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# DAMAGED BY DIVORCE

**W**hen Allen Parr was just six years old, his world was changed forever when his parents told him they were getting divorced. He recalls feeling devastated and confused at the time, and the experience continued to effect him as time went on.

It wasn't to be Allen's only experience of divorce either.

"In just my immediate family alone – looking at my mother, my dad and my sister – I can count seven divorces and three or four different separations as well," Allen shared in a YouTube video on his channel, The Beat.

"I grew up with the mindset that I was afraid of marriage and I was afraid of commitment and so that affected me later on down the line when I started dating."

Allen says in middle school he didn't receive a lot of attention from girls but towards the end of high school things started to change.

"I started getting some attention – I got a little taller, I was playing sports, I got rid of my glasses."

Allen says he struggled with lust and lost his virginity at 16.

At 17 he went to college, where he joined a fraternity, partied and

led a promiscuous lifestyle.

"I was just living the life," Allen recalls.

That was until Allen was 19 and he met Kevin Miller. Kevin was a deacon at a local church and used to visit Allen's college to teach the Bible.

"He taught the Bible to us in ways that I had never heard before and it just clicked for me as a 19-year-old and reading the Bible actually started to become fun," Allen says.

Allen's father had introduced him to Jesus Christ when he was six and he attended church with his mother every week until he left for college. But he says he was just going through the motions.

"I never prayed. I never read my Bible. I didn't enjoy church. And as soon as I went to college and got out on my own, I stopped going," Allen shares on his website.

But after meeting Kevin and studying the Bible for the first time, Allen's faith was ignited. He now had a personal relationship with Jesus.

"I couldn't put [the Bible] down. I read every book about the Bible I could get my hands on. I listened to every set of tapes, CD series I could find. I was like a sponge."

Allen also decided to make another change – one that would have seemed very odd to his college friends.

"I took a vow of celibacy at 19 years old," Allen shares. "I said, 'God... I don't know when I'm gonna be married but if you want me to lead a pure life – a sexually pure life – then I'm gonna take a vow of celibacy.'"

After college, Allen started working as an engineer.

"For the first time in my life I am making a ton of money," Allen shares. As a child that hadn't grown up with much money, it was exciting.

"I grew up with this mentality that I always had to hold on to money – I always had to get as much as I could because I didn't



Allen Parr and his wife, Jennifer.



of making a permanent commitment because of all of the divorces that I saw in my family," he admits.

But in 2014, Allen met Jennifer and they

married the following year, on his 40th birthday.

Allen started his YouTube channel, The Beat, because he was tired of seeing preaching that was boring.

"I said, 'The Bible needs to be preached and taught in a way where people would really get it and enjoy it and it's fun and something that would be relevant to their lives. I also had a vision to reach people not just in the four walls of a church but in the four corners of this world so that we could get the message out.'"

Then, when Jennifer was pregnant with their first child, Allen felt that God wanted him to give up his job as a teacher and instead start a math-tutoring business while running his online ministry.

"As a result, what I thought I was giving up financially God has returned and blessed me so many times over in return," Allen attests.

Allen says his story is an encouragement to anyone who may be frustrated by waiting on God.

"My life is a reminder that nothing is too hard for God to those who believe," he concludes.

## I TOOK A VOW OF CELIBACY AT 19 YEARS OLD



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**FREE TO EXHALE**  
**CANDICE WIGGINS**

know if we were gonna have what we needed. I never wanted to be in a situation that my mom and dad were in where they had to struggle financially."

Around this time, Allen was also given the opportunity to teach a Bible study group.

"I discovered that I had a gift for teaching the Bible," Allen remembers. "From that moment forward, I knew the very purpose for which God had created me and put me on this earth and that was to teach

His Word."

He then had a decision to make: "Was I going to choose comfort and career over my calling?"

Allen believed God was challenging him to have faith and follow Him. He quit his job and enrolled in theological seminary and began to study to become a minister. After graduating, he worked in ministry part-time, while also working as a mathematics teacher.

Allen had a strong desire to marry and have a family, but, "I was afraid

## MARRIAGE IS A GO(O)D DESIGN

BY JODY BENNETT

**RECENTLY** *The Sunday Times* in Western Australia published an article opining that now that people in *de facto* relationships can claim superannuation (pension) benefits from their partner's fund, that the institution of marriage has been rendered redundant.<sup>1</sup>

The idea that marriage is just a contract that becomes needless if sex and financial security can be obtained another way, is deeply offensive to those of us who believe this institution joins two people in a divine union that is greater



than the sum of its parts. It is also a damaging idea because marriage and family are the foundation of a stable and sustainable society.

In an age where everyone thinks they know best how to live well and make themselves happy, suicide and addiction rates are soaring. Society's loose morals have not led to people feeling fulfilled, but broken, ashamed, exploited and objectified. I would argue that we should go back to how our Designer ordained us to live – only having sex in the committed relationship of marriage, forsaking all others.

Yes some marriages don't last, yes

people fail and cheat, yes marriage is hard and not always happy, but the design is good and nothing we are doing instead is making us any happier or more fulfilled.

The longing of every human heart is to be loved unconditionally for who we are, to be appreciated and cherished as a unique individual, and to have the security to be able to express ourselves intimately and vulnerably with another. God designed marriage to meet those needs in an imperfect way that points to His desire for us to ultimately have those needs perfectly met in Him.

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# MARRIAGE IS A GO(O)D DESIGN

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Marriage is sublime, the Bible calls it a mystery.<sup>2</sup> It says that “the two become one flesh”<sup>3</sup> and that sex joins us with another human being in a way that involves more than just our bodies, but includes our souls. We may pretend to separate the physical from the emotional, but the Apostle Paul warns us that when we are immoral we are sinning against ourselves<sup>4</sup>, destroying our own psyche for the sake of a hormone rush.

