

SERVANT

WILMA DERKSEN
**THE ROAD TO
FORGIVENESS**

MARK MAXWELL
**ANCHORED
DEEP**

ALUMNI IN ACTION
**NO LONGER
ALONE**

**BEAUTY IN
BROKENNESS**
THE WOUNDED GIFT

My growing theology

I WAS TWENTY-THREE YEARS OLD

and had enjoyed a glorious January day doing one of my favorite things: skiing Sunshine Mountain in Banff, Alberta. My friends and I had just come back into town for dinner when the call came: my mother and father had been in a head-on collision on an icy northern Alberta highway. Both were killed instantly.

Much goes wrong—every day—in our world:

- I arrive at the airport to find my flight delayed. The dominoes of events start falling and adjustments need to be made.
- We are just days from a major event and the main speaker (or band) cancels.
- My partner in business or marriage turns against me and wants out, or wants me out.
- My brother is told he has cancer.
- Our child is heartbroken or in trouble, and we wish we could take the hurt for them.
- Family members in failing health require more of our time and our care.
- Bills are stacking up and we don't know how we will make ends meet.

I thank God that in the dark days of my loss, he took me to Romans 8:28—"We know that for those who love God all things work for good, for those who are called according to his purpose." I sank my anchor into that rock and rode out the storm of grief and questions that washed over me in the following days, months and years.

Since that time I have become increasingly grateful to the Lord for godly parents and for the friendship I enjoyed with them after my barbaric teenage years. They were gracious, giving me multiple second chances, and God allowed us to patch up that bridge. I am so thankful as well for family and friends who have circled around me with love.

Since that time I have begun to understand the cosmic battle that is raging

around us, a battle for every single human soul, mine included. Perhaps God was in that accident, turning me toward him as I bounced off the bottom of that barrel.

Since that time I have seen him show up in the darkest days, giving comfort and guidance. And each time, my understanding of his love and his dimensions grew.

jump the queue and go right to the top!

- The Holy Spirit is becoming my constant companion. I just need to tune my heart to hear him amid the clamor of all that concerns me.

The heart of Almighty God aches for a close and loving companionship with each one of us, made possible as we allow



I sank my anchor into that rock and rode out the storm of grief and questions that washed over me in the days that followed.

Since that time I have come to the conclusion that every part of the physical universe is a picture of some aspect of the spiritual world. As a result, my theology, founded on Scripture and observed in nature, has been translated into personal experience:

- The Creator of the universe has become enormous in my eyes, able to deal with life-shattering events while caring for the tiniest details.
- My comprehension of God's love has grown as I begin to understand the price he paid to send his Son as his messenger of love to earth, and what it cost Jesus to conquer sin and death so that we might have life.
- I am learning that my role is simply to look expectantly to Jesus for everything. He is Lord of the universe. We can

him the freedom to work in and through us. I'm convinced that when he asks us to do something, his real question is not "Would you do this?" but rather, "Would you let me do this through you?"

In times of adversity, I believe God is at work, drawing people to himself. Given his enormous care and capacity, should we not look at events and wonder: *what is God up to and what good will he bring in this situation?*

Perhaps the quintessential question of life is: How big is our God? **IS**



Mark Maxwell is president of Prairie. He welcomes your comments. Send them to mark.maxwell@prairie.edu

markmaxwell

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LETTERS

Just received the *SERVANT* magazine with excellent articles. I especially enjoyed Dr. Enns' advocacy of the humanities. It has also been my experience. Also the quotations from Amy Carmichael and Dr. Jowett: both were my dad's favorites and I have come to admire them also. But I especially congratulate Prairie for using Dietrich Bonhoeffer. In my Bible School days (1960-61) that theological focus was not possible. I am happy for the new horizons for my alma mater. Thank you for keeping me abreast with what's happening at Prairie today.

Elmer Lavastida, Cuba

I appreciated the article "Going Bananas" in the latest issue of *SERVANT*. Reading about Justin Trudeau, his turning to the Scriptures, his reading of the Bible and his unintentional stay at the Prayer Breakfast was very moving. Out of curiosity, I read Mr. Trudeau's book *Common Ground* just after he was elected and while I don't agree with a lot of his policies, I found the book very interesting, particularly so when I read of him attending an Alpha course and experiencing a renewed relationship with God. Your words, "I don't have to agree with people for God to be at work in them" were like a gift of grace to me. I often struggle with how to relate to people with whom I disagree. No Christian has everything figured out completely. We are all wanting in some way and we are all saved by grace alone. You reminded me that I can share God's love generously as it has been shared generously with me. I can love, pray for, and bless others and God's work in them, whether I agree with them or not, even our Prime Minister.

S. Appenheimer, Richmond, BC

BETWEEN THE LINES

Welcome to the 100th issue of *SERVANT*! Few of us could have envisioned the scope of this simple magazine that became a part of Prairie's ministry back in January of 1989. Both Phil Callaway and I were there at the beginning and it has been the adventure of a lifetime. I'm so thankful that Phil continues to write his column and offer advice when I need it.

"It seems like only last Wednesday," he says, "since I wrestled those first few issues off to press. My tribute goes to a group of retired people who prayed for me and to the God who answered their prayers. He has used this magazine to bring people to himself and to remind believers of issues that matter." For me, the most amazing part of this adventure has been encountering the stories of real people experiencing a real God as they deal with the stuff of life. Thank you for sharing our journey!

