



# Growing Families Australia

NATIONAL NEWSLETTER

Reaching our nation one family at a time

## Inside:

- 1st World Tantrums
- 31 Biblical Virtues
- Social Media Explained
- Parenting and the WWW

## Keep us up-to-date!

- Are you changing your email?
- Have a new telephone number?
- Planning to move in the next few months?

We would love to know your new details so we can keep you informed & connected with the Growing Families family! Email us on [enquiries@gfi.org.au](mailto:enquiries@gfi.org.au)

## Greed and Generosity

**Ed Young – from LISTS to Live By**

**Greed is self-centred**

**Generosity is others-focused**

**Greed hoards**

**Generosity helps**

**Greed holds a tight grip**

**Generosity shares freely**

**Greed is closefisted**

**Generosity is openhearted**

**Greed keeps mental lists of wants**

**Generosity keeps mental lists of people and projects that need assistance**

# Character is NOT Salvation

A Note from Belinda Letchford - FACETS Editor

One of the concerns that a lot of people have is that as we teach our kids character we are teaching them to be good people, and that they will they are saved by good works. Though this is certainly false doctrine it doesn't negate the idea of teaching good character. It seems most people who argue this will teach their kids obedience (certainly a character trait) but balk at the idea of intentionally teaching much else. This is inconsistent. So it is good to clarify in our mind, the difference between salvation and character.

Salvation is necessary because we are all born with a sinful nature – an inner desire to please ourselves, not God. Only Christ can change our hearts. We can never be good enough by our own efforts – be that giving to the poor, trying to follow rules, or by good character.

More important than teaching character to

our kids, is to teach them about the sinful nature of man (which obviously includes them) and to introduce them to the Holy God and His gift of forgiveness.

Character though is an issue of common grace – all people can practice good character.

My definition of character is the quality of response to people and situations. Will we respond with patience, diligence, gratefulness, creativity or boldness? These are the choices we face. These are the choices that both Christian and non-Christian alike face.

When we have good character established in our life, we will strengthen our relationships and productivity. But at no point does that ever make us good enough for God.

*Belinda Letchford - FACETS Editor*

## Key GFA Course Summary The Toddlerhood Transition (visit 7)

How we send a message to our children is as important as the message itself, as we communicate with more than just words.

Parents should reinforce right patterns that come from right behaviours but should not reinforce negative patterns that stem from wrong behaviour.

A child who acts "wise in his own eyes" is a child living above his age-appropriate level of freedoms. This is also about the funnel.

To give praise is to affirm the actual, to flatter is to offer false praise and is usually associated with deceitfulness.

Couch-time is a tangible way to demonstrate Mum & Dad's love for each other.



# Teaching Character

## A telling story about “Tantrums”

*An article by Amber on compassion is a fantastic tool to teach a range of character traits – compassion (obviously), contentment, generosity, gratefulness, thriftiness and wisdom.*

Recently, knowing that I work at Compassion, a friend sent me a silly video bemoaning all the difficult problems we face here in the developed world. They include atrocities such as:

I can never find the right lid for my Tupperware.

The freezer makes my ice cream hard to scoop.

There's some cereal left in the box, but not enough to fill a bowl.

My walk-in wardrobe door is kind of hard to close.

The other side of my pillow is not much cooler.

I can especially relate to the last one, as the temperature in my bedroom was roughly 80 degrees last night. Give or take a few degrees.

I do also hate it when I can't find a lid for any of my entire drawer full of Tupperware. I suspect they are in league with all my left socks.

And my pantry door is hard to close! It takes me roughly two extra seconds to shut each time I get a snack. This guy knows about my problems.

Watching the video, I couldn't help being reminded of a movie that convicted me many years ago: *You've Got Mail*. Yes, romantic comedies are key to spiritual conviction, so you men should all go watch one with your wives, preferably a circa-1990s Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan one.

In the convicting scene, Tom Hanks is trapped in an elevator with several neighbours and his girlfriend. The experience has brought clarity and epiphany to his two neighbours, who vow that they're going to be better boyfriends or mothers. (My memory is a bit cloudy here, so don't hold me to that exactly.)

While his neighbours experience this touching moment, Hanks looks over to see his girlfriend rummaging through her handbag with great exasperation and annoyance. She shouts at the injustice of the world,

“Where are my Tic Tacs?!”

Though it's just a romantic comedy, I've always found this scene quite convicting. In the grand scheme of the

universe, how much of my time is wasted groaning about my “problems”?

I've decided to call these problems my “developed world temper tantrums”:

Complaining to my husband about my 26-degree home (OK, so it wasn't really 80 degrees) as I drink ice water from the fridge and watch a movie on my laptop in bed ... while others spend 15 hours in 40 +/- degree heat working a field for peanuts.

Sighing in annoyance when my lawn mower for mowing my pretty green lawn is out of fuel ... while others are homeless or squatting on others' land in scrap-metal homes.

Slamming the Tupperware drawer after giving up on finding a lid that fits and having to turn to plastic wrap instead (I'm sure you're far more mature than I and would never do this) ... while others don't have food to store or a fridge to store it in.

I do have real problems, just as you do. But these aren't them.

How much of our energy is wasted on our developed world tantrums?

How much of our joy is stolen by the Tic Tacs that hide (admittedly, quite maddeningly) at the bottom of our handbags?

