



Dear Friend:

With spring on the horizon, I'm finding it hard to believe that it's been a year since the COVID-19 pandemic dramatically changed everyday life as we know it. Twelve months ago, who could have guessed that we would find ourselves facing lockdowns, mask mandates, and social distancing guidelines? Meanwhile, there are those among us who have watched their businesses go under or even lost loved ones to the virus. We grieve with them and lift them in prayer.

And, as if the pandemic weren't challenging enough, we've witnessed intense unrest and political upheaval across the nation, culminating in a presidential election cycle unlike any in recent history. If we're all feeling a little shell-shocked, it's no wonder!

I've spoken to many people who are dismayed and deeply worried about the future of our nation, and I certainly share many of those concerns. We are living in perilous times, and there's no question that the Christian worldview has fallen out of favor with the broader society.

However, I'm here to remind you that the Church's mission has not changed – and neither has our God. His loving and sovereign plan for salvation remains intact, and nothing can shake the foundations of His eternal kingdom. As Easter approaches, let's joyfully celebrate the wonderful reality that the tomb is still empty. Our own future bodily resurrection and the promise of Creation's redemption are assured. Christ has not lost control of history's narrative and timeline. To the contrary, He remains firmly and irrevocably at the helm.

This means, of course, that we can stare earthly hardships boldly in the face and trust that the Lord is accomplishing His divine purposes each and every day. We can have unshakeable hope, because the end of the story has been written, and its outcome is certain.

So as we look around at a world in which so many people are lost and hurting, let's not lose sight of our most important calling as believers: to help reconcile others to Jesus so that they, too, can have the hope that does not disappoint (Romans 5:5).

I'm certainly aware that, at a time when the messages echoing across society are incompatible with biblical teaching, it can be tempting to hunker down and isolate ourselves from an oft-unfriendly world at large. However, that is not God's heart for His people *or* for His hurting world. When Jesus issued the Great Commission, He did not tell us to go and make disciples of all nations "as long as the culture is friendly toward believers." There is no condition placed on the mandate to extend the message of God's love, truth, and salvation.

And let's not forget that converts to Christ proliferated after His ascension in an era when the earthly authorities were doing everything possible to snuff out Christianity. Throughout history, in fact, the Gospel has flourished at times and in places where persecution and even martyrdom were most intense.

I am under no illusion that any pressure we face here in America as followers of Christ can be compared with the kind of terrible persecution suffered by so many of our fellow believers down

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through the ages and up to the present day. What I *do* know is that we live in a post-Christian age – and those of us who profess Christ and speak His truth are increasingly being accused of hate speech, intolerance, discrimination, and more. Some have even had legal action taken against them and had their livelihoods threatened because they had the courage to stand unflinchingly for their convictions.

In such a climate, we do well to recall Jesus' exhortations to His disciples as He prepared them for the opposition they would face. "If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. . . . If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me" (John 15:19-21).

Did you catch the end of that passage? Those who mistreat us *don't know Jesus*. Thus, we don't dig in our heels and view them as our enemies. Instead, we allow God's love to stir in us a compassion for the lost and a sincere desire to lead as many people as possible to a saving knowledge of our great Savior.

Focus on the Family remains passionately committed to spreading the Good News of the Gospel far and wide. In fact, our mission is not to nurture strong families for the sake of strong families *alone*. Indeed, that is a noble cause – and we work day in and day out to save marriages and equip parents to raise children who love and serve the Lord. Ultimately, though, we want to help families thrive because stable, loving, Christ-following families are the most effective vehicle by which evangelism takes place.

The Lord has worked through our efforts to deliver the Gospel to people across the globe since our ministry was founded more than 40 years ago. In the last year alone, Focus has had a hand in helping at least 305,000 people make the decision to follow Christ or to rededicate their lives to Him!

We rejoice each time we hear of even one person who has experienced salvation or spiritual growth through our outreach, and we love receiving testimonials like the ones below:

*This is a praise report: I want to thank God for you all. As part of a promotion from Focus, I chose the gift of "The Ties that Bind" CD album from the Adventures in Odyssey series. I am married with one son. He is 12 years old and currently lives in a home of division. I am a follower of Jesus Christ, but my husband has not yet followed Him. For a little history about us, although our son is 12, we have only been married seven years. I was saved and began my walk nine years ago, a couple of years before we got married. During these years, God has taught me so much about His design, the importance of the family unit, and how that reflects Him. It has not been easy, as we did not grow up with the model of a godly family. I am very thankful for the lessons that I have learned. Things have been complicated at home and God's design for family has not often been respected or valued. I take our son to church and we often discuss God's Word. I try to share everything I am learning. My husband has tended to go against what I try to model for our son. This causes emotional frustration and discord tends to happen. I fall short daily, but am thankful God always picks me back up to try again. My son is many times divided in his understanding and I am reminded of the "house built on sand" that Jesus referenced in Matthew 7:27. Now that you know this, I hope you can understand how thankful I am for that Adventures in Odyssey gift. We have never listened to that series before. I probably would have never purchased it. My son and I listen to an episode almost daily now! We listen*

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*in the car and he even responds to the discussion questions! I am learning so much also. We are connecting! I am crying thinking about it because for that half an hour or so of listening, we are at peace and I feel God's peace. We may be in the process of learning, and we may not be displaying a perfect model of God's design for family right now, but our son is able to understand a healthy example through this series. I am so thankful. I pray that we will be better equipped to model family for my husband and that he comes to accept and walk in the salvation of Christ Jesus. I pray that we learn, appreciate, and model God's design so that our family can be a blessing to those around us.*

–Jennifer, Kansas

*The very day before I was scheduled to go into the hospital for a pacemaker, I received a call from you all. The timing of that call meant so much to me. It is because of the people who work at Focus on the Family that I have come to Jesus! And now I seek Him on a daily basis. I was even baptized a month ago! As I sit and write this, my young teen daughter, God willing, will also be baptized in just a few days!*

–Claudia, California

*I'm a home healthcare worker and one night during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic I couldn't sleep – I was overwhelmed with fear. I went into our family room and curled up in the recliner with my pillow and blanket in the dark trying to find peace. I have listened to Focus on the Family for years and turned to my podcast app. I found the interview with Norman Wright. There it was – peace and comfort with permission to let go of all those feelings and to know I'm not alone. I must have dozed off but then again became anxious and was unable to sleep. I went back to Focus and listened to the interview with Max Lucado and his story of Old Testament's Joseph. In the broadcast, Max also told his own personal story of sexual abuse. Since that night I have enrolled in Dan Allender's course called "Healing the Wounded Heart." I am so thankful for the way God has used your program to lead me along a journey of healing. So much has happened since that night, and the Focus on the Family podcasts have been a daily support and encouragement for me. I can't thank you enough.*

–Wendy, Connecticut

Inspiring stories like these always motivate us to “keep on keeping on” in our endeavors to introduce people to Christ and help encourage them in their walk with Him. Your prayers and support make these efforts possible.

You can point out God's plan of grace through Jesus Christ with young and old, families in crisis, troubled couples, bewildered parents and others who struggle by supporting the resources of Focus on the Family.

Will you give today to offer the redemption and grace found in Jesus Christ by sharing our broadcasts, counseling resources, magazines, podcasts, online and print articles, special events and more?

Your gift today of just \$75 can help lead five people to Christ through the broadcasts and resources of Focus on the Family. There has never been a more critical time to impact eternities than when the

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world seems to be spinning out of control. So many people need to know the peace that only God can bring.

Will you help? As we celebrate our risen Savior this Easter, you can be a part of proclaiming the Gospel wherever God opens doors for us to do so. I pray this verse from Priscilla Owens' joyful hymn will remain the Church's bold refrain:

*Sing above the battle strife:  
Jesus saves! Jesus saves!  
By His death and endless life  
Jesus saves! Jesus saves!  
Shout it brightly through the gloom,  
When the heart for mercy craves;  
Sing in triumph o'er the tomb:  
Jesus saves! Jesus saves!<sup>1</sup>*

It's always a privilege to connect with you and share my heart. If we can minister to you in some way, please visit us online at [FocusOnTheFamily.com](http://FocusOnTheFamily.com) or call 1-800-A-FAMILY (232-6459). In the meantime, God's abundant joy and blessings to you and yours. Happy Easter!

Sincerely,



Jim Daly  
President

P.S. The message of the Gospel is at the heart of every effort you support to save and strengthen families. Will you give today to share the Good News of Christ's resurrection during these challenging times? We deeply appreciate each and every dollar you provide as we carry out our mission to serve families and spread the Gospel.

<sup>1</sup> Owens, Priscilla. "Jesus Saves." Public Domain.

# FAMILY FOCUS<sup>®</sup>

FOR OUR PARTNERS IN FAMILY MINISTRY

MARCH 2021



## Coming back to my first love . . .

### Your support offers the hope of Easter with every broadcast and resource.

What is at the core of our ministry to couples, families and hurting individuals? The love of Jesus Christ! With every broadcast, article or counseling resource you support, you are sharing the hope of Easter.