On the other hand, God told Adam in Genesis that it was not good for man to be alone. We are designed as human beings for companionship. The Bible tells us that men and women are distinct from each other and created equal but different. Men have physical strengths and women have emotional strengths that the opposite sex just do not have. We are designed to be joined together in wedlock, using the strengths of each of our genders to raise the next generation.

Of course, this does not negate the meaning, value and purpose of singlehood, in all its forms and for all its reasons. Just that on the whole, for the perpetuating of society and the containment of sexual desire, which can be an incredibly destructive force (just look at the stats on sexual abuse, child porn and human trafficking for a start) God designed marriage.

Genesis 2:21-25: *And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the Lord God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man.*

And Adam said: *“This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man.”*

*Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.*

1. The Sunday Times, April 10, page 29; 2. Ephesians 5:32; 3. Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:6; 4. 1 Corinthians 6:18

# Rocky start led to second chance success

BY CHRISTIE SHEEHAN

**MY PARENTS** got married when my mum was 17 and my dad was 24. I know what you’re thinking... my dad sounds like a bit of a cradle snatcher, but my mum’s childhood caused her to grow up quickly.

My older brother came along not too long after, and then my mum’s dad tragically died of a heart attack when she was 19. He was 45 years old. This threw her into deep grief and she found herself wondering why she had chosen to get married and have a child at such a young age.

My mum decided to leave my dad and shack up with a previous boyfriend. Clearly my dad was heartbroken, so my grandparents came and took the firearms off the farm my parents had been living on to keep him safe.

Thankfully my grandparents, who are no longer with us, were Christians. They took my dad along with them to church and he decided to re-dedicate his life to Christ.

He soon had a congregation of 100 people praying for my mum, that she too would come to know Jesus and that she would return to him with their son.

It was around this time that my mum found herself alone at home with my brother. Her boyfriend had gone out to get drunk again. She found herself reflecting on her current choices and felt convicted that she was doing the wrong thing.

Torn between knowing she couldn’t handle being a single parent and feeling that she couldn’t return home, she felt that suicide was her only way out. She drank a glass of turps, and when that



Rob and Tracy Pannell, with their daughter Christie Sheehan. They have been married for 41 years.

didn’t work she felt even more ashamed of herself.

Something inside of her urged her to call out to God. As she spoke the words, “Lord, if You’re real, reveal Yourself to me,” a song came on the radio... ‘One day at a time sweet Jesus, that’s all I’m asking of you. Lord help me to take and do everything, one day at a time.’ She then heard a small still voice say, “Your place is by your husband’s side, and you need to get back there.”

My dad at this time was out in a paddock and found himself praying for his wife and child to return to him.

He heard an audible voice say, “It’s ok Rob, she’s coming back,” instigating tears of relief and comfort to stream down his face.

My mum called the farm and spoke to my grandma who called my shocked dad to the

phone.

Shortly after, my dad drove to collect my mum and his son and take them home.

I was born nine months later in a delivery room where they felt God’s presence with them both.

Their marriage is not a perfect one, but it certainly is a story of second chances. Over the years they have shared their story of hope with hundreds of couples, individuals and children. I can remember my dad counselling husbands out in the driveway, while my mum was inside with the wives. Sometimes we don’t understand why our story is the way that it is, but God is always simultaneously weaving our story into a greater tapestry of hope for generations upon generations to learn from and to cherish.

## Coffee Break CROSSWORD & SUDOKU

- ACROSS**
- 1 Item an Olympian hurls
  - 3 Give the cold shoulder
  - 7 Swim’s alternative
  - 8 Toolbox item
  - 10 Commitment
  - 13 Two-part lens
  - 16 Chin covering
  - 17 Symphony member
  - 18 American military branch
  - 19 Portable computer
- DOWN**
- 1 Dawn’s counterpart
  - 2 Man of Brazil
  - 4 Without feeling as a dental patient
  - 5 School financial officer
  - 6 Label for a picture
  - 9 Daytime show
  - 11 Martial art (4,2)
  - 12 Warren inhabitant
  - 14 Volcanic flow
  - 15 WWII vehicle

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And then it occurred to him: the world needed yet another book on leadership.

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# WHEN MARRIAGE GOES WRONG

BY AN EX HUSBAND WITH REGRETS

**EVEN** the death of my six-week-old daughter did not hit me as hard as marriage breakdown did.

My wife and I both solidly affirmed that divorce was not an option, and that we would work out all difficulties together. Having met in our mid-teens we formed a relationship dynamic that worked well. It worked well because my wife knew the ‘game’ and subjugated her words and actions to keep marital peace. She was a servant-hearted woman, and believed that a good wife should be subject to her husband. I believed a husband should lead, as the Bible teaches in Ephesians 5:22-24: *Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Saviour of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.*

We almost never argued; our home was a home of peace, a haven insulated from the world of relational trauma because we loved each other and we both believed in “until death do us part”.

But there was poison in the well. After the death of our daughter, my wife went to counselling, where it became clear that she was sacrificing a lot to keep our marriage peaceable. Although dedicated to each other and deeply in love, it was my wife who was doing all the peace-keeping work.

I was blind to this so didn’t appreciate her deep, costly and on-going contribution. As time went on she became less and less interested in carrying this load, and so she became less submissive.

I responded with greater coercion, expecting her to play by the established rules, I was to be her ‘saviour’ and she was to reverse me in that role.

