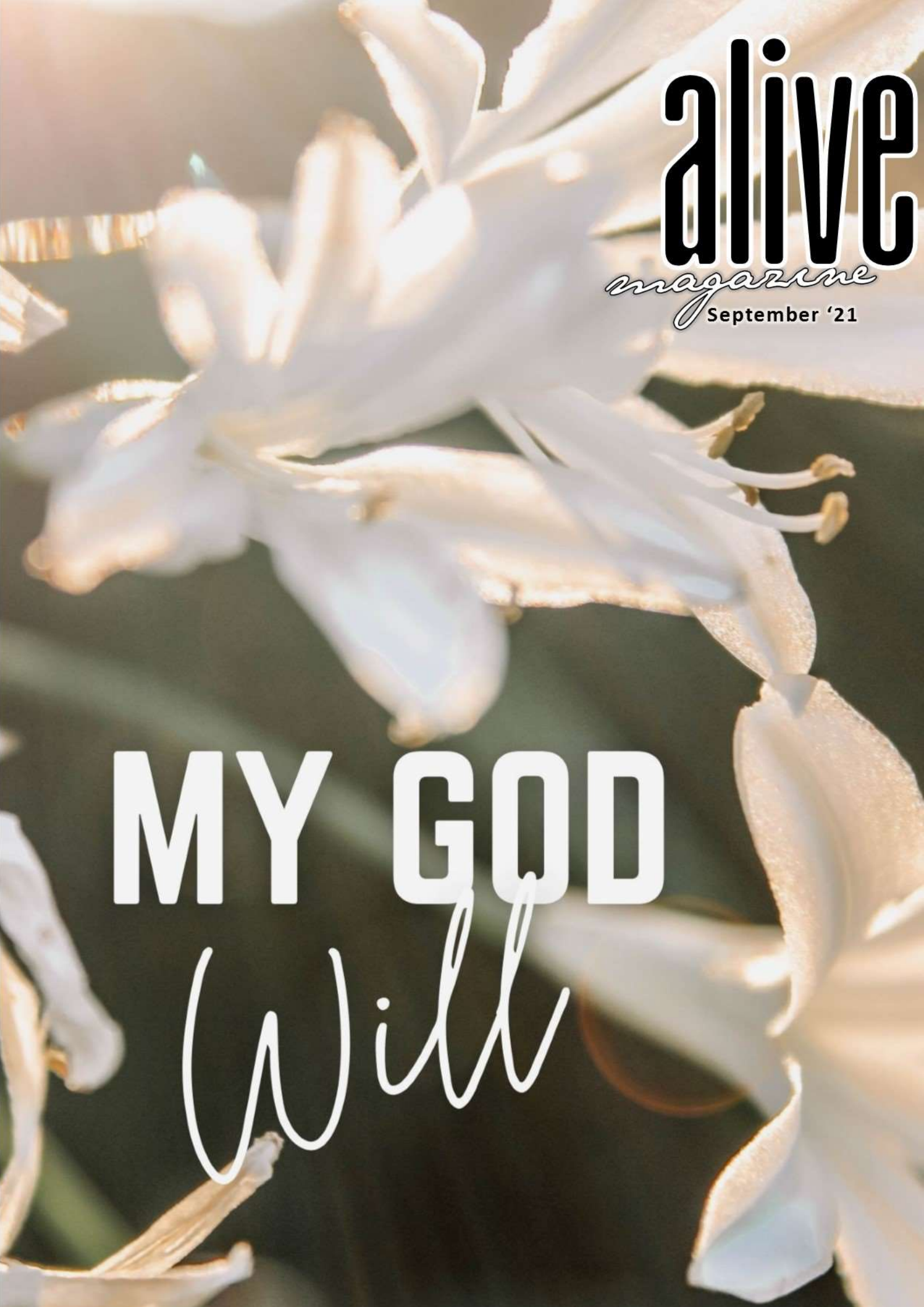




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MY GOD

Will

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WHAT DOES DAVID MEAN WHEN HE SAYS, "HE LEADS ME IN THE PATHS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS" (PSALM 23:3)?

BY: GOTQUESTIONS.ORG

For the soul in need of restoration, Psalm 23 is perhaps the most comforting place to turn in all the Bible. King David, who had tended his father's flocks as a boy, had come to know God as the shepherd of his life. In Psalm 23:3, David declares of the Lord, "He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake" (ESV).



