

The Body Builder

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Ed's Editorial:

Pastor Ed Before HPC - Part 1

by Pastor Ed Vasicek

Here is a brief account of my story. Today I would like to begin covering my spiritual life before I came to Highland Park Church in 1983.

I was 17 years old, raised in the old gangster Chicago suburb of Cicero, IL. Like most people who do not know the Lord, if you had asked me why I hoped to get to heaven, I would have answered, "Well, I try to do my best, to keep the 10 Commandments, to be kind and honest." If you asked me if I was a Christian, I would have said yes. But I would not have offered Jesus' work on the cross as the basis for my salvation. I would have acknowledged it, but that was not really my hope. There is a big difference between acknowledging and depending upon.

I came to know the Lord through the ministry of Cicero Bible Church (Cicero, IL). I was raised Roman Catholic, but, like many people (both Catholic and Protestant), I was under the idea that God graded on a curve, and that if I behaved myself I would make it to heaven. If I didn't, I wouldn't. The fear of hell helped keep me in line. Although I claimed to believe in Jesus, I was not depending upon His atoning work on the cross

to make me right with God. I was depending upon self-effort, trying to keep the 10 Commandments -- as I mentioned above.

When a friend at high school shared Bible verses like Ephesians 2:8-9, "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast," I was surprised. I never understand the concept of being saved by God's undeserved favor.

He invited me to church to watch a movie titled, "So Long Joey," the story of Gospel singer Dave Boyer. Although the pastor gave an invitation, I did not respond. The idea of being saved in an instant and knowing I was forgiven and heaven bound seemed too big a leap for me. Afterward, my friend talked some more about salvation by grace apart from works, and I listened with interest.

An attitude of pride made me ask myself, "Wasn't I as good a Christian as these folks? Wasn't my church as good as theirs?" I still did not understand that my salvation was not based upon what church I attended or how good I was. My friend gave me some Gospel tracts, and I took them.

That night, at home, I felt a hunger to really know God, not just dabble in religion. I read the tracts which were filled with verses from the Bible. Jesus said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life" (John 5:24, a verse we recently memorized!). Then it hit me.

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Jesus had paid my sin debt, and I had merely to believe and be saved. I prayed to the Lord something like, “Lord, I believe what Your Word says. Eternal life is mine because you are not a liar. I claim the salvation you offer. I believe that Jesus died for me and rose for me. Come into my life and be my Savior.”

All of a sudden, I knew heaven was my home and that the Lord was leading me to a lifelong adventure of knowing Him. I did not know where the path would lead, but I was eager to grow in my understanding.

I could not get enough Bible, and I still can't. I did not own a Bible, so I checked one out of the library until I could get one. I started attending the evening service at Cicero Bible Church where the pastor was preaching through the Book of Daniel. Eventually I began attending all the services there. I had been used to going to 12 o'clock mass at the Catholic Church, and, if I didn't wake up early enough, I could always attend at 5PM. Getting up in time for Sunday School – which started at 9:30 AM – seemed like an impossibility. But a few weeks after coming to know the Lord, I became a faithful Sunday School attender, too. A month after coming to know the Lord, I followed Him in believer's baptism.

So much was new to me. I didn't know hardly any of the hymns – not even Amazing Grace. I didn't know the order of the books of the Bible, I had never heard the song “Jesus Loves Me,” never been to a church dinner, I had no idea how churches were organized, what missionaries really did, what the end times were about, or what it meant to be a mature Christian. I had an awful lot to learn. Fortunately, I was given great direction – and much of that direction was Bible, Bible, and more Bible.

I began to read the Bible and other books (like Luther's biography and books by Francis Schaeffer that I never really could understand) so much that my eyes started troubling me. I had to get glasses. I was told about Moody Radio and listened to it as often as I could. I began to participate in the church's teen group and teen Bible study (I was a senior when I came to the Lord, so I only had about 6 months in the teen group). I began passing out Gospel tracts and tried to witness to my family and help them understand (I did a horrible job of it, and turned them off to the Gospel; they were worried about me).

I was perhaps 6 months old in the Lord when I met a young man at church named George. George had just returned from a stint in the army, so he was about 4 years older than I. George had also come to the Lord,

and had a zealous heart for the Lord. So we started reading books and discussing them. George said, “You know, Ed, if we read 10 chapters of the Bible a day, we could get through the whole Bible in about 3 months.” I said I would be willing to do it, too – and so we both did.

