

RESTORE IS THE CAMPAIGN | TRANSFORM IS THE MISSION

RESTORE

THE CHRISTMAS ISSUE

DECEMBER 2017



Restoring the Family Table This Christmas



Heavenly C. Ministries for the World

Letter from the Editors

Hello to family and friends near and far! This year of 2017 has been a wonderful year of Harvest, and it is soon coming to a close. It will then be time to embrace a “Glorious” 2018 with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

We are blessed to have the opportunity for presenting you with this special Christmas issue of Restore, on behalf of all the partners of Heavenly C. Ministries for the World, before this year ends.

Inside, we are encouraged by our Faith, challenged to reconsider our Celebrations, spurred on to delight ourselves again with our Families at the Dinner Table, and then nurtured in a heartfelt way from a Father This Christmas.

Take a moment to enjoy each article, and may the Lord bless you and your family with a wonderful Christmas and a glorious 2018!

**Elder Jeff and Cheryl Cook,
Heavenly C. Ministries
for the World**



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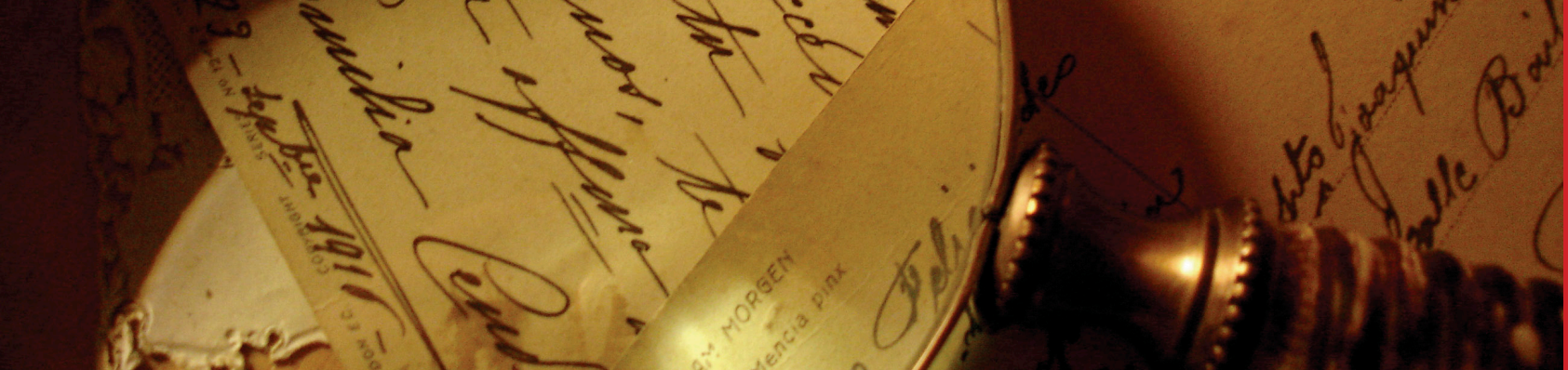
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NOW FAITH

by Elder Jeff Cook

Do you know the word 'faith' is written in the Bible more than 231 times? This tells me that faith is quite important to our walk with God. It is impossible to please Him without it. The Scriptures tell us so much about faith, the role it plays in our daily lives, and ways we should use it in our walk with the Lord.

Thus, I want to share with you some faith findings:

We live by faith,
walk by faith,
should be full of faith,
our faith should grow,
we should have unfeigned faith,
we should follow after faith,
have common faith,
faith that moves God,
mustard-seed faith,
faith that moves mountains,
great faith,
God-given faith,
faith-tested,
faith-tested again,
faith and works,
rich in faith,
precious faith,
fight for your faith,
contend for your faith, and
build up your faith.

Now I can support this faith symphony with Scripture verses, but I think you get the idea. Without faith, it is just impossible to please the Lord, and it is not possible to navigate this precious life we live. We can make it to the other side if we have faith in God and if we believe what His Word says because that is where we are going, right? And we want to bring as many people as possible with us. We do not wish to go alone, but we would like for our family members, friends, and neighbors to accompany us.

Now faith will get us there.



A Father's Christmas

by Kevin Hamilton

Christmas was approaching, and family members had gathered in joyful anticipation to celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Family members had traveled great distances and from many points of the compass to Connecticut this year in honor of this cherished tradition and to reunite with loved ones. This year had added meaning for me for several reasons.