David wrote this psalm during a time of spiritual renewal or revival. “He refreshes my soul,” says the New Living Translation; “He renews my life,” affirms the Christian Standard Bible. Like a sheep who lacks the typical animal sense of direction, David had lost his way. He had wandered off the right path.

But here, David affirms, “He leads me in the paths of righteousness.” The primary jobs of the shepherd in pasturing his flock were to lead the sheep in the right way, to food and water, and to fend off predators. The shepherd was responsible for the welfare and safety of the sheep.

The word paths in Psalm 23:3 refers to one’s “course of conduct.” The word for “righteousness” in the original language means “adhering to moral standards like honesty, justice, and uprightness.” Like a shepherd guides his sheep along the right way, God effectively leads His people on the correct path by His Word and through the Holy Spirit’s guidance (Psalm 19:7; 119:105; Isaiah 59:21; 63:11–14; Romans 8:14). God does all this “for his name’s sake” or, in other words, to bring honor and glory to His name.

In ancient Israel, one’s name was inseparably linked with his reputation and standing. God leads us in paths of righteousness because He is a righteous shepherd: “For you are my rock and my fortress,” David acknowledged, “and for your name’s sake you lead me and guide me” (Psalm 31:3, ESV).

In Psalm 5:8, David prayed, “Lead me, LORD, in your righteousness because of my enemies—make your way straight before me.” As our life guide, the Lord assures us of faultless leading in straight paths. He is the ultimate companion for our journey. Like a professional travel guide, He stakes His name and reputation to guarantee our protection and safe arrival at the promised destination (Psalm 23:6).

The “paths of righteousness” depict the journey that leads to eternal life (Psalm 16:11). Proverbs 12:28 assures, “There is life in the path of righteousness, and in its path there is no death” (CSB). The Lord watches over those who walk on these paths (Psalm 1:6). As the proverb says, “The path of the righteous is like the morning sun, shining ever brighter till the full light of day” (Proverbs 4:18).

Believers are made righteous by faith in Jesus Christ (Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11; Ephesians 2:8–9). By faith, we enter into a relationship with the one true God through Jesus Christ, His Son. Through the Holy Spirit, our Good Shepherd leads us on paths of righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:7; John 17:3; 1 John 2:25).

Sheep are known to stray from the path, and so are Christians. Yet, even if a believer falls into sin, as David did with Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11:1–12:15), the Lord is committed to leading him back to the right path. The Good Shepherd goes after the one lost sheep (Luke 15:1–7). The Father waits for the prodigal son to return (Luke 15:11–32).





The Lord shows us our wandering ways so that we can repent and have our souls refreshed and restored. “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

The disciple Peter is an excellent example of a straying follower who was pursued by the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord (Luke 22:58–62). After he fell, Peter, like David, was forgiven and restored by the Lord (John 21:15–19).

According to Scripture, paths of righteousness are the safest roads to travel (Proverbs 4:11–12; 10:2, 9). These paths are ultimately avenues of safety, wisdom, justice, right living, integrity, and eternal blessings (Isaiah 42:16; Psalm 119:35; Proverbs 8:20; 11:3). They are “ways of pleasantness” and “paths of peace” (Proverbs 3:17).



By: Andrew Roebert

MY GOD

Will

MY GOD WILL HELP ME

Psalm 71:12 'Do not be far from me, my God; come quickly, God, to help me.'

Help is one of the most basic functions we need in the course of life. From the moment we are born we need help and right up to the end of life we will need some form of help. We may think that we do not need help, but sooner or later we all need help. The professionals tell us that we have certain basic or foundational needs, and to meet these needs we need help. When we are born our parents help us, when we get married our spouse helps us, when we get sick the doctors help us and when we get old others have to help us. Sure, we love independence and want to do things for ourselves, but when we cannot help ourselves, we have to find help outside of ourselves. God wants to be exactly this for us - our Helper. The words of the great hymn confirm this: 'Oh God, our help in ages past, our Hope for years to come.' You can know God as your Helper.

Psalm 118:7 'He (the Lord) is my Helper.'

Don't try to do it on your own when your God wants to help you. Take hold of the hope you have in Him and say: 'My God will help me!'



MY GOD WILL SEE

Psalm 35:22 'LORD, You have seen this...'

There is nothing that is hidden from God. He sees all things, the good, the bad and the ugly. He sees what you have done while no one else noticed or appreciated the lengths you went to. He sees the way you have thanklessly served and tried to be a blessing and a help to others. He sees what you have had to face and what has been done to you. He sees all things, knows all things, and never leaves any matter undealt with. He is the One Who makes sure reaping follows sowing. So, you can rest in the knowledge that God sees and knows all things, even those things you hold within your own heart. The Lord sees all and knows all because He cares for you. He sees with the goal of intervening and taking care of things. Perhaps you feel like no one ever sees or notices you, but God does see.

