



# GRACE News

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## Editorial HELP, I'M A PARENT!

Continuing with our theme of strengthening family ties, in this issue of Grace News we take a look at Christian parenting: the joys and the challenges, and the unique opportunities we have to pass on our faith to the next generation.

Parenting is one of the most challenging training grounds God allows us. Which parent would dare claim to have no regrets: would not wish to have done something differently somewhere along the way? But where do we go when we need advice? There is no shortage of parenting help available out there, much of it useful, but as Christians we seek spiritual input more than anything else. We thank God for setting us in a church community filled with experienced parents, whose successes we can emulate and whose mistakes we can avoid.

It is in this spirit that we asked two sets of parents to share their own parenting journeys, which you can read on pages 2 and 3. On page 4 we ask, "What if your child decides to give up a good job and go into full-time Christian service?" – a question that Bok Wee's parents had to come to terms with; and page 5 profiles the new Family Ministry. Lastly, on page 8 we review a book of family devotions that Teoh Swee Hin found very helpful as he led his own family times of worship and prayer.

Also, on page 7 don't miss the latest dispatch from our very own Lily of the Valley!

May you be blessed as you read,

The Editorial Team  
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## EFFECTIVE PARENTING 101

Pastor Arnold Wong

**I**n moments of exasperation with my naughty behaviour my mother would scream, "Wait till you have children!" She knew what she was talking about. Raising children is not easy.

Fortunately, God's Word gives parents some 'must do's'. When God's Word is combined with God's grace and mercy, parents and children can live to see another day. Here are some of those 'must do's' for Godly parents.

**First, teach your children God's Word and ways (Deut 6:6-9).** Effective teaching happens two ways. One is by direct instruction – lecturing. The other is indirect – living. Both are important. In one, they hear the 'what and why', in the other they see the 'how'. The latter is often the most memorable. Effective parenting is teaching God's truths by our words and walk.

**Second, discipline your children God's way (Prov 13:24).** As painful as it might be for the child and bothersome to the parent, discipline is a must. Children with a healthy respect for authority will go farther and faster in their pursuit of a meaningful life. Good discipline involves a deep

love for the child and a clear understanding of the offence. If a parent disciplines out of rage and anger the result is often only more resentment and rebelliousness. Loving discipline is an indispensable tool of good parenting.

**Thirdly, allow your children to do things (Prov 22:6).** Any good training programme requires a child to do what you are training them to do. Mistakes will be made, but they will learn from them. Whether a child tries and succeeds, or fails, there are lessons to be learned. They will learn more about themselves, adversity, and perseverance. Where appropriate, let your children learn by doing.

**The last 'must do' is pray for your child (Lk 18:1).** Persevere in prayer. No matter what, "...at all times they ought to pray and NOT LOSE HEART". The world around us is challenging and complex with lots of attractions and distractions targeted at our children. Children need all the prayer protection they can get.

Teaching, disciplining, doing, and praying are essentials for effective parenting. **Ω**



*Grace News asked two families with children of different ages to share their parenting journey (so far) – their struggles, victories, and even mistakes – for our encouragement and to spur us on to be better parents.*

## TAN KHEE PENG & NAN YOONG

*Khee Peng and Nan Yoong are the parents of three children (ages 9, 11 and 15) who were named after God's attributes found in 2 John 1:3, "Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and from Jesus Christ..." How has God helped them mature as parents as they seek to bring up Godly children?*

"As I reflect on my parenting skills, I notice that there are some similarities to the way my parents brought me up. When I was a child, my strict mother used to yell at me whenever I did something wrong and caned me if I failed to listen to her. Sad to say, I followed in her footsteps and did likewise to my children. I believed God caused me to see the negative impact of this when I started to notice our children always living in fear and my wife also behaving in this authoritative manner. From then on, my wife and I started to share and prayed to God over our parenting struggles and learned to remind each other to train our children well.