Our relationship began to deteriorate as my wife moved away from the model we had been using for 25 years, she had begun to find her feet and find her voice. My wife was learning to say, “No”. She was developing a healthy independence and I was responding badly.

Eventually I went to counselling where the rules of my game were exposed. The exposure hurt me; I responded with anger. I was incensed, my entitled attitude wanted to dump my counsellor and walk off with my illusions intact.

Thankfully I began to suspect the counsellor was right. After a month or two I became interested in exploring my blindness; I wanted to expose my faulty understanding and become the husband that I should have been. But by now my wife had left. My efforts were shaping up to be too little and too late.

Counselling was very enlightening, and painful. I became deeply remorseful and ashamed that I had let such bad behaviour continue in what I thought was a Godly and Bible-based marriage. I had got some things terribly wrong.

The Bible does say that a Christian marriage should reflect the relationship between Christ and the church, but I had a very incomplete and inaccurate understanding of what this meant.

As the husband, I represented Christ; His chosen mission was to abandon His

godly nature and come to earth as a mere man ready to love and serve the church so deeply as to die a cruel death on the cross. This is an aspect of Christ I had glossed over, yet it is something that the Bible specifically tells us to emulate. Ephesians 5:25 — *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her.*

A wife represents the church. Jesus, modelled by the husband, does not coerce the church, He speaks the truth in love and humbly leads by example. The church submits to Christ voluntarily, and only to the extent she chooses. I have found that there is so much to learn from the relationship between the church and Christ that applies directly to marriage.

My understanding of Christian marriage has changed dramatically; I see now that in God’s model the wife has much more power and freedom than it seems at first glance. If you take away any possibility

of coercion from the husband, you are left with a wife who chooses to submit, according to the love and respect earned by her husband. He knows submission is not demanded but earned, so he loves her so deeply as to be ready to die for her, and truly treasures her by guarding her freedom to do as she wants.

My marriage was not restored, I deeply regret not digging deeper into God’s model for marriage before the trouble hit, but I am wiser now and far more appreciative of the way God’s Word says it should have been.

## COUNSELLING WAS VERY ENLIGHTENING, AND PAINFUL

# Holding on when the world falls apart

It's a widely accepted statistic that 50 percent of all marriages end in divorce. But what about couples that suffer the death of a child? That number rises even higher.

When tragedy struck TJ and Sarah Spooner's family, they defied the odds stacked against them as they united as a team in search of strength and hope.

Sarah sat down to share their story with their daughter, *Challenge News* journalist, Harriet Coombe.

Sarah grew up in England in a broken home after her parents divorced when she was a young child.

"I was always determined to have a different life for my children because it left me scarred," she explains.

After leaving home as a teenager, Sarah worked as a live-in nanny for many years and it was through one of those jobs that she met TJ.

"It was love at first sight," she says. "We lived together for a little while and we then arranged to get married. By the time I was actually married, I was three months pregnant with my first child, Richard, who was a surprise but a blessing. Then we had another child, Harriet."

It was at Harriet's christening that their world changed forever.

"We had a party at my parents-in-law's house," Sarah explains. "I wasn't allowed to breastfeed in the garden and my husband was looking after Richard. At some point I think my mother-in-law put him in the garden. We couldn't find him and, after a big search, Richard was found dead in the swimming pool. He was 22 months old. Harriet was six weeks. And my world shattered."

Sarah remembers the toll the tragedy took on her marriage and the further heartache that came when they had a miscarriage about a year later.

Sarah looked for hope, truth and meaning in New Age practices and concepts like reincarnation.

"But whatever I was looking at always left me searching," she recalls.

The couple had two more children, Thomas and Milly, before deciding to emigrate to Perth, Australia.

Not long after that, Harriet was invited to go to church by a friend from school.

"I said that she could go if Thomas could go as well! While they were at church, TJ and I would relax and read the paper while Milly was sleeping. Then I saw an article about a religious group that had abused children. So we decided to visit the church to check out what was going on. The people were just so lovely. We were invited to go to a course about the basics of Christianity, but we weren't keen to leave the children with anybody. So they offered to come and do it at our house. I'd been searching for years for peace and for answers and I realised Jesus was Who I had been searching for. TJ and I gave our lives to Christ together at our coffee table in 1994. It was a journey that we took together, just as we've journeyed

everything together. We saw that Jesus was the hope for our future here on Earth, but also our future in heaven with our son and with the Lord. They led us in a prayer and Jesus showed us where we needed to ask for His forgiveness and also forgive others. It was a gentle process but an encounter with Jesus will change you."

The family continued to attend church together and grow as individuals and as a family.

"Our marriage got stronger," Sarah attests. "We would do all the marriage courses, understanding that like in a car, you have to put petrol in and you have to have the car serviced for it to be a good working car. We recognised that even though we believed we had a good marriage, we still needed to learn and understand and work on things. We understood that we were a team. We loved one another and as parents we wanted to be on the same page. When we did disagree, we would talk about it. There

was a sense that we were one."

Over the years TJ and Sarah served in the church, including running courses about grief.

"TJ was very strong and had a very wise way about him," Sarah shares. "He was an elder in every church we attended and was very well respected. He was a mentor and a wonderful father and husband. In



TJ and Sarah were married for 37 years. These photos were taken (above) on their wedding day in 1982 and (left) in 2015.

2019 he started suffering with indigestion and felt unwell and I eventually convinced him to go to the doctor. We were devastated to learn he had stomach cancer.

"He had a short battle and died six weeks later. We had worship music playing in the room and I held his hands as he passed away. I said to him, 'Richard is running towards you, Jesus has his hand out, and I won't be far behind.' While TJ was in the hospital I was there 24/7 and the children came every single day. A

nurse said to me, 'It's very, very rare to see a family so close.' I talked to her about our faith and why we were a strong unit."