We have done some rearranging and you'll find a description of the products featured in this issue on page 14. See the enclosed envelope to order. We appreciate your feedback and trust that *SERVANT* will encourage your heart and strengthen your walk with God.

Pat Massey Editor
pat.massey@prairie.edu

CORRECTION

Innerview Issue 99 stated that Kent Annan and his wife lived in Haiti for seven months. They resided there for two and a half years.



WILMA DERKSEN *letting go*



*On November 30, 1984, thirteen-year-old Candace Derksen vanished on her way home from school. Nearly seven weeks later, her bound and frozen body was discovered in an abandoned shed. The case remained cold until an arrest was finally made in 2007 and the accused was sentenced to 25 years in prison. The conviction was overturned, however, and 32 years after their daughter was taken, Cliff and Wilma Derksen found themselves once again in a courtroom, re-living the events that rocked their lives. Through all those years, they had clung to the determination not to let their family be destroyed by the tragedy, but to seek another way, the way of forgiveness. The challenges they faced are described in Wilma’s new book, *The Way of Letting Go*.*

SERVANT: WHEN A REPORTER FIRST ASKED ABOUT YOUR RESPONSE TO THE TRAGEDY CLIFF SAID, “WE FORGIVE.” HOW DID YOU FEEL ABOUT THAT?

WILMA: I need to process things and I knew I wasn’t there yet. We had made that decision privately but I knew it was going to take time to actually live it out. You might feel that you can forgive in the moment, but the issues present themselves over and over again, so it’s an ongoing journey. Forgiveness became more of a goal for us.

AFTER AUTHOR WILLIAM GLADWELL HEARD YOUR STORY, HE SAID HE CAME TO FAITH IN WILMA DERKSEN’S KITCHEN. HOW DID THAT INTERVIEW IMPACT YOU?

He asked me if there were times when we were forced to live up to our public declaration to forgive even when we didn’t feel

like it. And I realized that forgiveness is a little like marriage. It is only after the public ceremony that we really find out what it means to keep that commitment. And during the tough times when it is tested, that invisible audience helps us stay true.

WHAT DOES FORGIVENESS LOOK LIKE TO YOU?

It wasn’t really about the murderer; for over two decades we didn’t even have a name or a face. Instead it meant giving up my right to do what comes naturally and deliberately choosing what my response would be. Only forgiveness held the promise of delivering us from the abyss of depression and trauma. It’s not a miracle drug to mend all broken relationships but a process that demands patience, creativity, faith and humility. Sometimes it takes a lifetime to forgive one incident. The first

step is accepting what has happened to us, the first of many things we need to “let go.” It was only in Christ that I found the courage and the faith to begin that journey.

I’M NOT SURE THAT OUR CULTURE ENCOURAGES US TO LET GO OF MUCH OF ANYTHING. HOW DID LETTING GO BECOME SO IMPORTANT TO YOU?

Churches were saying to me, “Just forgive.” But then I met people who re-sented the word “forgiveness” because they thought they were being told to just forget what had happened and there was no way they could do that. Over the years I was able to isolate the issues that kept us from moving on and as people saw that we were not locked in, they wanted to know why. I was finally given permission to talk about the letting go involved in forgiveness.

HOW DO I GET ON THE PATH TO FORGIVENESS?

By simply saying, “I want to, but I’m not there yet.” Letting go always feels empty, like you’re dying and in a vacuum of some sort. But when people are reaching out their hand, even if they feel they don’t have the ability, they’re inviting a supernatural love—God’s love-- to come into them and it helps them move. As long as they stay in that mode, eventually they will find themselves forgiving.

YOU SAY YOU HAD TO LET GO OF THE HAPPY ENDING.

I had an image of my family that we would end life together with our children and grandchildren. That first Christmas, when everybody sent us their beautiful family photos, I realized I would never be able to do that again. I had to let go of my dream. It was about ten years before we took another family picture.

YOU HAD TO LET GO OF FEAR AS WELL. HOW IS THAT POSSIBLE?

That's probably the biggest one because our instinct is to survive. But when we get up close to our fears, we realize they aren't as big as we think. This isn't the end. It wasn't the end of Candace; the memories still continue to live. The closeness of a relationship with God and knowing we will be together at the end is the grounding that takes care of our fears.

HOW WERE YOU ABLE TO EMBRACE RISK AGAIN?

I had forbidden Candace's sister to ever walk home alone. One day she did and I just ripped her apart because I was so afraid and she burst into tears. I had become a monster. I was murdering her spirit in order to keep her body alive. It reminded me how vicious fear is. The "perfect love" that casts out fear gives us the grace to allow others to live out their lives, to let generosity and self-sacrifice overcome my ego and embrace the good in every moment rather than be encased in fear.

YOU WERE ANGRY WITH THE GOD WHO HAD LET CANDACE DIE. WHAT BROUGHT YOU BACK TO TRUST?

We want to believe that God controls everything. Why didn't he tell me where Candace was? I had to realize that my anger was misdirected and that God was still loving and righteous. Each of us has an ugly side and our anger can turn to rage as our need for justice becomes a desire for revenge. Later on I had the opportunity to meet with a group of lifers—all murderers. They told me their stories honestly and as I saw their humanity and their struggle, my desire for revenge subsided. That's best left up to God.

WHAT STEPS CAN I TAKE TO DEAL WITH MY ANGER IF I'M HONEST ABOUT IT?