As they grew older, my style of discipline changed from caning to reasoning. As Christian parents, our primary focus is their salvation. Thus we want them to know God and challenge them to receive Jesus as their personal Saviour and Lord. In their eyes, I am still a strict and authoritative father while my wife is more loving towards them, but at times we still discipline them. Basically we want our children to be honest with one another, and whatever they do must honour God and their parents (Eph 6:1-3).

I believe actions speak louder than words, so we use our daily lives as learning examples for them to observe and imitate our Christian faith. We are blessed that my wife's sister composed a list of Bible verses into songs and taught them to the children. They eventually memorised these verses, and now they are always in their hearts to help them in their daily lives. We also hold CG fellowship at our house, and occasionally bring them along to visit my spiritual mentors so that they can see how others have helped me grow in my Christian faith.



(ABOVE) Khee Peng and Nan Yoong with their children (from left) Oliver, Grace and Mercia.

Of course they are also influenced by worldly values coming from friends and the media. Although we cannot prevent all these worldly influences (1 Jn 2:15,16), we can pray for them earnestly and ask God to change them and impart Biblical truth to them.

***I believe actions speak louder than words, so we use our daily lives as learning examples for them to observe and imitate our Christian faith.***

Our children feel that going to church every Sunday and attending church camp have helped them grow to love God. Every night my wife prays with them and reminds them to trust God. Parenting is a lifelong journey, but we continue on by God's grace." Ω



## YAP KIM MENG & BEOW KHENG

*"We were scared stiff to have a family," declared Kim Meng and Beow Kheng. It took them four years to start a family, after which they raised not one but four kids who are now young adults who would make any Christian parent proud. What did they do right?*



(ABOVE) (From left) Kim Meng, Caleb, Deborah, Joshua, Beow Kheng and Gideon.

### 1. Is there an ideal method of raising children?

Probably not, because we are dealing with human beings who have feelings and minds of their own. Each is different according to their unique temperament, gender, and age, so we have to be sensitive, discerning and wise. Whatever we do, it has to be undergirded by true unconditional love for the child and the fear of the Lord. It is important to look to Scripture and pray for them. We claim promises from the Lord for our children's growth and development as well.

*"... what I find as best evidence of God in my parents' lives would be honest Christian daily living because this is what children really observe and pick up on, whether they are conscious of it or not."*

*- Gideon Yap*

### 2. How can disciplining be seen positively by the child as character-building rather than as deterrence?

When we had Joshua, Beow Kheng had him memorise Prov 22:15, "Folly is bound up in the heart of a child but the rod of discipline drives it far away." We always explained to the children why we disciplined them before using the rod. Once the correction was over, we made sure there was reconciliation – the children would say sorry and ask for forgiveness and then we would embrace them and tell them we love them. In doing so we were hoping to model the way God loves, disciplines and forgives us if we ask Him.

### 3. How do you create loving, trusting, learning and accessible space?

As parents, the more we connect with our children – providing them with unconditional love and clear sets of realistic expectations and boundaries – the safer they are. As long as they don't violate what has been laid down for them, they are free to do anything they want. We need to recognise that our children also have rights – the right to be heard and the right to privacy. For our part, it is important to be able to sit down and chat with the children, expressing what Scripture says and our personal experiences with God. How we communicate is just as important as what we communicate – using loving tones and encouraging words, maintaining warm relationships, and letting them make their own decisions instead of lording it over them. Parenting is like flying a kite – you need to know when to let go and when to pull back, and adjust the tension accordingly. God is our helper.

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### 4. Children grow and are constantly influenced by social media, norms and values. How do you imbibe Biblical thinking and conduct as an integral part of their Christian life and manage the tension between the differing views?