Genesis 16:13 'You are the God Who sees me,' for she said, 'I have now seen the One Who sees me.'

So rest assured that He sees all things and say: 'My God will see...'

MY GOD WILL STAND WITH ME

Psalm 59:10 'In His unfailing love, my God will stand with me. He will let me look down in triumph on all my enemies.' (NLT)

Perhaps one of the greatest joys in life is to know that someone is standing with you. I remember as a little boy I would walk into the sea and hold onto my mother's hand as the waves splashed around me. She would stand with me and hold me by the hand and I could enjoy the thrill of the waves and the cold, fresh water, without the slightest fear, because she was standing with me.

I can remember in later life when my wife was diagnosed with cancer, how one of her friends stood with her during this difficult time. This friend attended all her chemo sessions with her, and was at the hospital when she had surgery and even at the final moment before she passed away, this friend was standing with her. It gave her strength to know that someone was there, standing with her until the end. I have also known what it's like to feel you are standing completely alone with little or no support. Even in those moments of feeling totally alone and abandoned, I know that My God stood with me. Today, as I look back, I can see that God stood with me, and He brought me out victorious. Regardless of what we go through, the Lord wants us to know that He will stand with us.

Psalm 118:7 'Yes, the LORD is for me...' (NLT)

Romans 8:31 'If God is for us, who can ever be against us?'

Right now the Lord is standing with you, so speak it out and say: 'My God will stand with me!'

MY GOD WILL SUPPLY ALL MY NEEDS

Philippians 4:19 'And my God will supply all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus.'

Our needs are important to God. The picture, in the original Greek language, of supplying our needs is of the filling up something that is empty. The Lord sees our needs as a vessel that He can fill up with His provision, His love, and His kindness towards us. He knows every need, every hope, every desire, every longing, and every dream. Meeting needs is part of the very nature and character of God.

Matthew 6:30 'And if God cares so wonderfully for wildflowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, He will certainly care for you.'

Matthew 6:32 'Your heavenly Father already knows all your needs.' (NLT)

So, just know that those needs that you are concerned about are things that God wants to do something about, He wants to come and fill that empty bucket.





He is the One Who says we should pray and say: 'Give us this day our daily bread...' Ask Him to give you those things that you need right now!

Psalm 37:25 'Once I was young, and now I am old. Yet I have never seen the godly abandoned or their children begging for bread.'

Say with me: 'My God will supply all my needs!'

MY GOD WILL SEND FORTH HIS UNFAILING LOVE AND FAITHFULNESS

*Psalm 57:3 'My God will send forth His unfailing love and faithfulness.'
(NLT)*

In His great love for us, the Lord wants to send forth His unfailing love, His mercy, His truth, and His faithfulness into our lives and into our situations. Perhaps you have had a picture, in your heart and mind, of God standing in judgement over you? Well, it is time to see your God in a different light, in the correct light. He is waiting to dispatch His lovingkindness and tender mercies to you. He wants to dispense His unfailing love and His faithfulness into your life and into your heart.