Just admitting it is the biggest step, then projecting it into the future. Do you really

want to follow the path it will lead you on? Is this where you want to end up? I think it helps to confess it to someone else as well. And we can deal with our ugly tendencies by filling the void that anger creates with goodness. Filling our hearts with good things and good actions prevents the anger from possessing us.

YOU SAY THAT "GRATITUDE IS THE LAST POWERFUL LIGHT THAT DRIVES AWAY THE DARKNESS." HOW CAN WE BE GRATEFUL IN THE MIDST OF HORROR?

In the beginning it was very difficult to pull my eyes off the tragedy because I had this huge, desperate self-pity and it was a struggle to be grateful. When you become obsessed with the negative, that's all you can see, but I had beautiful friends who let me talk about Candace and the murder endlessly. And then they would say, "And Wilma, what about your other two children?" And I'd remember, yes, I have other children. We feel like the loss is so huge, but when we turn our eyes the other way, we'll see that there is always something beautiful that we can feast on. When we're grateful for the little things, it's amazing how big they can become.

“ *FORGIVENESS MEANT DELIBERATELY CHOOSING WHAT MY RESPONSE WOULD BE.* ”

HOW HAVE YOU SEEN BROKENNESS OVERCOME?

The brokenness in my life hasn't only been from the murder. Life continues to break us. But everything that could have destroyed us has actually made us who we are today. I've had people say, "I don't relish what you've gone through, but I am envious of where you are. You've had so many opportunities." The doors that were closed were horrible, but the doors that have opened have been so gratifying. It's made me realize that brokenness can be overcome to something more beautiful. We have to lift our eyes from the storm to the sun; it's shining somewhere all the time.

MOST MARRIAGES THAT FACE ADVERSITY LIKE THIS COME APART. WHAT HAS KEPT YOU AND CLIFF TOGETHER?

It wasn't easy. Early in our marriage, though, an elderly pastor advised us not to blame the other one for something they



Wilma Derksen: "Love allows us to embrace the good in every moment rather than being encased in fear."

can't change. So we made that a rule right away. The fierceness of misapplied blame is a very destructive force, especially when tragedy happens. That was the biggest protection of our marriage because it gives space for learning and growing and grace. We also determined that we would forgive each other for being human, be open and transparent, and not give in to the lies. Now in hindsight all that grace has really paid off.

DID YOU HAVE TO GIVE YOURSELF PERMISSION TO LAUGH AFTER YOU LOST YOUR DAUGHTER?

I didn't want to. We had been a laughing family but I just couldn't anymore because to me that would minimize what had happened. But my children needed their mother back, so we had to purposely find reasons to laugh. I think that's part of the miracle of forgiveness. There's an element of faith and movement and freedom that has to happen and if you can laugh, it's one of the signs that you have moved from the obsession of the pain and the injustice toward forgiveness.

WHAT CAN CHURCHES AND OTHER BELIEVERS DO TO SUPPORT THOSE WHO ARE GOING THROUGH THE VALLEY OF SHADOWS?

Allow people the freedom to change. Listen without being judgmental. Show lots of grace. Forgiveness comes with a huge punch and it takes time. Part of being a real friend is to absorb the anger; to realize that what's directed toward me in a time of trauma isn't really about me and not to take it personally but to just hang in there. That's probably the biggest gift we can give.

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE REMEMBERED FOR?

That I loved to tell a story. Life is made up of comedy and tragedy and I hope people will see that I embraced both. ❧



REFORMER A BEST-SELLER

It's been nearly 500 years since Martin Luther sparked the Reformation but today he's making headlines for another reason. As Germany gears up to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation, the German toy manufacturer Playmobil has produced a plastic figurine of Luther, complete with a quill, German language Bible and cheery grin. The toy became the fastest-selling Playmobil figure of all time when the first edition of 34,000 sold out in just 72 hours.



MAMA LUKA GOES HOME

Helen Roseveare, missionary doctor and author, passed away in Northern Ireland on December 7, 2016, at the age of 91. Born in England, Helen came to faith as a medical student at Cambridge University. In 1953 she arrived in the northeastern region of the Congo (later named Zaire) where she served for twenty years as a medical missionary, establishing hospitals, training centres and clinics. Her traumatic experiences during the days of the Congo rebellion revealed to Helen what it meant to share in Christ's suffering, and "privilege" became a prominent theme in her world-wide speaking and writing ministry. Her life was documented in the 1989 film, *Mama Luka Comes Home*.

BIBLE SOCIETY CELEBRATES BICENTENNIAL

The American Bible Society is also celebrating a significant milestone. May 11, 2016, marked their 200th year of putting the Scriptures into the hands of people worldwide. Along with a recent move from New York to new headquarters in Philadelphia, the Society is about to embark on an ambitious project with the construction of a \$60 million interactive exhibit on site. The 40,000 square foot *Faith & Liberty Discovery Center* will examine how the Bible influenced America's historical figures and even documents such as the Constitution. Set to open in 2018, the center is expected to become a major public attraction.

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GEORGE
MacDONALD

"We have to live in the present moment, because we can do nothing about the past, and God is doing everything about the future."



QUOTEWORTHY

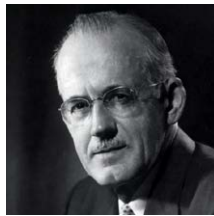


STEVE
KENNEDY

EDITOR
TESTIMONY MAGAZINE

"It is not hard to give up on church if I am going for any other reason than God.