Two-and-a-half years on, Sarah says she finds life without her husband and best friend very difficult at times.

"But I'm blessed by my children and friends and my four grandchildren. TJ's favourite Bible verse also gives me strength: *'Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths'* (Proverbs 3:5-6)."

## RICHARD WAS FOUND DEAD IN THE SWIMMING POOL.



# Marriage crisis was no joke

American actor Terry Crews, well known for his role as Sergeant Terry Jeffords in the comedy series *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*, and his wife, Rebecca's marriage nearly didn't make it.

They nearly split in 2010 after Terry confessed to a string of infidelities, and told her that he'd been struggling with an addiction to porn.

Terry told *Relevant Magazine*: "The fact that we are still here..., five beautiful kids, one grandbaby—I know a lot of people in Hollywood that wish they could be close to something like that. And I think that's my proudest production."

"Because let me tell you, it was a horror movie for a while."

Funny man Terry began his working life as an NFL football player, but decided to move to Los Angeles to pursue an acting career in 1997. He has also worked as a security guard, a courtroom sketch artist and voiced animated movies, as well as being a bodybuilder and social activist.

Terry grew up in a strict Christian home and was raised mainly by his mother, as his father was an abusive alcoholic. "We weren't allowed to listen to music. We weren't allowed to go to dances. We weren't allowed to go to the movies. We were in church a lot," Terry says.

While still in college in 1989 he married Rebecca King.

Unfortunately, once Terry started mixing with the rich and famous, he began to lose touch with his strict,



Actor Terry Crews, wife Rebecca King-Crews and their children attend the premiere of "The Star" in 2017 in Westwood, California. (Photo by Jason LaVeris/FilmMagic)

moral upbringing and live the fast, wild life.

"I actually went to a massage parlour, and I cheated on my wife," Crews says. "I vowed I would never tell. And eight years went by, and my wife was always questioning me, and I would just deny it."

"The thing about religion is that it can become a mask that you wear so long that you become it," Terry says. "Here I was: a Christian, a churchgoer, but I had a double life."

"I was also addicted to pornography at the same time," he says. "It

## YOU CAN FIND MEANING IN SUFFERING!



was like my dirty secret. It was the thing that I couldn't beat.

"One day my wife just confronted me. I was actually in New York, she was in L.A., and

she said, 'Terry, what is it I don't know about you?'"

Terry says at that moment God told him: "If you don't tell her the truth, I'm done with you. You can go ahead, but you'll be doing everything without Me."

With that, eight years' worth of lies crumbled.

"I told her," he says. "And I remember just everything falling apart. She was like, 'I'm done with you. You've got to go. I'm through. Don't come home. It's a wrap.'"

His world ripping at the seams, his family splintering, Terry turned to his pastor who, he says, gave him "the best advice ever."

"He said, 'Terry, you can't do anything to get your wife back, but you have to get better for you.' And I realized he was totally right. And I went to rehab."

Eventually Rebecca agreed to give the marriage a chance. Terry says, "it was a lot of tears, a lot of heartbreak."

But after several years and a lot of honesty and therapy, now "our relationship is better than it's ever been," he says.

Then in March last year the family faced another challenge. Rebecca was diagnosed with breast cancer and underwent a double mastectomy (breast removal) and reconstructive surgery.

Terry said, "When you're going through something you're always like, 'God are you here?' And He's like, 'I'm here.' You can find meaning in suffering! You don't learn it before you go through it. God speaks to everyone and tells them what the right move is."

"These things happen, and you have to deal with them. It made me more thankful for what we have."

Terry tweeted: "Happy to be saved, sanctified, and filled with the Holy Ghost [invisible person of God]! God is good and has always been! Thanks to Him for EVERYTHING!"

# Impilo yomzwangedwa isiyabukeka

## Zulutranslation

Stephen Cannou wase South Africa wayeme phakathi nomgwaqo phambi kwesidumbu sendodana yakhe ebulewe.

Ngaphambilini wayeke waphathwa ukwesaba okukhulu nokucindezeleka, uSteve wazizwa ebuyela kulobo bumnyama. Kodwa uNkulunkulu amkhonzayo wayenolunye uhlelo.

“INkosi yamtshela ukuthi athandaze amelana nolaka, nenhlungu kanye nenzondo,” ezisholo.

Indlela yayingelula njalo kulo chef weminyaka ewu 55. Inkinga zakhe zaqala esewumfana ekhulela ekhaya elingekahle nobaba owayebahlukumeza. Ngenxa yesimo esingemnandi sasekhaya, uSteve waba ne stress wacina izinto ngaphakathi.

“Ngangihluleka ukwazana nabantu nganginomzwangedwa,” ekhumbula.

Abazali bakhe bamusa yena nabafowabo esontweni kodwa babehlala bethutha njalo. Noma, u Steve wayekholwa ukuthi uNkulunkulu ukhona, wayengenabudlelwano naye. Kwakubonakala kunzima ukwazana Naye.

Eselibhungu, u Steve waqala ukuphuza nobumnandi njengendlela yokwehlisa ubuhlungu abhekene nabo. Waba nabangani abangasanga kodwa uyavuma, “Ngazizwa ngiyinxenye yokuthize.”

Kusuka, lapho utshwala bodwa babunene, owesifazane ayezwana naye wamlethela insangu. “Wazinikela!”

Kusuka lapho, izinto zaqala ukumsimamela u Steve. Ekuhambeni kwesikhathi, wathola umsebenzi ophakeme omkhokhelayo, washada, waba nabantwana ababili kodwa engajabule. “Wayecindezelekile,” Ekhokha umoya. “Ekufuneni kwami ukuthula ngafunda I Buddhism, nokudlinza, nokuphiliswa esho ezimbalwa.”