George had been brought up in a Christian home, so he had a lot more background and spiritual maturity than I had. He encouraged me greatly. Incidentally, George went on to graduate from Dallas Theological Seminary, picked up a doctorate along the way, and has been pastoring the last several decades in the Dallas, Texas area (Denison).

I came to the Lord in January, and now it was October. Cicero Bible Church was looking for laymen to attend a seminar in November conducted by a church in Ohio to train laymen to teach evangelistic home Bible Studies. Although I had just turned 18 (and was now attending the local community college, where I was working toward an Associate's degree in Electronics Engineering Technology – a degree I have but never used!), the church was willing to send me along with some others.

After the weekend seminar, I was capable of leading a simple evangelistic study, and George's mom was more than eager to host them. I invited a number of my lost friends, and, although only one made a genuine commitment to Jesus, it was a great opportunity to share the gospel of salvation by grace alone through faith in Jesus Christ alone with a number of them.

The next year, I became the president of a tiny Christian fellowship at Morton College, the community college I attended. Although the fellowship had limited impact, God used the experience in my life to build confidence in me that he could use me in a leadership role (in my mind, as a lay leader). Part two will follow next month!



Missionary Letters



Dawsons

June, 2016

Dear Pastor Ed and Friends at HPC,

What's happening in your life this week?

The Bible translation and linguistics community lost the wife of one of our pioneers, Ken Pike, whom Matt and I met when we were here in training in 1999. Evelyn Pike passed into glory last Friday. She was 101 years old and lived in the Dallas area. She was actually somewhat of a pioneer in her

The Body Builder

own right, with having authored, co-authored, or edited more than four dozen publications in the linguistics and Bible translation field. That's quite a Kingdom legacy! Ken had passed away in 2000; Wikipedia describes him as "an American linguist and anthropologist. He was the originator of the theory of tagmemics, the coiner of the terms "emic" and "etic" and the developer of the constructed language Kalaba-X for use in teaching theory and practice of translation.



Matt continues to work in the office in the mornings this summer and to tile the house with Jessica in the afternoons. They finished the laundry room last week and are now working on the family room.

Praise God for:

- His faithfulness and the faithfulness of those who have gone before us in the Bible Translation movement.
- His work and revealed majesty among the Rendille people.
- Restored health from our weeks of colds in the home.
- The young adults from the Sunday evening church who are reaching out to Jessica.
- His favor on Valerie in giving her a summer job! She will start next week, probably as a cashier, at Sprouts, a nice grocery store.

Please pray for:

- Young hearts to be open to Jesus next week as Valerie and I work in Vacation Bible School at our church in the mornings.
- Valerie to be able to minister in VBS. She won't know her Sprouts' work schedule until later this week or next.

Please continue to pray for:

- My dad to accept and trust Jesus.
- My mom to receive the Lord's joy and peace.
- Jessica to have the desire to nurture her relationship with Jesus.

May we keep our eyes on our champion Jesus, as we run our race with endurance!

Love and Blessings,
Janet & Matt

serving with the Wycliffe Global Alliance

Matt: Corporation Secretary

Janet: Assistant to the Corporation Secretary; East Asia Connector; Finance Receptionist at the International Health Clinic

Jessica: senior in Computer Science at Rice University, Houston, TX; working with Accelerated Learning on their website

Valerie: freshman in Linguistics, with a minor in Aviation Sciences, at Baylor University, Waco, TX; Baylor Disability Shuttle driver

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Wycliffe Bible Translators, PO Box 628200, Orlando, FL 32862-8200, www.wycliffe.org

For financial partnership, please click [here](#) or include with your check a separate note indicating "Preference for the Wycliffe ministry of Matt and Janet Dawson"



Smile



A bicycle can't stand up on its own because it's two-tired.

A lot of money is tainted - it taint yours and it taint mine.

It wasn't the fruit on the tree that caused all the trouble ... it was the pair on the ground.

The young father took a seat on the bus next to an elderly man and plopped his one-year old on his lap, just as the little boy began to cry and fidget. "That child is spoiled, isn't he?" the old man remarked. "No," said the dad. "They all smell this way."

I was visiting my son the other night when I asked if I could borrow a newspaper. "Dad, this is the 21st century," he said. "I don't waste money on newspapers. But if you like, you can borrow my iPad." I can tell you this: That spider never knew what hit him!

Ladies' Bible Study

There will be no Thursday Ladies' Bible Study in July, 2016. We resume on Thursday, August 4, 2016 at 12:15 p.m. Please join us!!