This Christmas was even more special to me, as a father, because it was the first one that my son hosted in his first home. I was thankful to God that our son took the next step in maturing as a young man. He has always been big on family, but hosting this numerous and somewhat voracious group is a definite challenge for a first-timer. There were many memorable moments, and my son made certain everyone had a joyous time. That was quite a blessing, but God blessed this father even more.

This Christmas was a heartfelt, double blessing because my daughter was also there, engaged with family and enjoying herself. This was remarkable because she had often avoided spending extended time with family. My wife and I would sometimes speak of her, between us, as our “prodigal child” because of her chosen lifestyle. However, our prodigal returned home to wholeheartedly embrace family this Christmas. The blessing deepened when we ceremoniously gathered together to honor God and to be thankful for Christ’s birth.

A Christmas-Day custom that began after the death of my mother-in-law, more than twenty seven years ago, is a candlelight ceremony. We gather around a table of candles (one for each member in attendance), and each family member is encouraged to light a candle and express his or her thankfulness to God and family before any gifts are opened. I was touched and proud to hear both of my children express deeply felt gratitude for God, Jesus, and family, attributing particular honor to my wife and me for the Christian values we instilled in them as children. Moments like these immediately bring Proverbs 22:6 to mind.

As one can tell, I was thankful to our almighty God for allowing me to spend that watershed Christmas in my son’s home with the double blessing of having our daughter there, enjoying so many special moments.

The Worship of Christ at Christmastime

by Angela Parker

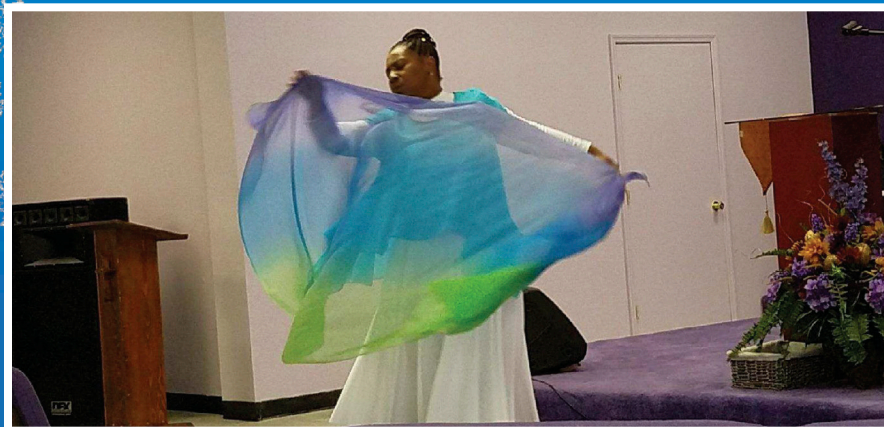
As a young girl, I grew up in a household where Christmas did not have anything to do with Jesus Christ's birth. For an unsaved household, Christmas pertained to a man dressed in a red-velvet suit, named Santa Claus. He had a great big belly, white hair, and a snow-white beard. Santa was the so-called star of Christmas because: 1) he brought gifts to good children; 2) he was a magical being with a sleigh that could fly all around the earth, which was pulled by his eight reindeer; and 3) kids received lumps of coal, instead of gifts, if they were naughty for a year. I didn't understand until I was in my twenties that the real meaning of Christmas is celebrating my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ's birth.

So many people (Christians and non-Christians alike) are more concerned with purchasing the latest gadgets, cellphones, and toys than they are with acknowledging the real reason for the season. Christmas was revered as a Christian holiday, and we need to return Christ to Christmas. I read an article titled "Is Jesus the Reason for the Season? Godless Christmas without Christ." The title broke my heart due to the reality of what was stated, but I was curious about what other truths the author had to share. The article explained how Santa Claus has become the focus of Christmas even though "there is nothing recognizably Christian about him." The writer continued that "there is nothing odd or difficult about having a Christmas without Christ or God." I was immediately offended because Christmas does not exist without Christ.

The way to put Christ back into Christmas is recognizing His identity and why we are on the earth. According to John 3:16-17 (ESV), "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him." Jesus Christ is God's gift to us and a celebration of His love toward us. "Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love" (1 John 4:8, ESV). Christmas is a representation of the Lord's love toward us. God knew that man was in need of a Savior, which is the reason He sent Jesus Christ. The Lord showed His love to us because "while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). Christmas is set aside as a time for us to show our gratitude for the sacrifice that our heavenly Father made to save our souls. We do this by showing love to others during Christmas and throughout the year. "God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24, ESV). That's why the Christmas spirit is about worshiping Christ and expressing God's love—not about a jolly man in a red suit.