Ngalesosikhathi, u Steve wakhumbula u Nkulunkulu wobusha bakhe. Ngokushesha, wayobona umfundisi wobuKrestu. “Uthi konke kwakumhambela kahle ngaphandle kwalokhu,” ngidinga ukulungisa inhliziyu yami no Nkulunkulu!”

Emva kokuzama kaningi ukubulala wacina eyivulile inhliziyu yakhe ukwamukela u Jesu.” Ngangifuna impendulo, esholo. “Ngo 2015 ngamukela uJesu ngabhabhathiswa emanzini.”

Uma I Challenge ibuza u Steve ukuthi

wathandaza wathini, uphendule wathi, “Baba uNkulunkulu ngithathe ungihlanze amacala ami, ngizinikela kuwe. Iguqule ingqondo yami uyenze ibe intsha.”

Ukuzinikelakukholo akhuliswa ngalo akushongo ukuthi inkinga zakhe ziphelile. Empeleni, u Steve walahlekelwa ikho konkengenxa yezinqumo ezingaphusile, umuzi wakhe, unkosikazi, nabantwana kanye nomsebenzi. “Wakha kabusha impilo yakhe ehlala endleleni.”

U Steve wahamba wayohlala e mission station iminyaka emithathu, ekhona, efunda ibhayibheli lonke” emamatheka.

Ngokunakekelwa u Nkulunkulu, uSteve uhlukune nezinto ezazimkhungethe nemicabango emibi usephothule izifundo zobu chef. “Abantu bayangibuza ukuthi kungani nginenhlanhla? Impendulo yami: INkosi u Jesu Kristu.”

Kungekudala, indodana yakhe yabulawa noma bekuyisikhathi esizima kuye nomndeni wakhe, uthi uJesu akazange abashiye. “Kuqala wayefuna uthando kubantu, manje unokuthula ekwazini ukuthi zonke izinto zisemandleni kaNkulunkulu.”

U Steve useneminyaka ewu8 eyikholwa noma ehambe ekulingweni nasenhluphekweni enkulu, uyazi ulondekile kuJesu.

“UJesu uyiqiniso nothando lwakhe lulujile,” evuma. “Ngiyisotsha likaKristu.”

UJesu wethembise abalandeli bakhe: “Nginitsehele lezinto, ukuze kimi nibe nokuthula. Kulomhlaba nizoba nenkinga! Qinani Ngilinqobile izwe (Johane 16:33)



Stock photo. Getty Images. The murder of Stephen's son was one event that God used to get through to the chef.

# Lewe van eenzaamheid kyk op

## Afrikaans translation

Suid Afrikaner Stephen Cannou het in die middel van die pad gestaan en afgekyk op die lyk van sy vermoorde seun.

Voorheen het hy aan angs en maniese depressie gelei, en Steve het gevoel asof hy terug gly na daardie donker plek.

Maar die God wat hy dien het ander planne gehad.

“Die Here het vir my gesê om teen die vestings van woede, bitterheid en wrok te bid,” het hy gesê.

Die pad was nie altyd maklik vir die 55 jaar oue sjef nie. Sy probleme het as jong seun begin, waar hy in ‘n onstabiele omgewing saam met ‘n beledigende pa gebly het. Met konstante spanning in die huis het Steve ‘n stresversteuring ontwikkel, en was hy ‘n erge introvert.

“Ek kon nie met mense kontak maak nie en het basies baie geïsoleerd en eensaam grootgeword,” onthou hy.

Sy ouers het hom en sy twee broers kerk toe geneem, maar hulle het dikwels getrek. So, terwyl Steve in die bestaan van God geglo het, het hy nie ‘n persoonlike verhouding met Hom ontwikkel nie. Dit het ook gevoel asof dit moeilik was om met God te verbind.

Gedurende sy middel tiener jare het Steve alkohol ontdek, en hy het partytjies gebruik as ‘n manier om sy pyn te verdoof. Hy het saam met ‘n groep rondgegaan wat hom nadelig beïnvloed het, maar hy erken, “Vir die eerste keer het ek gevoel asof ek aan iets

behoort.”

Binnkort was alkohol nie genoeg nie. ‘n Vrou met wie hy seksueel betrokke was het dagga aan hom bekend gestel. “Ek was verslaaf!”

Toe later, het dit gelyk asof alles vir Steve beter gegaan het. Soos die tyd verby gegaan het, het hy ‘n hoogs betaalde korporatiewe werk gekry. Toe trou hy en het twee kinders gehad, maar hy was steeds nie gelukkig nie. “Ek was desperaat depressief,” sug hy. “In my soeke na vrede het ek Boeddhisme, meditasie, en kristal genesing probeer, om ‘n paar te noem.”

Toe het Steve die God van sy kinderjare onthou. Desperaat het hy ‘n Christelike pastoor gaan besoek. “Hy het vir my gesê dat ek alles het behalwe vir een ding,” vertel Steve, “Ek het nodig om my hart met God reg te kry.”

Dit het verskeie selfmoordpogings geneem voordat Steve sy hart volledig vir Jesus oopgemaak het. “Ek het ‘n oplossing nodig gehad,” sê hy. “So, in 2015 het ek Jesus in my lewe aanvaar en is gedoop met water.”

Toe Challenge Steve gevra het wat hy in daardie deurslaggewende oomblik gebid het, het hy geantwoord, “Vader God neem my soos ek is, reinig my van my skuld. Ek wy myself aan U. Hernu my gedagtes en maak my weer heel.”