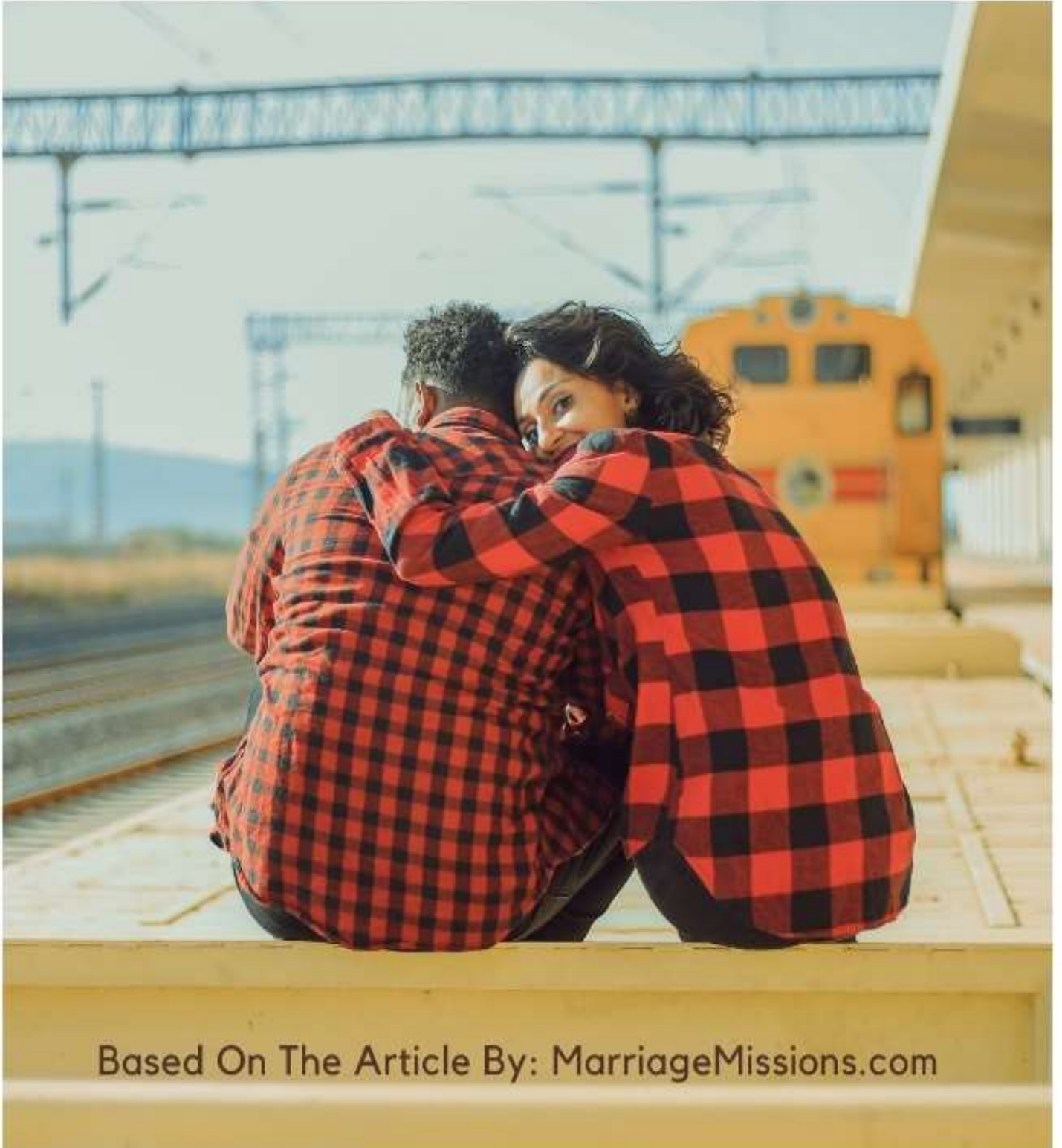
Your God loves you and He wants you to know and experience His faithfulness in every area of your life. If you've given up hope, it is time to pick up your hope out of the ashes and present it to your Heavenly Father, expecting His love and kindness towards you.

1 John 3:1 'See what an incredible quality of love the Father has shown to us, that we would be named and called and counted the children of God!'

His incredible love is calling out to you, His child, and telling you that you are loved, valued, and can expect Him to be faithful to you. Say with me: 'My God will send forth his unfailing love and faithfulness into my life and situation.' From today on, may you know, like never before, His great love and faithfulness towards you!

Apologies

That Make a Positive Difference



Based On The Article By: MarriageMissions.com

It's important to know that apologies are not created equal. Just because you apologize, it doesn't mean that the receiver feels you really "get it" as far as how much they have hurt you. As a result, they very well may reject your sincerity when you apologize. And when that happens you are stunned. Here's an example of a case in point that involved Dr Gary Chapman. He wrote: They were sitting in my office when the wife said, "I'd forgive him if he would just apologize."

He responded, "I did apologize."

"You did not."

"I told you I was sorry," he said.

"That is not an apology," she responded."

Have you been in the place Dr Chapman described? You apologized and your spouse says you haven't.

Or maybe your spouse says he or she apologized, and you just don't see it that way. You feel there's a disconnect in the sincerity of their apology. And now you both feel misunderstood and frustrated. This happens to A LOT couples. Often, it's not easy to know what the other spouse expects as far as an apology. Many—actually, most spouses don't approach and receive apologies in the same way. As a result, many apologies go flat, and it doesn't register with the offended spouse.

Apologies That Make a Difference

Apologizing is a difficult thing to do the right way. You say: "I've already said I'm sorry, what more does she/he want from me?" Or "I said I'm sorry once—that should be enough!"