That message can make all the difference for someone like Craig of Ohio.

“I gave my heart to Jesus when I was 21,” he writes. “God gave me a beautiful wife and two beautiful children. He gave me a career as a paramedic firefighter.”

But Craig’s life and faith took a turn. “At 27 years old, some personal things happened to me, and I walked away from God, my wife, my kids — everything,” he shares. “Over the next 16 years, I became a hopeless heroin addict, lost my career, and became homeless.”

“Eventually, I got my life in order, got off

drugs, got a great job,” he shares. “But still I was sad inside and very lonely. I realized that until I came back to my first love, Jesus, I would always be empty. It was rough at first, but then I started listening to Focus on the Family on my way to work. The teachings I heard gave me strength to stand strong in my faith.”

Easter is a great time to pause and remember that at the root of all our efforts is the love

*COMING BACK TO MY FIRST LOVE ...*  
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**INSIDE**  
THIS ISSUE

Daly Focus  
by Jim Daly

How to Maintain Your Marriage  
When Expecting a Baby

Children Are  
a Blessing





## Daily Focus

By Jim Daly, President

# Evangelism and family go hand in hand!

When you look at Focus on the Family, what do you see? A ministry committed to saving and strengthening families? That's true. But do you also see missions-focused ministry, intent on sharing the Gospel?

Sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ is as much a part of the ministry you support as saving couples, equipping parents and rescuing babies from abortion. In fact, without the Gospel, Focus on the Family would not even exist.

When Jesus Christ died on the cross and rose again, he provided the hope of reconciliation and grace to each one of us. With that great gift, we are all called to share the Good News.

***"I have made you a light . . . that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth."*** — Acts 13:47 ESV

Through the strength of our marriages and families as we honor the Lord, we can be a witness to the world.

Every resource you provide offers the hope of Easter at its core. Through resources like our daily broadcast, Adventures in Odyssey audio dramas, Hope Restored marriage intensives, the Bring Your Bible to School Day program, the Option Ultrasound program, Boundless and Plugged In websites, we are equipping individuals and families like you to be that witness to those who are hurting.

Thank you for sharing the love of God and the redemption message with families and individuals!

*Jim*

## "Coming back to my first love..." *Continued from page 1*

of Jesus Christ. Because he loves us, he gave up his life so that we might be reconciled with our Heavenly Father.

The message of Christ's death and resurrection is at the heart of everything we do at Focus on the Family. Your gifts share the Good News of Christ's love through our broadcasts, counseling resources, magazines, articles, programs and more.

*"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends"* (John 15:12-13 ESV).

Our prayer is that God continues to use the ministry you provide to couples, parents, children and families to share that Gospel and transform the lives of hurting people like Craig.

**In the last year alone, your support helped 305,000 people**

**make decisions for Christ ... including 111,500 salvation decisions.**

Research also shows that your generosity played a role in helping at least 30,000 children make salvation decisions over the past year. Helen of California wrote:

"You gave us resources to be able to help my son come to faith in Jesus Christ. When my son was 7, his dad read him the *Clubhouse Jr* magazine before he went to bed. At the end of the article, it asked readers if they wanted to receive Christ. My husband and I were so delighted that he accepted Christ. Now, he's 10, and he is loving the Word. Thank you for the resources."

Thank you for sharing the love God revealed with His Son's death and resurrection. ■

He Said, She Said On *Expecting*

# How to maintain your marriage when you are expecting a baby

With Dr. Greg and Mrs. Erin Smalley

*Dr. Greg and Mrs. Erin Smalley share from their own experiences how your marriage can continue to grow when a baby is on the way.*



**ERIN:** We had been married one year and one month when we got the news that we were going to have a baby. It was kind of earlier than we thought it would be and our marriage was in a place where it needed to be strengthened. So, when we found out we were pregnant, we knew that we really needed to strengthen our relationship and get serious about working on our marriage so that we could be good parents. We really got intentional about growing individually and we also did some counseling to strengthen our relationship. It started us really on the path of forming a healthy marriage.

**GREG:** There are some awful messages out there when you get pregnant. We heard, "Your life is over. You guys will never be the same. Your marriage won't be the same. It's a burden." You have to fight those messages and realize the truth that it will be different, but not a bad different. Erin and I decided from the beginning that our kids would be part of our family, not the center of our family. Our marriage is more important than anything else next to our Lord.