Finding fault in a church service is like finding Waldo at a Goth convention—it's too easy!"



A.W.
TOZER

"We can be in our day what the heroes of faith were in their day—but remember at the time they didn't know they were heroes."



JONI
EARECKSON TADA

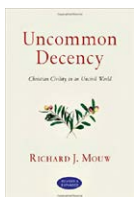
"He went without comfort so you might have it. He postponed joy so you might share in it. He willingly chose isolation so you might never be alone in your hurt and sorrow."

MEDITATION

HELEN
ROSEVEARE

"To be a living sacrifice will involve all my time. God wants me to live every minute for him in accordance with his will and purpose, sixty minutes of every hour, twenty-four hours of every day, being available to him. No time can be considered as my own, or as 'off-duty' or 'free.' I cannot barter with God about how much time I can give to serve him. Whatever I am doing, be it a routine salaried job, or housework at home, be it holiday time and free, or after-work activities, all should be undertaken for him, to reveal his indwelling presence to those around me. The example of my life must be as telling as my teaching if he is to be honored."

RECOMMENDED



UNCOMMON DECENCY: CHRISTIAN CIVILITY IN AN UNCIVIL WORLD (IVP)

Richard Mouw

This second edition of Mouw's book, first published in 1992, speaks to our times as if written yesterday. In an age when invective, name calling and outright slander pass for public debate and 'open discussion' on controversial issues, Mouw summons Christians to rise above responding in kind, urging us to practice a "convicted civility" in the public arena. Cultivating the habit of civil speech, while maintaining convictions grounded in the truth of the gospel, causes us to see those who oppose our views as worthy of dignity because they, too, have been created in God's image. Practicing civility when discussing polarizing issues such as politics, sex and religion will be one of the best ways of affirming the truth of that familiar chorus, "They will know we are Christians by our love." —James Enns

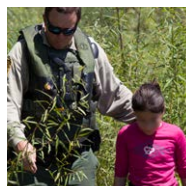
NOW YOU KNOW

Queen Elizabeth II received 17,420 pieces of mail during the week of her 90th birthday in 2016.

BritishMonarchy@RoyalFamily



Fleeing crime and poverty in Central America, nearly 26,000 unaccompanied children were stopped at the U.S. border in the first six months of 2016. *UNICEF*



A 1,410-foot long bridge in China towers 984 feet above the ground and is paved with panes of transparent glass.

BBC News

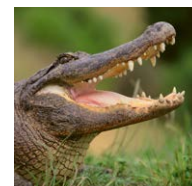


The Sesame Street character Cookie Monster's first name is Sid. *Muppet Wiki*



The British drink 165 million cups of tea every day or 60.2 billion cups a year.

www.tea.co.uk/tea-faqs



Alligators develop up to 3,000 teeth in a lifetime with roughly 80 teeth in their mouths at one time.

Smithsonian National Zoo

Families at the crossroads

When most people think of a typical Canadian family, they may picture a man and a woman, 2.5 kids, a dog named Fluffy, and a minivan.

In 2017, however, the image of the traditional family does not always bear that resemblance. The student family distinction here at Prairie is not nearly as clear-cut as it was even ten years ago and we are seeing a rise in non-traditional households. The change mirrors what is happening in our culture and global church as divorce ravages our family units.

of both challenges and opportunities and ministering to changing family dynamics takes wisdom and discernment.

Prairie has responded to this changing culture through the reallocation of people into our gospel-centered community without labels. Our Student Family ministry intentionally does not have a “divorce ministry” or “single parents’

It is important that we learn not only what God is saying to us, but what he wants us to do about it. For the majority of Christians, it is not so much that we need more Bible knowledge, but we need to put that knowledge into practice. Prairie College has been intentional at creating small discipleship teams, called Impact Groups, for all students. Each Student Family Impact Group is gender specific and cross-pollinated by program and marital status. The student leaders encourage group members to apply the Word to their lives rather than just studying it. It is in this loving community that the new family in Christ becomes a reality.

Today’s change to family structures is filled with complexity and issues. Yet in the midst of complexity, our Prairie Student Family community has brought



Kelly and Donna Steffen and family: Alexandria, Hannah, Nathan and Fluffy...er...Thor.

Students come from all roads of life and may now include newly married, married with children, divorced, separated, widowed, blended families and single parents. All of these individuals are now grouped as “Student Families,” thus alleviating the marital status distinctions. These categories have created a plethora

says to this new culture and rethink how we can be shaped by the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ. In a changing world, God’s Word is unchanging and we affirm its authority in the midst of culture. How does one live out that Word to the single parent, to the widow, to the blended family, to the divorced?

It is in a loving community that the new family in Christ becomes a reality.

ministry,” not because we hadn’t thought of it, but because we want to foster unity and not division. Prairie is all about relationships: our relationship to God and our relationships with each other. Our desire is to serve student families so that, whatever road God has brought them from, we can assist them in becoming lovers of God and help them find their place in his kingdom.

The church in every generation must ask what the story of Jesus

a rich environment of grace, welcome and compassion to those who are suffering from brokenness or experiencing a new singleness. Many are at a crossroads in their lives and it reminds me of the prophet Jeremiah who once wrote, *Thus says the LORD: “Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls...”* (Jeremiah 6:16 ESV).

