly success. It cannot be shaken and it cannot be taken away, *ever*, because God cannot be shaken (Hebrews 12:28) and His gifts are irrevocable - final (Romans 11:29).

#### **ETERNAL SUCCESS**

Earthly success cannot measure up to the success God gives those who trust and depend on Him for life and salvation. They rejoice to be last because they know with Him the last are first (Matthew 20:16). They know for a fact that the confidence and success and joy of the Lord they feel inside of them is like nothing else they have ever felt on earth. While some who have received Kingly success have earthly success, they are glad to give it up all up, *because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus*. They count it all rubbish with the Apostle Paul, *to gain Christ*.

(Philippians 3:8)

#### **CONFIDENCE IN CHRIST BIBLE STUDY**

All of the confidence that matters, all of the confidence we need comes to us through faith in Christ who gives us access to the Father and eternal life in heaven. **READ:** Ephesians 3:11-12

The greatest work we can do is what we do for the Lord, and it is not in vain. **READ:** 1 Corinthians 15:58

There is no greater or better “Boss” that our Lord and He pays both in life and for eternity. BUT we must work while it is day! **READ:** John 9:4

Whenever you feel unsuccessful, unimportant, unloved, or insecure, remember you are the child of the King, the almighty Lord of heaven and earth! And the best is yet to come!

**Read:** 1 John 3:2

**Share this Resource  
to Help Generations Build  
Christian Confidence that  
Gives Kingly Success.**

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