We need to give them Scriptures from young, and make our expectations clear. To a certain extent they will have pressure from us but we should not apologise for our standards. Most importantly we need to model what we ask of them. We model hospitality and our children ask for our home to be used for meetings. Our children need to see authentic living. We tell them stories of people we know who are powerful examples – not to preach but to inspire them. We allow them to have age-appropriate media, eg, books, TV, computer, etc. We can't run away from the internet, but we trust them to use their discretion and let the Lord take over. There is a place to be firm but not unreasonable and whatever rules or restrictions we lay down need to be age-appropriate. Ω

*"The most powerful lessons that shape my journey of faith that I learn from my parents are the ones which they live out."*

*- Deborah Yap*



*What if one day you or your child decides to give up that [comfortable] lifestyle and take the deep dive... into full-time ministry?*

**M**any of us have enjoyed the comforts of Singaporean living: the abundance of food, the roof over our heads, the occasional holiday overseas, and practical career choices. However, what if one day you or your child decides to give up that lifestyle and take the deep dive... into full-time ministry?

Bok Wee was working at the Land Transport Authority of Singapore (LTA) when he felt called to the mission field. A minor car accident in early 2012 led him to reflect on the goodness of God and how he had been using God's gifts. While at university, Bok Wee joined Campus Crusade where, through a few short-term mission trips, he grew a heart for missions and outreach. He continues to work with the local church in Isaan, Thailand.

Knowing that going into full-time ministry was not an easy career choice, Bok Wee consulted with the church pastors and elders who guided and prayed with him. He also communicated this desire to serve God full-time in the church (and, possibly, in a different country) to his parents and family members, who were initially very resistant and upset about it. They did not understand the need for him to give up a 'proper' job in exchange for a hard life of struggling to make ends meet.

God is faithful. He delivered Bok Wee from the situation by giving him the love and patience to share his hopes and dreams in ministry and missions with his parents, who through his sharing, were ministered to and grew closer to the Lord. Although still a struggle, his parents have accepted his decision and are aware that there may be a possibility of him committing full-time to missionary work in the future.

Bok Wee last served as a social worker for six months at Gracehaven, a halfway house for troubled youths; he continues to seek direction from the Lord into various missionary opportunities.

Through his testimony, we are reminded that God has commanded us to *"be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth"* (Acts 1:8) and to *"share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus ..."* (2 Tim 1:8-9) [ESV]. Ω



Loving the 'Gangnam Boys' at Gracehaven!



## Ministry Focus: Family Ministry

If you Google the words 'Strong families make...' the suggestions that pop up are: 'strong churches' and 'strong communities'. It's clear that strong families have impact. More than that, with a little thought, we will see that families are made up of individuals. Therefore, strong individuals make strong families, strong families make strong churches, and strong churches make strong communities. Having a family-focused ministry is essential to our church and hence, Pastor Arnold championed its formation.

Before forming the Family Ministry, Pastor Arnold invited the congregation to come together on 1st July 2012 to share their ideas and to express their interest in serving on the team. A group of more than 20 people turned up for the dialogue. We brainstormed on the people to reach out to, topics to cover, issues to address and methods to use in achieving them. An aspect crucial to us is that the Bible shall be the foundation on which the Family Ministry will be established.

In August 2012, our team was formed and Pastor Arnold gave us this simple vision for the Family Ministry:

Impacting individuals and families with the Gospel now and for eternity.

Armed with this simple vision, the team felt led by the Lord to set out on a mission to pursue:

Growing Godly individuals and families by working with the Spirit of God and

GROWING GODLY  
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THE WORD OF GOD.



teaching the Word of God.

Our team's task, to begin with, is to think through and plan to meet the needs of folks in our church through a ministry that focuses on building strong Christian families, dealing with issues including, but not limited to, marriage and parenting.

We started working on building an infrastructure to meet envisaged needs and are now exploring different means to strengthen individuals and families. We hope to engage members through various ministries such as parenting forums, marriage enrichment courses, and even weekend retreats. In collaboration with other ministries in our church, we pray that through Biblical teaching we will grow in Godliness, strengthen our family relationships, and become a light in our communities.