As we stand alongside these that God has brought to us, we can do our part by helping to shape godly families, applying the Word, and ministering to them. Ultimately our desire is that families come to know the One who is able to bring healing, restoration and health to their situations. It was, after all, God’s grand design to form and redeem all families through the sending of his only Son Jesus, who stands at the crossroads between heaven and earth. ❏

Kelly Steffen is the Director of Student Families and Pastoral Program Coordinator at Prairie College. He can be reached at kelly.steffen@prairie.edu

Student families



**BLAIR & ELAINE
STROMSTEDT**

PASTORAL

I had reached a point in my career where I either needed to find another job or get more education.

We seemed to be living constantly in debt with an endless need for “more.” After working for the same company for fifteen years, and becoming a Christian during that time, I knew the only way forward was to serve Jesus. I evaluated a handful of Christ-centred post-secondary institutions and with a lot of help from God, I settled on the Digital Media program at Prairie College.

Three Hills is a closely-knit community and Elaine and I have found the slower pace restful. Our home is within walking distance of the college as well as the Christian school that our son attends. And even with the wide variety of churches in town, we’ve managed to find one that feels like home. I recently transferred into the Pastoral program and I really believe this is where God has called me and that he has a good plan for me and my family.



**TED
LANTZ**

PASTORAL

Alcohol and drug problems began very early in my life, with the result that self-destructive behavior and poor choices were my trademarks.

When I married and gained a step daughter, I gave up those addictions for the sake of my family. But in the end, my selfishness destroyed our marriage. I had tried on my own to become a better person, but a friend finally told me, “You need Jesus in your life and you need to change from the inside out.” Those words turned my world around and before long I had surrendered my life to the Lord.

I resisted when God told me I should go to school. But when he removed every obstacle, I applied to Prairie and have never regretted that decision. I’m so grateful that he put me in this place. Faculty, students and staff have all added to my walk with Christ and are teaching me to love others. You may come to Prairie for an education, but you’ll stay because of the people and the community!



**SAULO & MARA
OLIVEIRA**

MUSIC & WORSHIP ARTS

We came to Prairie to develop our calling of being involved in the church, particularly in the area of music.

I led the worship in our church in Brazil and helped its expansion through worship teams and youth choirs. I also used to teach in universities, colleges and schools as a physical education teacher and professor in the field of leisure activities, pedagogy and lifespan aging. My wife Mara was studying business administration.

Here we have found a great community and are making friends for life. Language is always an issue, but I think the biggest challenge is that our experience is not known and it takes time for people to accept that we can do things according to their cultural expectations. Another challenge is finances for studies, but God has provided everything we need. It is our hope to find positions that will allow us to express our love for God and his community in the areas he has trained us for. ☞



the broken way

ANN VOSKAMP

**Shalom had come
to me with her
heart cut out
of white paper.
“Will you do it,
Mama? I can’t
make it work.”
And she holds out
a roll of mangled
clear tape.**

“What are you trying to do, Sweet? Tape it in half? Tape it to the wall?”

“I just want the heart taped to me. Right here.” Shalom staccatos her finger off her chest.

“And why are we doing this exactly?” I’m on my knees, looking up into her face, my thumb smoothing the tape line of this exposed heart.

We’d just talked it over that morning at breakfast, about how we need to give love to others. So of course, she’s trying to put into practice her mother’s half-baked words, making herself into a walking sign of my little breakfast lecture. She takes my face into her hands and bends close. “We need to tape hearts right to us, Mama. So we always know. So we always know His love’s around us everywhere.”

If only we could all wear a heart right across the center of us so there was always this knowing: God has not forgotten you. God has not abandoned you. God’s love is around you everywhere. Shalom looks down, smooths out her paper heart, white and larger than life. And then the inevita-

ble happens: the heart breaks, rips right down the center, just where she tried to smooth everything out. She looks down. I am waiting for her to brim and overrun.

“It’s all okay.” She holds the torn bit of her paper heart out to me. “Maybe the love gets in easier right where the heart’s broke open.”

I gently kiss her perfect little forehead and off she goes with her one broken heart. I sit there in the wake of her, waking: *maybe you can live a full and beautiful life in spite of the great and terrible moments that will happen right inside of you.* Actually—maybe you get to become more abundant *because* of those moments. Maybe our hearts are made to be broken. Broken open. Broken free. Maybe the deepest wounds birth deepest wisdom.

I am the woman with secrets she doesn’t know how to speak, with sins that are like hidden black mold growing up the side of her soul, who’s ached with a silent suffering and felt shattered at

the base of her crumbling foundations and knows what it means to be lost, not knowing how to rebuild. I'm the woman whose machete tongue has torn a strip off her kids' backsides, the friend who has slapped up cold, guarded walls to protect her heart at the cost of anyone else's heart, the woman who's been more interested in self-preservation than anyone else's situation.

Maybe we believe in Jesus; we just don't always believe in Him *working in us*. It feels strange, even wrong to believe He could find any value in my tarnished brokenness. But didn't He, somehow? Didn't He believe it was worth redeeming, renewing, resurrecting, to make all into more than enough, in spite of my brokenness and through it?

When we're naked and ashamed and alone in our brokenness, rejected and abandoned and feel beyond wanting, Christ envelopes us with a grace that holds us and calls us Beloved and says we belong and no brokenness ever has the power to break us away from being safe.

maybe we believe in Jesus; we just don't always believe in Him working in us.

If Christ has chosen me, can He *not* believe in me? Jesus calls us to the abundant life because He knows He can empower and fill us with His Spirit. And if He believes in us and what can be given through us, how can I not believe?