Or "I give up! What more can a human being do to make him/her understand that I'm sorry?!" The "what more" that can be done, is being sorry enough that you make sure your spouse knows beyond a shadow of doubt, that you TRULY "get it" as far as how much you hurt him or her. Guard against being one who appears to be giving an apology equaling only a handful's worth of sorrow when your spouse feels you have piled a bucket's worth of hurt onto him or her. YOU may know that you are truly sorry. But does your spouse perceive it that way? It's important to give what they truly need, not what would satisfy you. Your spouse approaches matters like these differently than you do. If that's the case, make the extra (sincere) effort to meet your spouse's needs. After all, who is the apology really for? Is it for you or is it for your hurting spouse? Or could it be that you're giving your spouse your type of "fix" for the situation so you can get it all behind you? Again, that may meet your needs, but does it meet the needs of your (offended) spouse?





Does your apology go the “extra mile” (as we’re told in Matthew 5:41)? Do you show sincere remorse, and willingness to do whatever it takes to help heal the damage you’ve afflicted upon your spouse? There IS a difference!

Apologizing So Your Spouse is Fully Satisfied

If your apology is made to appease you and make YOUR life easier, giving what YOU believe is enough, it probably won’t work in reality. It may even introduce more frustration, anger, and grief into the whole matter. The emphasis needs to be on the receiver —not the giver. This is the type of situation where it definitely is “more blessed to give than to receive.” But if you are truly sorry for what you’ve done, then you need to express it in a way that opens his or her heart. It means getting out of YOUR comfort zone. You must be being willing to enter theirs. You may not be comfortable with the questioning that comes when you confess your sorrow. But you need to be willing to allow them to deal with the healing process in a way that works for them. It might not make sense to you. But if it satisfies them and brings rest to the issue, then that is part of the price you should be willing to pay. Even if you never meant to hurt your spouse, don’t let that stop you from apologizing, as you should. You have to deal with the reality of the situation. If you run over your spouse’s foot with an automobile — even if you did it by accident, it still hurt them. And you should make sure they know how sorry you are for hurting them. We say all of this because we battled with this issue for a number of years until we both had our “ah-ha” moments. We finally “got it” as far as what a sincere apology entails. Below are a few things we learned that helped us to get there.

The “How-To’s” of Apologies

First, here are some tips to help you to apologize in ways that can help you and your spouse connect. These are very similar to the ones we learned and now have implemented in our marriage. Author Janis Abrahms Springs gives the following practical advice when dealing with apologies:



1. Take responsibility for the damage you caused.
2. Make your apology personal.
3. Make your apology specific.
4. Also, make your apologies deep (apologize for the whole truth of what you did).
5. Make your apology heartfelt.
6. Make your apology clean (no buts or qualifications).
7. Apologize repeatedly, if needed. (From the book, How Can I Forgive You?)

Apologies That Don't Feel Heartfelt

On this same issue, the following is a “Question of the Week” email that was sent to us a number of years ago by Gary Smalley Ministries. These tips helped us a lot. If you need to change the pronouns, please do so. The concept works either way:

Q: My wife is very sensitive, and she says that I am not. She feels that my apologies are obligatory and not heartfelt. When I hurt her feelings, I want to make it right, but I often fumble over my words. How can I apologize and convince her that I mean it?

A: The following are just a few thoughts for crafting great apologies:



1. Put some thought into it.

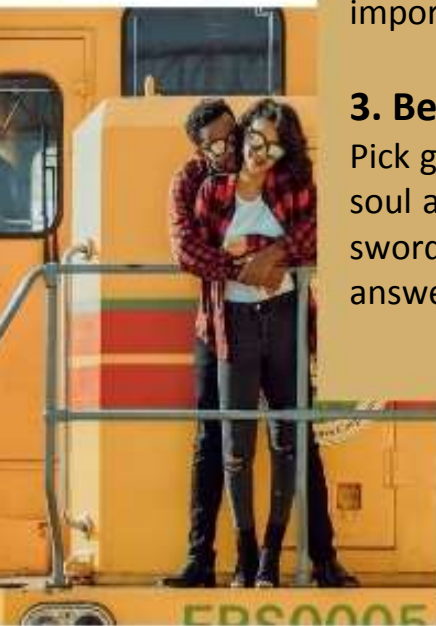
"There is more hope for a fool than for someone who speaks without thinking." (Proverbs 29:20 NLT) Your spouse will know the sincerity of your apology by the amount of thought you have given to it.