Heraanvaarding van sy vorige kinderlike geloof het nie beteken dat all sy probleme verdwyn het nie. In werklikheid het Steve alles verloor as gevolg van slegte besluite-

sy huis, sy vrou, sy kinders, en sy loopbaan. “Ek moes my lewe oor begin en het op straat gebly.”

Steve het na ‘n Christelike sendingstasie toe gegaan, en vir die volgende drie jaar het hy kerk bygewoon, Bybel kursesse toe gegaan, en die Woord van God bestudeer. “Ek het die Bybel van begin tot einde gelees,” glimlag hy.

Deur God se voorsiening het Steve sy vorige verslawings en angstige denke oorkom en hy is op pad om ‘n volwaardige sjef te word met ‘n graad in kookkuns en ‘n sertifikaat in gasvryheid. “Mense vra vir my hoe is dit dat ek so gelukkig is? My antwoord is: Die Here Jesus Christus.”

Onlangs is Steve se seun vermoor, en al was dit ‘n baie moeilike tyd vir hom en sy familie, sê hy dat Jesus hom nooit verlaat het nie. “Voorheen het ek desperaat gesoek na liefde en aanvaarding van ander. Nou het ek vrede en selfvertroue, wetend dat alles nie deur my eie vermoë is nie, maar deur God s’n.”

Steve is nou al vir die afgelope agt jaar ‘n toegeweide Christen, en al is hy deur baie verdrukkinge en proewe, weet hy hy is veilig in Jesus.

“Jesus is so werklik en Hy is onvoorwaardelik lief,” verkondig hy. “Ek is ‘n soldaat vir Jesus.”

Jesus het sy volgelinge belowe: “Dit sê Ek vir julle, sodat julle vrede kan vind in My. In die wêreld sal julle dit moeilik hê; maar hou moed: Ek het die wêreld klaar oorwin.” (Johannes 16:33)

## English translation

# Life of Loneliness looks up

South African Stephen Cannou was standing in the middle of the road looking down at the body of his murdered son.

Having previously suffered from anxiety and manic depression, Steve felt himself slipping back into that dark place.

But the God he served had other plans.

“The Lord told me to pray against the strongholds of anger, bitterness, and resentment,” he says.

The road has not always been easy for the 55-year-old chef. His troubles started as a young boy in an unstable environment with an abusive father. Because of the constant tension in the house, Steve developed a stress disorder and was severely introverted.

“I failed to connect with people at all and basically grew up isolated and very alone,” he recalls.

His parents took him and his two brothers to church but changed locations often. So, while Steve believed in the existence of God, he did not develop a personal relationship with Him. God also seemed very hard to connect with.

In his mid-teens, Steve discovered alcohol and turned to partying as a way to numb his pain. He fell in with a group of bad influences but he admits, “For the first time I felt like I belonged to something.”

Soon, alcohol alone was not enough. A woman he was sexually involved with introduced him to marijuana. “I was hooked!”

Then, things seemed to look up for Steve. As time passed, he got a high-paying corporate job, got married, and had two children but he was still not happy. “I was desperately depressed,” he sighs. “In my quest for peace I studied Buddhism, meditation, and crystal healing to name a few.”

Then, Steve remembered the God of his childhood. In his desperation, he went to see a Christian pastor. “He said I had everything going for me except one thing,” Steve relates, “I needed to get my heart right with God!”

It took several suicide attempts for Steve to fully open the door of his heart to Jesus. “I needed a solution,” he says. “So, in 2015, I accepted Jesus into my life and was baptized in water.”

When Challenge asked Steve what he prayed in that pivotal moment, he answered, “Father God take me as I am and cleanse me of my guilt. I offer myself to you. Renew my mind and make it whole again.”

Recommitting to his earlier child-like faith did not mean all his troubles went away. In fact, Steve lost everything as a result of some poor decision making – his home, his wife, his children, and his career. “I had to restart my life living on the street.” Steve made his way to a Christian mission station and, for the next three years, he attended church, went to Bible courses, and studied the Word of God. “I read the Bible cover to cover,” he smiles.

Through God’s provision, Steve has overcome his past addictions and anxious thoughts and is on the pathway to becoming a fully-fledged chef with a degree in culinary arts and a certificate in hospitality. “Some people ask me how am I so lucky? My answer is: the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Most recently, Steve’s son was murdered and even though it was a tough time for him and his family, he says that Jesus never left him. “Before I was desperately seeking love and affirmation from others. Now I have peace and confidence knowing everything is not in my own power but in God’s.”

Steve has been a committed Christian for eight years and even though he has walked through many tribulations and trials, he knows he is secure in Jesus.

“Jesus is so real and loves so unconditionally,” he proclaims. “I am a soldier of Christ.”

Jesus promised His followers: “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33)

# BUILDING BETTER RELATIONSHIPS

## FORGIVENESS IS VITAL TO A RELATIONSHIP

BY ROB FURLONG

**UNHEALTHY** anger inevitably leads to an unwillingness to forgive, and many a relationship has been destroyed because people have refused to forgive each other.

Forgiveness is also a very real issue in marriage. The health of a couple's relationship can often be determined by the willingness (or unwillingness) of a husband and wife to forgive each other.

I have talked with many couples over the years, and I never stop being amazed at how people hang on to things they did to each other years ago and the overwhelming pettiness of it all.

"She did this..."

"He always forgets..."

"I never do that..."

On and on it goes.

I am not saying that their hurts (or yours) are insignificant and that they should be simply glossed over. All I am arguing for is that at some point in the relationship, someone needs to have the guts to forgive the other person. If this does not happen, then the couple is either headed for the divorce court or they will simply learn to co-exist under the same roof in a permanent state of "Cold War".