**ERIN:** The marriage relationship has to be strong so you can parent well. The greatest thing you can do for your children is strengthen your marriage relationship. They need the stability. Marriage has to be that solid foundation. That was a choice and decision that we made.

**ERIN:** When we have our time together, it is strengthening our relationship. And that strengthens the family and provides stability for our children.

The broadcast schedule is subject to change. Listen to the Focus on the Family<sup>®</sup> Broadcast on your local radio station, your mobile device or online. If you've missed one of these broadcasts, listen online at [FocusOnTheFamily.com/Broadcast](http://FocusOnTheFamily.com/Broadcast). You can also hear us with the all-new, enhanced Focus on the Family App found at the App Store and Google Play.

*Broadcasts are brought to you by our partners — you!*

DATE	TITLE	GUEST
3/1-3/2	Navigating a Toxic Culture with Your Daughter I & II	Dr. Meg Meeker
3/3	Journeying from Tragedy to Triumph	Pastor Bryan Koch
3/4-3/5	Reconnecting with Your Spouse I & II	Dr. Greg and Mrs. Erin Smalley
3/8-3/9	Identifying Triggers in Your Marriage I & II	Mr. Guy and Mrs. Amber Lia
3/10	Sharing Your Faith as a Family	Pastor Kevin and Mrs. Sherry Harney
3/11-3/12	Reigniting Your Passion for Jesus I & II	Mrs. Kim Meeder
3/15	TBA	
3/16-3/17	Holding on to Hope During Separation I & II	Dr. Gary Chapman
3/18-3/19	Guiding Your Teen into Adulthood I & II	Dr. Kenneth Wilgus, Mrs. Jessica Pfeiffer and Mrs. Ashley Parrish
3/22-3/23	Joyfully Embracing God's Children	Mr. Josh and Mrs. Heather Avis
3/24-3/25	The Journey Back to My True Identity I & II	Mr. Walt Heyer and Ms. Kathy Grace Duncan
3/26	Embracing Your Role as a Spouse	Mr. Kevin Thompson
3/29-3/30	Understanding Your Spouse's Emotions I & II	Dr. David and Dr. Jan Stoop
3/31	Finding Hope and Joy While Single Parenting	Mrs. Linda Ranson Jacobs

\* The broadcast schedule is subject to change.

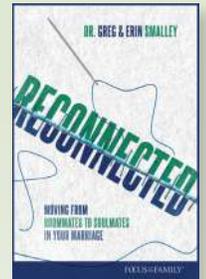
DATE	TITLE	GUEST
4/1	TBA	
4/2	Examining the Evidence of Easter	Pastor Lee Strobel
4/5-4/6	Using Your Unique Personality to Share Your Faith I & II	Dr. Mike Bechtle
4/7	Fighting for Joy as a Special Needs Parent	Mr. Jason Hague
4/8	TBA	
4/9	Does Living Together Help or Hurt?	Dr. David Gudgel
4/12-4/13	Discovering God's Plan for Your Parenting I & II	Mr. Gary Thomas
4/14-4/15	Experiencing a Fulfilled Marriage I & II	Mrs. Patricia Ashley
4/16	Walking Through the Healing Process	Mr. Stephen Arterburn
4/19-4/20	Men and Relationships: What Works and What Doesn't I & II	Dr. Greg Smalley and Dr. Michael Smalley
4/21	Keeping Hope and Faith During Childhood Cancer	Mr. Turner and Mrs. Tara Simkins
4/22	TBA	
4/23	TBA	
4/26	Finding Hope in an Unexpected Pregnancy	Mrs. Leslie Leyland Fields
4/27-4/28	Improving Your Marriage as a Blended Family Couple I & II	Mr. Ron Deal
4/29-4/30	No Better Way to Pray for Your Kids I & II	Mrs. Jodie Berndt

Feature  
Guests:



## Dr. Greg and Mrs. Erin Smalley

In their brand-new book, *Reconnected*, Focus on the Family's Dr. Greg and Mrs. Erin Smalley will help you rekindle the passionate, intimate, heart-to-heart spark of connection with your spouse. Learn how to battle the grind of work and chores and start enjoying life together. We'll send you a copy in appreciation for your ministry gift today of any amount!



Use the enclosed response card to mark your gift and book request or go to [FocusOnTheFamily.com/Reconnected21](http://FocusOnTheFamily.com/Reconnected21).