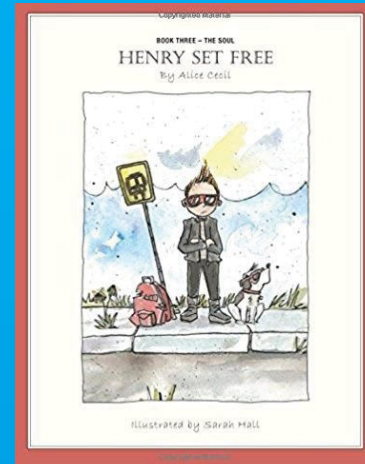
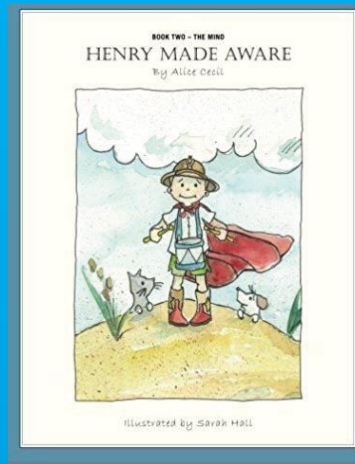
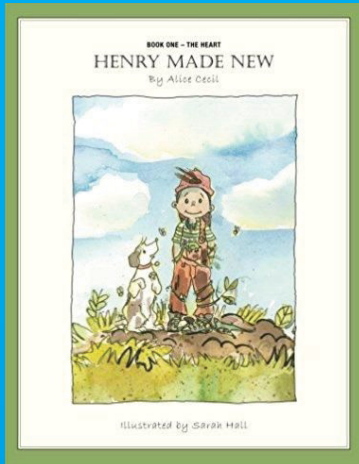
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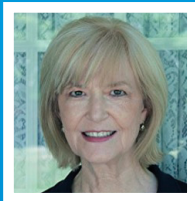


NEW BOOK RELEASES

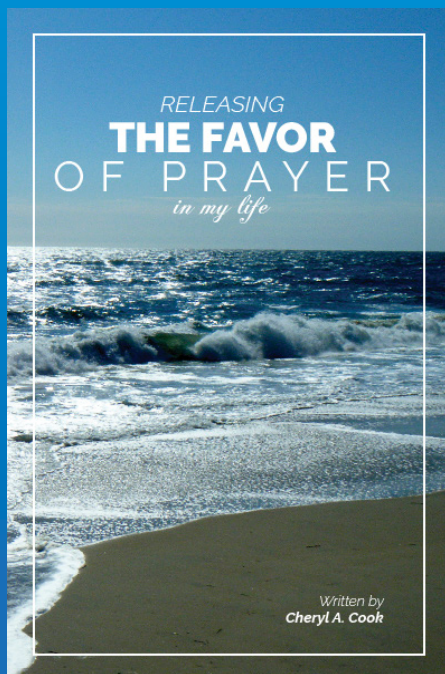
Encourage someone this Christmas!



Reading The Henry Series is a fun way to teach the gospel to your children and grandchildren from ages six through ten, and expose them to Scripture. A very short Bible verse, which relates to the above storyline, appears on each page. The quite detailed and beautiful pictures make the easy-to-comprehend plots come to life for children in vibrant, living colors! The gifted, talented, and creative author skillfully uses practical metaphors and weaves word pictures to represent life's problems for children. In the second series book, as an example, Henry's father repairs his broken birdhouse, just as Jesus can "fix" all of Henry's trials.



You can obtain copies of Alice Cecil's *The Henry Series* at www.amazon.com



Releasing the Favor of Prayer in my Life

By Cheryl A. Cook

How do you pray to God, when you are feeling disconnected? You learn how to release some things through confession and repentance. This short, but impactful book will help you on your way to Releasing the Favor of Prayer in your Life. Order online today at www.heavenlycmin.org. Click on the Resource Page.



Restoring the Family Table this Christmas

Written by Cheryl A. Cook | Photos by Markus C. Cook

I believe there is still room today for the family table in our lives, even at Christmastime, whether our children are younger or older, have become adults, or even have children of their own. Young children require leadership and teaching in the ways of Christ. With our current age of technology and social media, not only should we keep the family table, but I feel that we might want to encourage it all the more as the kids grow older.