2. Focus on your spouse's feelings, not issues.

"We know that we all possess knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up." (1 Corinthians 8:1) Resolution focuses on the issue; but reconciliation focuses on the relationship. Let your spouse know that your marriage is more important than the disagreement.

3. Become a great wordsmith.

Pick great, meaningful words. "Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones." (Proverbs 16:24) "Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing." (Proverbs 12:18) "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger." (Proverbs 15:1).



4. Remember, less is often more.

Sometimes in our apologies we can bring up new issues as we try to make amends over one. Remember: "Fire goes out for lack of fuel..." (Proverbs 26:20 NLT) "Don't talk too much, for it fosters sin. Be sensible and turn off the flow." (Proverbs 10:19 NLT) "A man of knowledge uses words with restraint; and a man of understanding is even-tempered. Even a fool is thought wise if he keeps silent, and discerning if he holds his tongue." (Proverbs 17:27-28) "When words are many, sin is not absent; but he who holds his tongue is wise." (Proverbs 10:19) Hopefully these will help you move from repetitive and programmed to meaningful and heartfelt apologies.

More Tips on this Issue Given by Gary Smalley:

Q: My wife says that I am one of the fastest apologizers she knows. She says the speed and repetition of my apologies voids the sincerity. She believes that when I say "I'm sorry" it is just to get out of a fight. I can't win. Any suggestions?



A: Become a great wordsmith. Find new words and ways to say, “I’m sorry.” When you use the right words—loving words, you change the atmosphere of your relationship. Proverbs says, “Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.” (Proverbs 16:24) Put some thought into your apology. Be specific. Instead of a simple “I’m sorry,” make it more of a complete sentence. “I’m sorry for snapping at you in the car earlier.” “I’m sorry for being late again. Here are two more: “I’m going to try harder to get home on time.” “I’m sorry that I was an idiot earlier.” When you give the reason for your apology you communicate that you understand the frustration. The hidden marriage manual in every woman knows when the apology is given to claim the hurt or to simply smooth something over.

We all need to learn to settle accounts quickly and do it with clarity of thought.



WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE

IMITATORS OF GOD

(EPHESIANS 5:1)?

BY: GOTQUESTIONS.ORG



In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul instructs the believers, “Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children” (Ephesians 5:1). We are to imitate Christ and model our lives after Him.

This word translated as “imitators” or “followers” in English versions of the Bible is *mimētai* in the Greek, the root of our word *mimic*. It has the positive connotation of emulating a pattern set by an admired mentor, and it is used seven times in the New Testament to advocate following or emulating certain early church leaders, Christ, and, ultimately, God.

A child imitating his or her parent is the most natural thing in the world. It’s how children learn everything from brushing their teeth to putting away toys to treating others with respect. Young children want to grow up to be like their parents, and they will often pretend to be their parents—trying on their parents’ shoes, wearing their hats, etc. It’s an important part of childhood play as they imitate what they see in their parents. This is the type of mimicry that Paul alludes to in Ephesians 5.

In Ephesians 5:1–21, Paul discusses what behavior is and is not a worthy imitation of God and befitting of God’s children. “For at one time you were darkness,” he says, “but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light” (Ephesians 5:8).

When Paul instructed the believers to be imitators of God, he did not indicate that this meant they should act as if they were also divine, omniscient, or possessed of any God-like powers. Instead, he specified “be imitators of God, as beloved children” (Ephesians 5:1, emphasis added). Perhaps this is why some translations use the word followers instead, to emphasize that Christians must imitate God in such a way that follows His example. Beloved children do not presume to become their parents; however, children may be seen imitating the behaviors and actions of their parents.

To properly imitate God, we must first be His children. “But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:12–13). If we receive Christ and believe in His name, we become God’s beloved children.

We must also know God’s ways so we might know what to imitate. Ephesians 5:1–21 gives several examples. “But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. . . . And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ” (Ephesians 5:3–4, 18–21). We can learn of the Lord and His ways through prayerful study of biblical passages like this one.

God gave us the ultimate example to follow in Christ. Discerning how to live based on our God who supersedes the universe can be difficult, but, in the life of Christ, we see a practical example of how a person should live on this earth. “And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God” (Ephesians 5:2). As we look to Christ, we learn we are to walk in love, giving sacrificially to others and offering ourselves fully as a sacrifice to God.

Imitators of God will be imitators of Christ, striving to walk in love and submission to God as beloved children walk in obedience to and imitation of a father.



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