How many times have I read it? How Jesus "took the seven loaves and the fish, and when he had

given thanks, he broke them and gave them to the disciples, and they in turn to the people." The miracle happens in the breaking. *Not enough* was given thanks for, and then the miracle happened: there was a breaking and a giving into abundant filling. What could be a greater paradox than this? Out of feeling lavishly loved by God, one can break and give away that lavish love—and know the complete fullness of love. *The miracle happens in the breaking.*

This is how you live with your one broken heart; *you give it away*. All our brokenness meets in the mystery of Christ's brokenness and givenness and becomes the miracle of abundance. We are made

in the image of God. And wasn't God's heart made to be broken too? Wounds can be openings to the beauty in us. And our weaknesses can be a container for God's glory. When our own brokenness meets

when our own brokenness meets the brokenness of the world, we are most near the broken heart of Christ.

the brokenness of the world, in shattered places, with broken people, we are most near the broken heart of Christ.

At a doctor's office I pick up the magazine lying on the seat next to me, the pages falling open to some editor's column. According to the article's author, everyone has a "bucket list" of the experiences they hope to have or achievements they hope to accomplish during their lifetime, experiences you can check off to break out of your boring life and into the abundant, exciting life. *Is this what enough looks like?*

I want to find this editor and tell him, "We are done waiting for some elusive future moment to say life is good enough. We are done with waiting room living. Real life is happening, and it's happening *right now*. What if instead of waiting for good enough things to happen to us, we could be the good thing to happen to someone else who's waiting? *What if abundant living isn't about what you can expect from life, but what life can expect from you?*

The world is brokenhearted and full of suffering, and if you listen to what life needs instead of what you need from it you could fill the

brokenness with your own brokenhearted love—and this will in turn fill you.

Who needs more when He's already made us enough? Why grow the list of what I want to have instead of the list of

what I can give? Why not let the heart grow big with a love large enough that it breaks your heart and gives bits of you away? Does "real life" only happen when you get to pick some balmy destination and a cheap flight itinerary? Or is "real life" when you choose to be bread to all kinds of hungry? What if doing that gave you the gift you'd been hungering for yourself?

No change in circumstances can change your life like meaning and purpose can. Experiencing the whole world will not fill your bucket like experiencing *giving yourself* and finding the meaning that will fill your soul. When you are filled to the brim with the enoughness of Christ, the only way you can possibly have more is to pour yourself out. Christ in me makes me enough. I have more and become more, the more I pour out. The abundant life doesn't have a bucket list as much as it has an empty bucket.

I wonder if there isn't a better way to live than carrying around a bucket to fill up. Live for something worth dying for. Let love break into you and mess with you and loosen you up and make you laugh and cry and give and hurt because this is the only way to really live. Bucket list or not, don't waste a minute of your life on anything less. ❧



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INTO THE LIGHT

WAYNE NELSON WITH PAT MASSEY

I woke up shaking uncontrollably and looked at the clock. It was only 3:00 am. The same thing had been happening night after night, but I knew what to do. A quick trip in the darkness to my secret stash in the garage calmed me down and gave me the courage to face the world. I was in control once again.

ALUMNI IN ACTION |

Not everyone agreed with me, however. Even though I couldn't see it, things were starting to fall apart. Our house had always been a gathering place for friends, but now my children were spending less and less time at home and never brought anyone over. My unpredictability, outbursts of anger and odd behavior were embarrassing them and causing my wife Lydia increasing concern. She tried every way she could to keep her world from falling apart, but reality was rapidly dragging her out of her denial. It was plain to see that I was on the path to destroying myself and everyone around me.

After resigning my job at Prairie, I commuted back and forth to Calgary where I would often end up in front of a liquor store, waiting desperately for it to open. One day my wife confronted me.

"I hope you're not driving drunk," she said.

I denied it, but the truth was only one of a long list of casualties in my life and Lydia knew that I was lying. Now that she realized that I might actually kill myself or someone else, it was obvious that an intervention was necessary, no matter how difficult it would be.

Then the miracle happened. That same weekend I finally hit bottom and recognized that I was completely and hopelessly addicted. On March 12, 2013, a day I will never forget, I stood before my family and admitted that I was an alcoholic.

Years before, we had been involved in a church that welcomed drug addicts and alcoholics from local recovery ministries. As we opened our lives and our home to these men, we saw God meet them and gained a whole new perspective on spiritual warfare, the power of prayer, and what grace and forgiveness really looked like. Our children had seen the horrible results of addiction up close. But they also knew that through hard work and the transforming power of the Holy Spirit there could be healing. They had had enough of my games and pulled no punches with me.

"Dad," my daughter said, "you need help. You need to go to a recovery centre."

How could I? Then everyone would know my secret! In spite of my reluctance, however, I knew there was nowhere left to hide and my family was not about to let me back down. The next days were filled with the pain of detox and the humiliation of telling my 90-year-old father, my church, my friends, and those that I had helped out of addiction that Wayne Nelson had been living a lie. Ten days later my son drove me to Valiant Recovery Centre in Kelowna, BC, and as I watched him leave for home, the last shreds of my pride evaporated. After years of telling addicts how to find freedom, now I was the addict. My life, my family, my reputation, my future—all lay in ruins. How had it come to this?

AFTER YEARS OF TELLING ADDICTS HOW TO FIND FREEDOM, NOW I WAS THE ADDICT.