Forgiveness can be a difficult concept to explain.

This was certainly the case for some missionaries who took the Good News about Jesus to the Eskimos. They couldn't find a word in the Eskimo language which adequately explained what they meant by forgiveness, so they came up with the following:

*issumagijoungnainermik*

It literally means "not being able to think about it anymore".

Does this mean forgiveness is simply forgetting the wrong that was done to me?

Most of us have been told at some point to "forgive and forget" and we are no doubt familiar with the say-

ing, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me."

Personally, I've discovered this isn't true!

I don't think much about the physical injuries I have incurred over the years, but I certainly remember many unkind things said to me throughout my life.

Perhaps you wrestle with the same thing.

You feel you have forgiven a person for the wrong they did to you, but there are times when the memory of what was done surfaces again, causing you fresh grief.

Because you still remember, does this mean you haven't forgiven?

Not for a minute. When the missionaries to the Eskimos came up with their word for forgiveness, what they meant by "not thinking about it anymore" was the hurt or pain done to you no longer holds you. If, and when, it does come to mind, you direct the memory back to God, forgive again and leave it with Him.

Forgiveness has also been described as "repairing the past".

When we forgive someone, we repair the wrong and the relationship.

This does not mean forgiveness comes cheaply. In marriage for example, there should be a genuine acknowledgement by one party that what they did was hurtful and a sincere commitment by them to change their behaviour. And the other person then freely forgives the

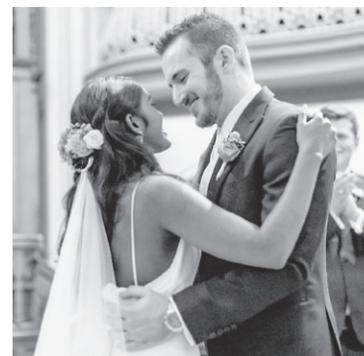
Rob Furlong and his wife Karen have been forgiving each other for 41 years this month!



## WHEN MARRIAGE WORKS



Tshogofatso and Magetlane, married for 39 years. Tip: Be best friends. Friends love, respect, forgive, support, and bring out the best in each other. Giving Christ His rightful place in our relationship helped us through it all.



Harry and Celestine, married for two years. Tip: Understand your partner's love languages, don't carry arguments into the next day and pray for each other and your marriage, together, every day.



Barry and Gill, married 47 years. Tip: don't forget the promises you made in your wedding vows, and make a habit of praying together.



Janice and Edmund, married 34 years. Tip: Focus on and celebrate your partner's strengths and good points, not their weaknesses or failings.



Jody and Adrian, married 20 years. Tip: Be polite, be kind, say sorry, hold hands, laugh at each other's jokes.

DISCUS	SNUB	7	5	3	9	1	2	6	4	8						
UE	C	U	U	6	9	2	7	8	4	5	1	3				
SINK	HAMMER	8	1	4	3	6	5	9	7	2						
K	H	M	P	B	S	5	4	9	1	2	8	3	6	7		
LOYALTY	A	3	6	1	4	7	9	8	2	5						
K	R	T	I	R	R	2	7	8	6	5	3	4	9	1		
U	B	I	F	O	C	A	L	4	2	6	8	3	7	1	5	9
N	L	N	N	B	J	1	3	5	2	9	6	7	8	4		
GOATTEE	OBOE	9	8	7	5	4	1	2	3	6						
F	V	E	I	E	U	S	A	F	L	A	P	T	O	P		

### HOW DO I BECOME A CHRISTIAN?

**What?** Salvation is an eternal relationship with God – now on Earth and, after we die, in Heaven.

*The Lord Jesus says: "I tell you the truth. Everyone who believes in Me has eternal life." John 6:47*

*"In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." John 16:33*

**Who?** Anyone can gain the eternal life offered through Jesus Christ, regardless of how you have previously lived or what you have previously believed.

*God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16*

**Why?** Because sin separates us from a holy God. Sin is all the wrong things we do, say and think, as well as our desire to be our own boss.

*For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Roman 3:23*

**How?** The Bible says you become a Christian by confessing with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believing in your heart that God raised Him from the dead.

*If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. Romans 10:8b-10*

**Ready to change your life forever?** Here is a prayer you can pray, but you can also use your own words. The words are not as important as the heart attitude – which only God can see.

Almighty God, Creator of Heaven and Earth,

I acknowledge that I am a sinner. Please forgive me for all the ways I have disobeyed and defied You.

Thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus Christ, to earth to live the perfect life I couldn't, and die on the cross for my sins. Thank You that His blood was sufficient to pay my debt to You, and His resurrection proves that there is life beyond death. I accept that His sacrifice is all I need to get right with You – I bring nothing I have done but I give you everything I am. Help me to live for You. Please be my Saviour and my Master. Amen.

**What now?**

1. Tell someone - either a Christian that you know or email us at info@challengenews.org
2. Use the resources in the green box on this page to find a Bible to read and more information regarding Christianity.
3. Keep praying. Talk to God anywhere, about anything. He is always listening, and you don't need a formula.
4. Find a Bible-teaching church to attend.

**AS A NEXT STEP:**

Please send me:

- A Bible portion
- Some 'starting off' literature
- Information on a helpful church

I have prayed this prayer.