Finding Your Child's Way on the Autism Spectrum

by Dr. Laura Hendrickson

Moody Publishers, 2009

reviewed by Pastor Ed Vasicek

Marylou and I have some longstanding Christian friends – a Christian couple from the Chicago area. We were often puzzled by the husband's behavior patterns – and so was he – until he was finally diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome. After his diagnosis, he began attending an Asperger's

support group. His behavior improved; he now monitors his responses and reactions.

Asperger's Syndrome is part of the Autism Spectrum. Autism varies from high-functioning to low functioning, and research is ongoing. But the question arises, "How should Christian parents rear their autistic children?"

Dr. Laura Hendrickson points the way in her 144 page book, "Finding Your Child's Way on the Autism Spectrum." Hendrickson is uniquely qualified to write such a book: she had been a practicing psychiatrist, believes in Biblical counseling (with an emphasis on personal responsibility), and successfully raised her autistic son. She views autism as a type of personality – with both pros and cons. And she recognizes the contributions autistic people have and are making in society, referring often to autism's chief contemporary spokesperson, Dr. Temple Grandin, who is one of many success stories.

The book addresses both spiritual and behavioral issues. Chapter titles include (but not limited to): "In His Way," "Shepherding the Heart of Your Child," "Stims, Rituals, and Obsessions," and "Managing Emotions."

The author shares her own experiences with her son (including a few mistakes), and how she developed better skills as her understanding grew. The book concludes with the text from her son's valedictorian speech!

If I were to characterize her approach, I would say she excels at balance. Her advice in the realm of discipline involves speaking calmly and slowly, making a distinction between a "melt down" and rebellion, exercising patience – but also firmness and consequences.

The author also advocates early intervention. Parents, therefore, should be on the lookout for signs that their little one might be on the spectrum. Infants may display autism by not making eye contact, being fascinated with shadows, and not being interested in people. Toddlers at two may not yet be speaking and have little interest in other children. Older children may lack social skills, be content alone when other kids are playing, become overly focused upon a single interest, flap their wrists (or other "stims"), and be upset at change.

Here is one sample quotation about social skills: "Not only does your child have difficulty reading the nonverbal signals of others, she also doesn't learn very well by observing social interactions involving others. This is probably because she doesn't understand what she's seeing. She won't pick up 'unwritten rules' unless you teach them explicitly to her. But the good news is that once spectrum kids understand these rules, most follow them diligently."

Dr. Hendrickson suggest nudging your child toward social involvement, but doing so alertly and weighing each situation. She recognizes that some children do not want to be in social situations, but she insists they need to be: "Brighter spectrum kids may take refuge in arrogance, fantasizing that they don't fit in because they are so superior.

Some deliberately cultivate Mr. Spock's or Lt. Data's aloofness. These kids may claim that they don't understand typical social interactions, and don't need to...the Bible contests this claim. Christ calls us...to seek first His kingdom, not our own comfort or pride...He taught that our goal... is to serve others, rather than insisting upon being the one that is served (Matthew 20:25-28). We are called to adapt ourselves to others for love's sake..."

It is rare to find a book like this, one that views the Bible as both true and practical – yet, at the same time – does not take a simplistic approach to a complex challenge. If you suspect your child or a child you influence might be on the autism spectrum, I would recommend this book as a starting point and broad game plan.

Home, Sweet, Home

Two weeks ago, my kids headed off to school. One week later they were back home, sick with the first round of school-borne illnesses. I got the call from the school nurse around 11:30. My eight-year-old son had a fever—slight—but just enough to send him home. By bedtime, the rest of us were beginning to show signs too. Unfortunately, it was the kind of sickness that was just bad enough to make you miserable but not bad enough to knock you out completely - the kind where you can't muster enough energy to go about your normal routine but you've still got enough energy to bicker and fight - the kind that brings out the worst in you—irritability, whining, helplessness.

And that was just me.

As difficult as last week was, I found that it reminded me of the importance of home. Stripped of the externals—the housekeeping, the Pinterest projects, the car pools—the purpose of home became clearer; *the fundamental purpose of the home is to teach us how to live in relationship with God and with each other*. Every day, as we interact with our spouses, parents, children, aunts, and cousins, we are learning the basics of how to interact with other human beings. So when my family is at our worst; when we are not loving or kind or patient; when we have "one of those" weeks, I remember exactly what I am fighting for.