It seemed like my whole upbringing had been filled with rules for just about everything and I found the expectations impossible to live up to as I struggled with things like self-worth, depression, substance abuse and sexual purity. I couldn't talk about it with my parents and no-one in the church seemed to understand, so I kept it all to myself and continued to struggle. Over the years I turned to things I thought would help. After attending Christian schools, I went on to Bible college, married an amazing woman, and enjoyed business success, money, and involvement in the church, even a job with a Christian organization.

But it made no difference. I just found myself more and more consumed with guilt and shame as I looked around Sunday after Sunday and wondered how everyone else

HOW MANY OTHERS JUST LIKE ME WERE SITTING IN CHURCH PEWS, HIDING IN THEIR WOUNDEDNESS, STRUGGLING IN ISOLATION?

could have it all together when I was such a mess. As a teen, I had discovered that alcohol helped to dull the pain and silence the guilt and it gradually became my refuge. That was ok, though, because I had things in hand and my habit was well-hidden—or so I thought. I was wrong.

For much of my life I had relied on my own strength to fix the hurt instead of acknowledging that God is the giver of all things. It wasn't until he brought me to a place of humility and vulnerability that I finally understood that my efforts got me nowhere; that every good and perfect gift really is from above. All the things I had held onto so tightly had been stripped away and while my time in recovery brought me absolute peace and forgiveness, the consequences were enormous. My family had lost their faith in me as a husband and father, and I no longer had the crutch of alcohol to get me through a day. It didn't seem like restoration would ever be possible.

While I was away, Lydia and the kids began to draw together and share honestly with each other about what they had been going through. My habit had so beaten them down that love and trust were in short supply and they had no idea what the future held. In those dark days, Lydia

turned to the Word of God and a trusted friend. It had taken great courage to upset the status quo, but she knew that my drinking habit was destroying my health, our family, and any possibility of ministry. Her prayer was that somehow my willingness to admit the addiction and commit to sobriety would stop the downward spiral.

When I came home, there was a lot of healing to be done and it has been a slow process that continues to this day. My eyes were opened to how devastating my addiction had been to my family and that really broke my heart. I also realized how much they loved me and desperately wanted me to get well. If I chose not to, I would lose the ones I cared so much about and that was a huge motivation to stay clean. New healthy habits had to replace the harmful ones.

Spending time with God each day, being accountable to a group of friends, being honest instead of living a lie—all were important steps in my journey to sobriety. My wife and children are my heroes. I could never have made it without them and their decision to choose love and rebuild our family. We are better people for deciding to live in truth instead of denial.

I was so sure that being open about my struggles would destroy me. But to my surprise I discovered that it was only when I was willing for the light to reveal my brokenness that healing started to become a reality. The words of David certainly rang true for me: *"I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, I will confess my transgressions to the Lord and you forgave the guilt of my sin"* (Psalm 32:5).

Even in the darkest, deepest places of my addiction, Jesus let me know that he loved me and was with me. As I took hesitant steps into a new life, I also began to experience the peace, hope, forgiveness and joy that come with a life that is surrendered to God. That is a wonderful place to be and I don't ever want to lose that.

Out of my experience with addicts, myself included, I now know that problems like mine are not just "out there."

Statistics for addictions with alcohol, pornography, eating disorders, even prescription drugs, within the church are staggering and yet we seldom talk about them. I began to wonder how many others just like me are sitting in church pews, hiding in their woundedness, convinced that they struggle in isolation. Aloneness leads to helplessness and shame, but God wants to bring us to the light and set us free.

It's amazing what happens when we are willing to be vulnerable, and Lydia and I have both been overwhelmed at how God is opening doors to share that message. Hardly a day goes by that we



Wayne and Lydia Nelson: *"We are better people for deciding to live in truth instead of denial."*

don't come into contact with people in our churches and community who are caught up in the cycle of addiction.

"I love Jesus," they tell me, often with tears, but because of their wounds they have looked, as I did, to something else in an effort to numb their pain. In the strength of God's amazing grace and with honest effort and friends to walk beside them, many of these individuals are finding hope and lasting healing and being freed from the shame that has consumed them for so many years. I now have the privilege of watching the transforming power of God at work in their lives. What a gift!

If there is one thing I would want to say to others who are trapped in addictions, it's that there is hope. I have experienced for myself how God can make something very good out of Satan's efforts to destroy and I will be forever grateful. ❧

Wayne is a 1980 grad of Prairie High School and an '88 undergrad of Prairie College. He can be reached at waynedn6@gmail.com

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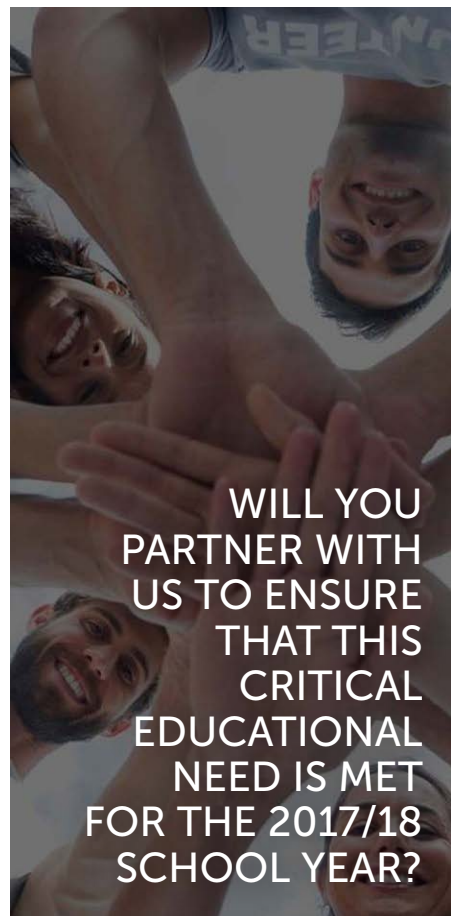
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THE WAY OF LETTING GO