\* Please tick and write clearly \*

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Send to: Honeydew Ridge Residential Estate, 12 Mississippi, Mozart Road, Honeydew, Roodepoort, South Africa

All overseas enquiries are referred onto someone in their own country

### Want to explore more?

Here are some **free**, helpful, Christian online resources:

Online Bible - <b>Olive Tree app</b> (we recommend that you start with an easy-to-read version like the ESV)	
Audio Bible - <b>Bible.is app</b> , or <b>Youversion Bible app</b>	
Christian radio station - <b>CBN radio app</b> (different channels for all genres of music)	
Christian podcasts and sermons - <b>Edifi app</b>	
Christian movies - <b>New Faith Network app</b> (7-day free trial)	
Daily thoughts and inspiration - <b>Our Daily Bread app</b>	
Advice on specific issues, Bible reading plans and studies for new believers - <b>Youversion Bible app</b> .	
The Bible explained with visual aides - <b>the Bible Project on YouTube</b> .	
<b>Alpha Film Series on Youtube</b> - an online introduction to Christianity.	
For kids - <b>Superbook Kids Bible, videos and games app</b>	
Comic book Bible online- <b>goodandevilbook.com</b>	
More inspiring faith stories - <b>back issues of Challenge News at challengenews.online</b>	

# DAD'S LEGACY BECAME A BURDEN



Los Angeles Sparks Guard Candice Wiggins (2) during in game action, in June, 2015. The Connecticut Sun defeated the Los Angeles Sparks in that encounter at the Mohegan Sun Arena in Uncasville, Connecticut, 80-76 in overtime. (Photo by Williams Paul/Icon Sportswire/Corbis/Icon Sportswire via Getty Images)

Continuing her father's legacy of success has always been a driving force for former Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) player Candice Wiggins.

Her father, major league baseball player Alan Wiggins, passed away from AIDS after battling depression and drug abuse when Candice was four years old.

"It was a scary time. No one would talk about it," she recalls. "A young girl wants to know about her Dad dying of AIDS. But it was taboo."

In an interview with Christian Broadcasting Network, Candice said she was often compared to her father.

"I ran like him, I looked like him, and so that became like my blueprint of how I was going to succeed," she says.

Her success in basketball in high school earned her a scholarship to Stanford University where she felt the weight of the team's success.

"Even my senior year at Stanford my coach, Tara Vanderveer said, 'you're carrying us, you know, it's on you,'" Candice says.

Although Candice had accepted Jesus as her Lord and Saviour as a young child, she said she lost sight of the importance of her relationship with Him as her focus shifted to succeeding in basketball.

In a blog post on her website, she writes, "I never read the Bible growing up. Mainly because I felt that it was too cumbersome in length

and it was hard for me to tackle it, from one end or the other."

Despite her own basketball achievements, Candice's father's legacy of success was heavy on her shoulders.

Just before a major college basketball game, she read an article online that she expected to be about her and the upcoming biggest game of her life. But it was all about her dad.

She says she felt that instead of caring about her as a person, people cared more about her performance.

"I felt defeated," Candice says. "I felt like no one cared for my soul. That's what I felt. For the first time I felt like I was born into terrible circumstances and I started questioning. This is the biggest game of my entire life. Our family legacy is on the line, my legacy is on the line, my WNBA dreams are on the line."

She says she couldn't go to her coach or her friends with her feelings.

"I knew they didn't have the answers," she says. "I knew there was only one source and I just said, I'm going to go straight to the source."

Candice knew the only One she could turn to was God. She begged God to erase her pain and she experienced a sense of calm and an incredible peace.

That night she went on to leading her team to victory and a spot in the final four as well as a scoring a career high of 41 points.

"I broke a record that no male nor female has broken yet, but the crazy part about the game was that it wasn't me," Candice remembers.

"There must have been angels or someone, something, around me because every shot I would take, I'd be like, 'why would you shoot that, that's terrible?' I would just throw it up, and it would go in."

Although her team lost their final four matchup against University of Tennessee and Candice's college career finished, now Candice didn't find her identity in her basketball success or her father's legacy.

Her identity now comes from her relationship with Jesus Christ.

"For me, Jesus was a path, a leader," she explains. "He gave me an outlet, a way where I didn't have to be perfect. My life didn't have to be perfect. He gave me a way out of all of the guilt that I had held on to, all of the people-pleasing. I finally could just exhale."

Candice has discovered a love for reading the Book she once saw as too cumbersome. In a blog on her website, Candice says she now sees the Bible as a tool and a weapon that has helped her survive her struggles.

"The Bible is a tool that instructs and helps us all to combat evil," she writes. "Whether you choose to take it literally or not is completely your choice, but remember in all of this, God is love! He is so loving, in fact, that He gave us all a free will to choose to either accept or reject Him."

Candice graduated from America's Stanford University, graduating as the all-time leading scorer.

She went on to play for the WNBA's Minnesota Lynx, Tulsa Shock, Los Angeles Sparks and New York Liberty as well as in Spain and Greece.

She retired from the WNBA after eight seasons in 2016.

In a 2017 interview with *The San Diego Union-Tribune*, Candice revealed why. Calling the league's culture "very, very harmful" and "toxic to me", she alleged that she had been bullied on the court throughout her WNBA career for being heterosexual and nationally popular.

"I wanted to play two more seasons of WNBA, but the experience didn't lend itself to my mental state.

"Me being heterosexual, and being vocal in my identity as a straight woman was huge. [Most] of the women in the WNBA are gay. It was a conformist type of place."

Since then she has been coaching youth basketball and more recently, has developed a virtual coaching series for young basketballers during the coronavirus pandemic.

Candice blogs about basketball on her website [candicewiggins.com](http://candicewiggins.com)



WNBA Basketball Player Candice Wiggins attends a Runway Wonderland Children's Benefit By Trina's Kids Foundation on December 10, 2014 in Los Angeles, California. (Photo by Michael Bezjian/WireImage)

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