So we cherish your prayers and your participation as we endeavour to serve our church through the Family Ministry. Ω

The Family Ministry team currently consists of Tan Kim Cheng & Yuh Jane, Ding & Daisy Han, Koh Poh Gee & Patti, Samuel Tan, and Mok Chuan Hao. If you would like to know more or to get involved with the Family Ministry, please get in touch with any member of the team or contact *Poh Gee & Patti at [pgkohpat@singnet.com.sg](mailto:pgkohpat@singnet.com.sg) or 92302512.*



# EVENTS

**Youth Fellowship - 17 Feb 2013**



**Good Friday and Easter  
- 29/31 Mar 2013**



The youths thoroughly enjoyed the first youth fellowship of the year, bonding through games and worship at the Gardens.



Top left and above: 'Something Good out of Something Bad' - GBC held its Good Friday Service at night this year for the first time.  
Top right: Resurrection Sunday - Jesus is alive!



Our youths worshipping God at the Singapore Botanic Gardens.

**Enjoy Ministry's Brunch - 23 Feb 2013**



The Enjoy (Encouraging, Nourishing Journey for Old and Young) Ministry participants discuss possible future opportunities and challenges in the year 2030.



Interesting discussion continues during brunch!

**Worship Ministry Get-Together - 3 Mar 2013**



Members of the Worship Ministry get together to fellowship, give thanks and review the various aspects of our worship service.



Praise God for the Worship Ministry members who lead us so wholeheartedly every week to bring glory to our Lord. Thank you!



More than 300 brothers and sisters in Christ gathered to honour and thank God for Dr & Mrs Poulson's 60 years of faithful ministry in Singapore. We pray that the Lord will continue to bless them and us with many more years of their fruitful ministry.



*Dr & Mrs Poulson watching a video of heart-warming greetings from their friends in their home church in the US – Church of the Open Door. We thank God for their faithful support of the Poulsons' ministry all these decades!*

## Snapshot of My Life – Lily of the Valley



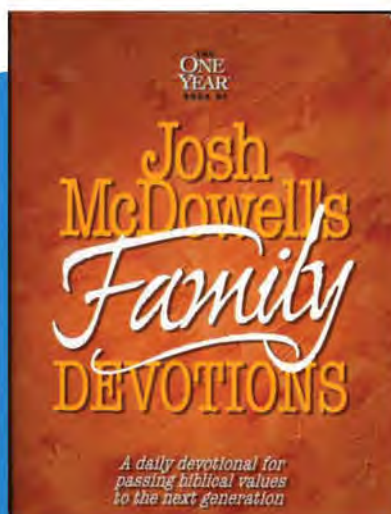
**“Y**our parents have not been well for years and they remit 600-700 yuan a month to you for your living allowance?” I ask the 16-year-old student. She gives me a puzzled look. A few days later I visit the home, planning to bring a few *jin* (Chinese measure) of pork as a gift, but discard the thought. Her mother, 40, stands, a bit bent over as if in pain, by the side of the road waiting for my bus in case I miss the stop. She helps me down from the bus and thanks me profusely for coming all the way to visit their poor home. Though smiling, her face is dry and wrinkled and her eyes look tired, lacking sleep. As is the courtesy, she insists on carrying my bag. In her home, the living room is EMPTY except for a few tiny wooden stools and a foot-wide hole in the rough cement floor with cinders glowing. Her husband, thin, short and with sunken cheeks, returns from the garden with a basket full of *baicai* (greens) for the day's meals and a load of dried twigs for fuel. How do they live when they can't do much and their daughter needs so much? Getting into debt and more debt and an occasional odd job of hauling cement or sand or bricks because they love their only child and want to have a university graduate in the family. At home the next day, I write up my report of the visit and

forward it to my boss for her decision regarding sponsorship to the student. Then, as is my habit, I buy some dried food and mail it to her parents.