Wilma Derksen

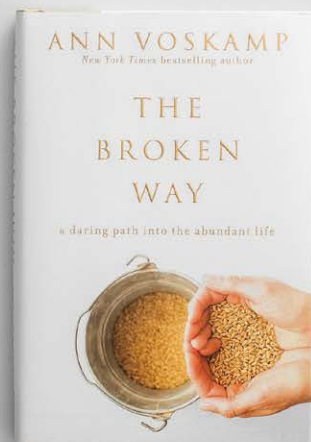
When her teenage daughter was kidnapped and left to die, Wilma Derksen's world collapsed. Realizing that the tragedy had the potential to destroy their lives, she and her husband knew that while they had no choice about what had happened, they did have a choice in how they responded to it. Rejecting anger and obsession, they chose instead to begin the process

of acceptance, surrender and forgiveness, releasing the hold of heartbreak on their lives. In her new book, Wilma shares how letting go of the barriers to personal healing has helped her navigate the dark waters of sorrow and live a life of joy and freedom.

THE BROKEN WAY

Ann Voskamp

Sharing the shattered pieces of her own life, the author invites us to recognize that wholeness and brokenness are not opposites and that freedom can be found not only *beyond* the fear and pain, but actually *within it*. When our broken parts are met by God's broken heart they can bring healing to a broken world. Suffering is never a meaningless waste of your life to a God who is willing to use the ugly places and makes them beautiful, guiding us, not around the pain, but through it. Resurrection can happen in the broken places when his goodness is invited into the wound.



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Bumpa

I CAN'T TELL YOU HOW EXCITED I WAS

the first time my granddaughter called me “Bumpa.” But then I discovered that she calls everything Bumpa. She calls a tomato Bumpa. My dog she calls Bumpa. A block of Gouda cheese is Bumpa. A friend’s grandchild calls him “Grandma,” and sometimes “Grumpy,” so I figure I don’t have it so bad. Bumpa is just fine.

Names. My mother once told me that she started thinking of my name months before I was born. She wrote it on a slip of paper, tried it out on friends, and whispered it to me when I was in the womb. She rocked me to sleep singing songs with my name in them. When I was older she even had “Philip” embroidered on a towel for a birthday present.

So it’s amazing that half the time when I was growing up she had no idea who I was. She couldn’t remember my name at all. She called me by my siblings’ names: Dan, Dave, Tim, Ruth. Sometimes she called me Inky, which was our snarly little terrier’s name. I’m sure some kids would be traumatized by this. I thought it was more fun than a couch full of kittens. Sure, I went through a bit of an identity crisis there for a while when she called me

hectic. Mothers with more than two children are just glad if they can remember why they called you in the first place when they finally get your name right.

My wife sometimes calls our children by her siblings’ names: Janice, Dennis, LaVerne, Caroline, Miriam, Cynthia. They got used to it in time.

“I’m Rachael,” said my daughter once. “Say it with me, Mom. Rachael.”

“What did I call you?” asked my wife. “You called me Rex. That was your dog when you were little.”

“I always liked Rex,” said Ramona. “That’s a lovely name.”

The more the family is extended the worse it gets. Jeff married Raelyn. Rachael married Jordan. It’s too many R’s and J’s. We pray for them each night and often get the names mixed up. I’m thankful God is big enough to sort it all out. And I’m

I asked her once why she couldn’t get my name right and she said, “You’ll understand one day.”

“Get In Here You Know Who You Are.” Or, “For the love of Pete.” For a whole week I thought my name was Fiddlesticks.

A family came to visit us once. The kids were Dallas, Dennis, Dorcas, Deloris, and Zach, a pudgy little toddler. I wonder if his was the only name his mother could remember at dinnertime. Motherhood is

comforted to know that he never forgets our names.

In John 10 Jesus compares himself to a shepherd who calls his sheep by name. “I am the good shepherd,” he says, “I know my own and my own know me.” In Exodus 33, God says to Moses, “This very thing that you have spoken I will do, for



Illustration copyright by Dennis Jones

you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name.”

I like that.

In Isaiah 43, the Lord reminds the people of Israel, “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.” In Matthew 10, Jesus says, “Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground without your Father knowing. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.” In Isaiah 49 God asks, “Can a mother forget her own child? Though she may forget, I will not forget you.” We have a Father who is intimately acquainted with all our ways. He knows our every thought. He knows what concerns us today. And he loves us unreasonably. He loved us to death.

I never doubted that my mother loved me. But remembering names wasn’t her spiritual gift. I asked her once why she couldn’t get my name right and she said, “You’ll understand one day.” And I do now. When my son was small, he had his jammies on inside out one Saturday. I called him Calvin Klein for two days. ❏

Phil Callaway is an author and host of Laugh Again Radio. He has five grandchildren. They wear nametags. Visit Phil at laughagain.org



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