Have you heard any of the latest reports about the influence of social media? While there is more social media connectedness than ever before in our history, it appears that our latest generation of young people seems to be more isolated than before (Hobson, 2017). The wisdom of God's Word teaches us that while some things are lawful, they are not necessarily profitable. Or, perhaps they have profit, yet we are not to be brought under their power (1 Corinthians 10:23). We can value a picture on Facebook because of the distance in miles that may exist between ourselves and family members and friends. We should never let it become a substitute though, for the

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visit at home; the hugs and kisses; or the personal investment that we can make in being involved with the family with which the Lord has blessed us.

So what is all the fuss about the dinner table? Studies have demonstrated that eating dinner together allows for face-to-face encounters. In addition, it provides connection, encouragement, listening ears, and prayerfully wise counsel during such a short, but powerful time of exchange (Fisher, 2015). During my studies with a very seasoned School Teacher for more than twenty-five years, she related to me how kindergartners do not necessarily experience moments at home with their parents/or parent, eating and discussing their thoughts. As a result of her own learning about the effect of sitting at the table with children to eat and talk, she began to sacrifice her own personal time with other teachers at lunchtime and rather chose to spend it with her students. They shared a piece of their lives, and even their fears, every time she did this. She became a listening ear for them and brought comforting words to them. What can change at our dining tables while we share Christ—who lives within us—in laughter, hope, and faith?

Christmas is just around the corner. While we make preparations, even for dining, have you thought about to whom you might reach out this Christmas? Will family, and maybe even family friends, be present? The weather is changing, and maybe some of our plans will do so as well, as we rethink the importance of the family table. What will be the testimony of a family member whom we do not want to miss? Or perhaps consider the joy that will be gained because we laughed and talked together, and someone found the courage to go forward in life. Sitting and dining together from breakfast to dinner may be an old-fashioned idea, but this experience possesses a number of great benefits that start with relationship. There will be no room for isolation. Instead, we can together share both natural and spiritual bread, and I hope you find them both to be tasty! Why don't we pray about this? Let's see what God wants to serve up this Christmas as we learn to Restore the Family Table!

Works Cited

- Fisher, A. (2015, January 12). The most important thing you can do with your kids? Eat dinner with them. Retrieved from The Washington Post: https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2015/01/12/the-most-important-thing-you-can-do-with-your-kids-eat-dinner-with-them/?utm_term=.e08ab27fded4.
- Hobson, K. (2017, March 6). Feeling Lonely? Too Much Time on Social Media May Be Why. Retrieved October 14, 2017, from NPR: <http://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2017/03/06/518362255/feeling-lonely-too-much-time-on-social-media-may-be-why>.



Of Patterns and Shadows

WORD SEARCH

The following are Old Testament Scriptures that foretell the coming of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Enjoy reading these Old Testament Scripture verses.

Make sure that you meditate upon them, and search for the underlined words in each Scripture.

The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken.

Deuteronomy 18:15

Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.

Psalm 41:9

Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Isaiah 7:14

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 9:6

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.

In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord Our Righteousness.

Jeremiah 23:5-6

When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.

Hosea 11:1

But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, are only a small village among all the people of Judah. Yet a ruler of Israel, whose origins are in the distant past, will come from you on my behalf.

Micah 5:2

And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one.

Zechariah 14:9

Search for the underlined words below:

C F B G
K O E W N G
K U K C E S F X
M V J E I Q M U Z M L P J U D G M E N T
W Z C X M T R I G H T E O U S B R A N C H V
M K L N V S S P G O D B D O C W M P E E S Q G X
M X Q S C E U F U H P R I N C E O F P E A C E A
Y N X L K M J K N O S A R A E B M H L N C N P Y
S Y A I T A A B Z I M M A N U E L B C I L H I U
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I M P W O N D E R F U L L V
V L A V I R G I N C Z A
E I K S W L G T S F
N P F U N M V Q
M M I U N I
K J Y P
K E





THAT'S A WRAP!

Alan and the Fullness of Time has officially completed production. Thanks so very much for the many prayers and laboring in love of prayer partners, crew members, and the cast. Thank you to each and everyone who has had a hand in this film thus far; stay tuned for more updates in the future!

**CELEBRATE THE
REASON FOR THE
SEASON WITH YOUR
FAMILY THIS
DECEMBER.
JESUS IS THE REASON!
MERRY CHRISTMAS**



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