In philosophy, there is a concept called "moral proximity." Moral proximity says that we owe our greatest responsibility to those closest to us. So when the Scripture says you are to "love your neighbor as you love yourself," it is teaching you both how to love and *who* to love. You are to love whom ever God has providentially placed in your life. **The genius of Home is that it teaches you how to do this by putting you in close (difficult, irritating) quarters with people who are committed to loving you as well.**

Because here's the rub: Loving people close to you, loving your neighbor, is often more difficult than loving those at a distance. It is easier to love those whose quirks you don't

have to live with, whose Legos weren't left all over the family room floor (again), who don't take your hard work for granted. Learning to love those close to you means learning to love in the face of frustration. For my children, this means figuring out how to love their siblings who irritate them and learning to love mommy and daddy who tell them to do things they don't like.

When the young lawyer asked "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus answered with the story of the Good Samaritan, a parable about moral proximity. In it, both the priest and the Levite fail to show true love because they fail to love the person right in front of them. But the opposite is also true. If today, we learn to love our closest neighbor, the people in our own homes, chances are we'll be able to love another neighbor when we pass him in the road.

Trust me, our family has our share of bickering and meanness. This last week proved it. But every time I find myself refereeing, every time I get overwhelmed by the work, the sheer work of discipline and correction, I think about my kids' futures. I remember that the boy who dismisses his mother and sister today will likely dismiss his wife some day too. The girl who pouts and whines to get her way will likely grow up to be a woman who manipulates others in her workplace and church.

But.

But children who learn to love today, children who see grace and kindness and peace modeled, children who are expected to offer grace and kindness and peace in return—these children will flourish. They will flourish because by learning to love the people closest to them they will also learn to love their neighbor as themselves. So that when they finally do fly away, when they leave the safety of home for broader society, the world be a better place because of them.

Hannab Anderson lives in Warsaw, Indiana, and is the author of Made For More. You can find her at sometimesalight.com.

***The ABC's of Wisdom:
Building Character
with Solomon -
Progress - Rebuke -
Caring Enough to
Tell the Truth***

Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses.

Proverbs 27:5-6

The King James Version says it elegantly: "Faithful are the wounds of a friend." Being a man or woman of integrity means that you don't walk away from a problem. It means that when you see a problem you hit it head-on, even though it would be easier and more convenient and pleasant just to walk away.

When someone asked General Norman Schwarzkopf the secret of his success, he replied very simply, "I never walk past a problem." Another friend put it this way: "Just remember, when it comes to solving problems, the first price you pay is always the cheapest." We ignore problems, hoping they will go away, but that rarely happens. And the price of solving them goes up, not down.

That last bit of advice came from a pastor who stayed in the same church over thirty years. He said, "I learned years ago when I was just starting out in the ministry that my tendency when I saw a problem was to just walk away. I discovered that I had to fight that tendency. I discovered through hard experience that the first price you pay is always the cheapest." The reason we don't want to get involved in solving problems we see around us is that we think if we just wait, the problems will solve themselves. That is rarely the case. Problems never get better when you ignore them. You may think you love someone too much to say anything. No, if you really loved them, you would speak the truth. You would speak it in love, but you will speak the truth he needs to hear. Integrity does not ignore the problems of life.

This truth has two sides. We are to love each other enough that we are willing for our brothers and sisters to hurt us if necessary. What does that mean? *It means that in the body of Christ we are to have some friends gathered around us who are close enough to hurt us from time to time.*

Does that sound like a shocking statement? It might seem that way. Nobody wants to be hurt by his friends. We all want to be surrounded by people who will make us feel better about ourselves. The very idea of having friends who will hurt us seems absurd. Friends don't hurt each other. Friends build each other up.

But that's not the whole story. If you want to live in a world where no one will ever hurt you, you picked the wrong planet on which to be born.

Spiritual growth becomes possible when you let other people get close enough to you to say the things to you that you need to hear - whether you want to hear them or not.

Lord Jesus, give me the courage I need to speak hard truth to my friends and the grace to receive it if they need to speak it to me. Amen.

Which is harder for you - to speak hard truth or to have someone speak it to you? Why?

What "hard truth" do you need to say that you have been putting off? What do you plan to do about it?

by Dr. Ray Pritchard

My Utmost for His Highest - Getting There

...*come, follow Me.* —Luke 18:22b

Where our individual desire dies and sanctified surrender lives.