I spend a lot of time thinking over issues and talking or arguing unceasingly with Father over them. What is serving? Humility, endurance... How can we serve together in teams? How does He want me, a single, to serve, and now, at my age? Without reservation, prayerfully... How can I discern students' needs and show them that He has all the answers and is worthy of their complete trust? There are many undergraduates and working graduates sponsored by us all over the country. A nurse, after three years of work, has found life brief and our bodies fragile. Even a skilled nightingale is helpless in the face of illness and death. A visit to her bore great fruit. But visits will become costly with increases in train rides and hotel rooms. How can I minister among them? Lift them up and let my Heavenly Father minister. I begin to write letters to parents who, during the visits, voiced their fear of death, of injustice and retaliation. ***I need wisdom to quote the words of truth, life and hope to them.*** Most important is my personal study of the Word to keep up on a weekly basis, but only in spring, summer and autumn. Icy fingers deter me from sitting up and studying in winter. So I listen to messages from James MacDonald, John Piper and David Platt, and try to take notes. Look at the shoeprints all over the floor! It's time to mop the office again: a five-hour job outside office hours. **Ω**



## The One Year Book of Josh McDowell's Family Devotions



There are many books on family devotions available in bookshops and online, but this is one that is well worth investing in. *The One Year Book of Josh McDowell's Family Devotions* reinforces the need to apply Biblical principles to everyday living and decisions. There are discussion suggestions suitable for children of all ages, making it easy to engage all members of a family. Most interesting are the 365 daily readings, each of which includes a story showing people choosing what to do in difficult situations. I like the family prayer at the end of each reading and the practical task for each member of the family to discuss and do.

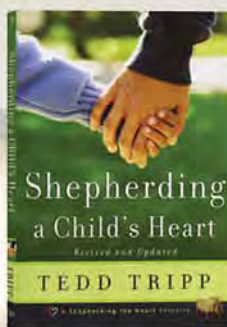
Every month there are character themes, for example, in April the character themes are Faithfulness and Unity. Other character themes include Justice, Love, Mercy, Self-Control, Purity, Humility, Respect, Honesty, Generosity, Compassion, Perseverance, etc.

The style is easy and approachable. Said one parent, "It is short enough to keep my teenage son engaged throughout our after-dinner devotions, but not so short that it becomes a pointless reading of words, primarily because of one key feature that I have found in few other family devotionals: the 'To Discuss' questions."

An example of a 'To Discuss' question from the devotional of 1 January is: "Should a person listen to lyrics [of pop songs] that go against his or her beliefs? Why or why not? How can a person know what's right or wrong?"

If you have not tried doing family devotions before, this would be a great place to start, or if you are looking for new material do pick up a copy. You will find this book an invaluable resource. Ω

For a list of recommended books on parenting, you can go to [www.gracebaptistchurch.sg](http://www.gracebaptistchurch.sg), look under Care Group, Recommended Reading, Marriage, The Family & Parenting, and scroll down to Parenting. A highly recommended book is Tedd Tripp's *Shepherding a Child's Heart*.



### An example of the daily readings for April:

#### April

SPECIAL THEMES FOR THE MONTH:  
Faithfulness (April 9-18)  
Unity (April 21-28)

- 1 April Fool
- 2 Shoestring Choices
- 3 Nerve Center
- 4 The Dull Conscience
- 5 The Dead Conscience
- 6 Old Enough to Know
- 7 Committed
- 8 True Wisdom
- 9 True to the Original
- 10 Man's Best Friend
- 11 Be Faithful
- 12 A Faithful Friend
- 13 Faithful Like God
- 14 Faithfulness Provides (Part 1)
- 15 Faithfulness Protects (Part 1)
- 16 Faithfulness Protects (Part 2)
- 17 Faithfulness Provides (Part 2)
- 18 God Remains Faithful
- 19 The Road to Gladness
- 20 The Facts of Life
- 21 Living in Harmony
- 22 One Plus One Equals One
- 23 Russell's New Tune
- 24 Buddy Check
- 25 The Lord Is One
- 26 The World Will Believe
- 27 Peace Be with You
- 28 God's Spiritual Vitamins
- 29 Copycat Christianity
- 30 Practice Makes Perfect