Check out our YouTube channel  
[FocusOnTheFamily.com/YouTube](http://FocusOnTheFamily.com/YouTube)

### LIFE UPDATE

## Connections for Life

Through your support of Focus on the Family, you not only help provide grants to equip pregnancy medical clinics with machines and training, you also help connect mothers considering abortion with these lifesaving clinics through the My Choice Network. A woman can enter her zip code and find the address of the pregnancy medical clinic nearest her.

Once these expectant mothers connect with a pregnancy medical clinic, your support allows them to see the truth about the life growing inside of them. Staff at one of the clinics shared this story,

The LIFE UPDATE column features testimonies and the latest news on how your support is rescuing babies from abortion and saving moms from the pain and regret of abortion.

*"We received a new ultrasound machine through a grant from Focus on the Family. We could not believe the quality of the images. Even very early pregnancies could be viewed so clearly. The very first patient we had scheduled for the new ultrasound machine was abortion minded. A few months ago, she lost all she owned in a fire and was just starting to put her life together. She then lost her job. Her boyfriend had a parole violation and had to go to jail. She was all alone . . . and then found out she was pregnant. We talked about the life that was growing inside of her. We reviewed her options. Then it was time for the ultrasound. She was only 5 weeks 5 days. But with the new ultrasound machine we were able to visualize the little beating heart. Right away she began talking differently about the pregnancy. It made it so real for her. Following the ultrasound this patient shared that she was thinking she would now continue with the pregnancy. We were able to provide her with some things she needed and plan to wrap support around her as she continues this pregnancy. We are so thankful that Focus on the Family has this grant available to allow pregnancy centers to get the best equipment possible to demonstrate life for our patients. We were able to clearly view the baby at the earliest point possible and help this mom choose life."*

Thank you for saving lives!

Parenting Corner with Danny Huerta

## Children are a blessing

Danny Huerta is Focus on the Family's vice president of the Parenting and Youth department



As soon as you share the news that you are having a baby, get ready. Here come the comments about what to expect.

"You'll never get a full night's sleep again."

"Just wait until they start walking. You'll be so exhausted."

"The toddler stage is the worst!"

Don't be alarmed. Each parenting journey is unique and different. You will have your own unique moments. Each age and stage is different and special. You will have both great moments and difficult moments.

Don't let a sense of dread prevent you from enjoying each moment for what it is. Come alongside your child in this journey as they grow up and enjoy the moments — good or bad — because it all moves so quickly.

Here are a few other things to keep in mind about having a newborn:

Encourage one another. Come into each stage of parenting knowing that support from one another is needed. Talk about that expectation with each other.

Openly communicate with your spouse. If you need something from your spouse, don't hesitate to share. Also, listen to your spouse if they are telling you what they need. I remember when we were having a particularly frustrating time, I thought, "We can make this a good marriage or a miserable one. It is up to us."

Find encouragement from a support system. Find someone who will encourage both you and your spouse. Maybe it's an older couple with 10 to 15 years down the road who can offer you encouragement and wisdom from their experience.

Go to [FocusOnTheFamily.com](http://FocusOnTheFamily.com) for more resources to help you as you begin this parenting journey. ■



# Friends of FOCUS ON THE FAMILY

## Share the Good News monthly!

When you join our *Friends of Focus on the Family* program as a loyal monthly supporter, you'll help share the Good News of Jesus Christ's resurrection with hurting people through our broadcasts and programs.

As a *Friends of Focus on the Family* member, you'll receive monthly updates that report on how you are helping us make an eternal impact with practical results for families, as well as special offers and resources. Call 888-862-6767 today.

To learn more go to  
[FocusOnTheFamily.com/  
Sustainer](http://FocusOnTheFamily.com/Sustainer)



## Help reach a soul this Easter!

Souls are at stake for eternity. As believers, we must shine the light of truth and point people toward Christ. Even as we invest in families, the hope of the Gospel is always our focus.

Everything we do points people to Jesus Christ in love. Whether through our broadcasts, counseling resources, *Adventures in Odyssey* audio dramas or other resources, we want to share the life-changing message of the Gospel to everyone we reach.

Your gift today will help bring people to Jesus Christ through all these efforts! Your gift today of just \$75 can help lead five people to Christ through the broadcasts and resources of Focus on the Family. ■



Please be sure to include this form along with your gift.

Your generosity will transform a life like this,

*"I am finally living the life God planned for me. And I thank Him daily for speaking to me through the programs you broadcast. I was unreachable. But God still got through."* —Michelle, Florida

Use the enclosed reply form and envelope to return your generous gift and share God's saving love and grace. ■



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