One of the greatest hindrances in coming to Jesus is the excuse of our own individual temperament. We make our temperament and our natural desires barriers to coming to Jesus. Yet the first thing we realize when we do come to Jesus is that He pays no attention whatsoever to our natural desires. We have the idea that we can dedicate our gifts to God. However, you cannot dedicate what is not yours. There is actually only one thing you can dedicate to God, and that is your right to yourself (see Romans 12:1). If you will give God your right to yourself, He will make a holy experiment out of you — and His experiments always succeed. The one true mark of a saint of God is the inner creativity that flows from being totally surrendered to Jesus Christ. In the life of a saint there is this amazing “Well,” which is a continual Source of original life. The Spirit of God is a “Well” of water springing up perpetually fresh. A saint realizes that it is God who engineers his circumstances; consequently there are no complaints, only unrestrained surrender to Jesus. Never try to make your experience a principle for others, but allow God to be as creative and original with others as He is with you.

If you abandon everything to Jesus, and come when He says, “Come,” then He will continue to say, “Come,” through you. You will go out into the world reproducing the echo of Christ’s “Come.” That is the result in every soul who has abandoned all and come to Jesus.

Have I come to Him? Will I come *now*?

WISDOM FROM OSWALD CHAMBERS

We never enter into the Kingdom of God by having our head questions answered, but only by commitment. *The Highest Good—Thy Great Redemption, 565 R*

Recipe of the Month

Chicken Fajita Pasta

Hannah Broo, Janie Martin's friend

Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 pound boneless, skinless chicken breasts

- 1 packet taco or fajita seasoning (or use your own homemade)
- 2 cups diced onion (about 1 whole onion)
- 2 cups diced bell peppers (2-3 peppers)
- 3-4 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- ½ cup heavy cream
- 1 10-ounce can Ro-Tel Diced Tomatoes and Green Chiles
- 8 ounces (3 cups) penne pasta
- ½ teaspoon salt

Directions:

- Cut the chicken into bite-sized pieces. Season the chicken with half of taco/fajita seasoning.
- In a 12-inch skillet, heat 1 tablespoon olive oil over high heat.
- When the oil is very hot, carefully add the chicken in a single layer and cook without stirring until one side is seared and browned, about 1-2 minutes. Flip the chicken to the other side and cook until well browned and no longer pink.
- Remove the chicken to a plate and set aside.
- Add the remaining 1 tablespoon of olive oil to the skillet with the heat still on high.
- When the oil is very hot, add the onions, peppers, and remaining taco/fajita seasoning. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the veggies are slightly blackened.
- Turn heat to low, add minced garlic and stir until fragrant and well combined, about 30 seconds. Remove the veggies to the plate with the chicken.
- In the same skillet, add the broth, cream, diced tomatoes, uncooked pasta and salt. Stir to combine and bring to a boil, then cover and reduce heat to medium-low, and cook for 15 minutes until pasta is tender and liquid is mostly absorbed.
- Add the chicken and veggies back to the skillet and stir to combine until heated through, about 2 minutes. Serve with buttery garlic bread and enjoy!



Quotes



I do not pray for a lighter load, but a stronger back.

Something is wrong when our lives make sense to unbelievers.

When Satan sees a man or women who really believes in prayer, he trembles as much as he ever did.

God teaches us to love by putting some unlovely people around us.

Never give up, for that is just the place and time that the tide will turn.

We can't make others love us, but they cannot keep us from loving them.

July 2016

26	27	28	29	30 Ladies' Bible study 12:15	1	2
3 No Evening Service	4	5 Deaconess Mtg, 6:30	6	7	8	9
10 Camp Emmanuel Begins	11	12 Deacons' Mtg., 7:00	13	14	15	16
17 Bible Study 6:30	18	19	20	21	22	23
24 Creation Night 31 Jesus Lodge	25	26 Elders' Meeting 7:00 pm	27	28	29	30

Sunday Events:

- Early Service, 8:30 am
- Sunday School, 9:30 am
- Morning Service 10:30 am
- Bonfire 6:00-7:30 pm
- Jesus Lodge, 6:00 - 7:30 pm
- Sunday Evening Bible Study, 6:30 - 7:30 pm

Important Events:

- Bible Study - July 17th, 6:30 p.m.
- Creation Night - July 24th, 6:30 p.m.
- Jesus Lodge - July 31st, 6:00 p.m.
- NO Ladies' Bible Study in July, 2016



Elizabeth "Fizz" Olsen & Emily Hoeksema - May, 2016

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