I don't want to be that gal who, I admit, sometimes, somehow, creeps out. So instead I vow to pause each time I feel a developed world tantrum coming on.

I will pause and thank God for the tyre that I have to go flat, the sprinklers that I have to break, the shirt that I have to get a stain on.

I'll pray that God will give me perspective to have His peace and joy in this world, rather than having it stolen by my “problems”.

And lastly, I'll pray that God will help and protect those who don't have all the things I have to break, stain and complicate my life.

I'll pray that my attitude of annoyance would be transformed into an attitude of love and compassion for others... who don't have a pillow with two hot sides.

*By Amber Van Schooneveld*

You can find this story and many more on the Compassion International blog (<http://blog.compassion.com>).

# Others Focused – thinking like a servant...

Purpose Driven Life by Rick Warren

Service starts in your mind. To be a servant requires a mental shift, a change in your attitudes.

- Servants think more about others than about themselves – servants focus on others, not themselves.
- Servants think like stewards, not owners – servants remember that GOD owns it all.
- Servants think about their work, not what others are doing – they don't compare, criticise, or compete with other servants or ministries.
- Servants base their identity in Christ – because they remember they are loved and accepted by grace, servants don't have to prove their worth.

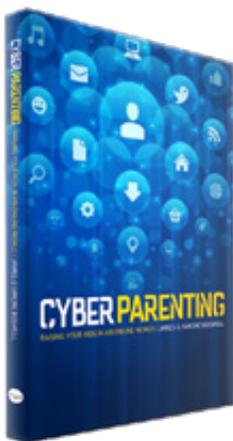
- Servants think of ministry as an opportunity, not an obligation – they enjoy helping people, meeting needs, and doing ministry.

**Point to ponder** – To be a servant I must think like a servant - so how am I doing?

**Verse to remember** – Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus – *Philippians 2:5 NIV*

**Question to consider** – Am I usually more concerned about being served or finding ways to serve others?

## Cyber Parenting: Raising Your Kids in an Online World by James & Simone Boswell.



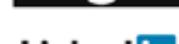
Our children's lives are immersed in technology; their music, social schedule, schoolwork, games and daily interaction rely on it. Not so long ago, we as parents could limit our kids' exposure to the Internet, guiding them through the information they found and protecting them from predators, bullying and porn. But the goalposts have moved: devices are portable and access is possible 24/7. James and Simone Boswell update parents on everything they need to know about technology and how it impacts families. But more importantly, they discuss timeless parenting principles that help mums and dads teach their kids how to live out their faith online and stand firm when the physical and digital worlds collide.

Technology changes so swiftly – IT usually leading the charge. Teen trends on social media shift what seems like daily. So it seems almost inevitable a book on helping your kids navigate the maze of cyberspace will be out of date even before it's printed. James and Simone have put together a practical and principled based message to transcend the immediate fads to strengthen and equip parents with the knowledge needed to make decisions in any situation.

This is available from the GFA bookstore for \$20

# Social Media Explained

(DONUT EDITION)

-  « I'm eating a donut »
-  « I like donuts »
-  « This is where I eat donuts »
-  « Here's a video of me eating a donut »
-  « Here's a vintage photo of my donut »
-  « Here's a pretty donut recipe »
-  « Here's a viral picture of my donut »
-  « My skills include donut eating »
-  « Now listening to "Donuts" »
-  « I'm a Google employee who eats donuts »

If the diagram doesn't make much sense – have a talk with your teen. Get a hold of the "Cyber Parenting" book and get involved with their online world.

# 31 Biblical Virtues to Pray for Your Children

Praying Beyond Protection and Blessing By Bob Hostetler

1. **Salvation.** "Lord, let salvation spring up within my children, that they may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory." (Isa. 45:8; 2 Tim. 2:10)
2. **Growth in Grace.** "I pray that my children may grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (2 Peter 3:18)
3. **Love.** "Grant, Lord, that my children may learn to live a life of love, through the Spirit who dwells in them." (Gal. 5:25; Eph. 5:2)
4. **Honesty and Integrity.** "May integrity and honesty be their virtue and their protection." (Ps. 25:21)
5. **Self-Control.** "Father, help my children not to be like many others around them, but let them be alert and self-controlled in all they do." (1Thess. 5:6)
6. **Love for God's Word.** "May my children grow to find Your Word more precious than much pure gold and sweeter than honey from the comb." (Ps. 19:10)
7. **Justice.** "God, help my children to love justice as You do and act justly in all they do." (Ps. 11:7; Mic. 6:8)
8. **Mercy.** "May my children always be merciful, just as their Father is merciful." (Luke 6:36)
9. **Respect** (for self, others, and authority). "Father, grant that my children may show proper respect to everyone, as Your Word commands." (1Pet. 2:17)
10. **Biblical Self-Esteem.** "Help my children develop a strong self-esteem that is rooted in the realization that they are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus." (Eph. 2:10)
11. **Faithfulness.** "Let love and faithfulness never leave my children, but bind these twin virtues around their necks and write them on the tablet of their hearts." (Prov. 3:3)
12. **Courage.** "May my children always be strong and courageous in their character and in their actions." (Deut. 31:6)
13. **Purity.** "Create in them a pure heart, O God, and let that purity of heart be shown in their actions." (Ps. 51:10)
14. **Kindness.** "Lord, may my children always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else." (1Thess. 5:15)
15. **Generosity.** "Grant that my children may be generous and willing to share, and so lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age." (1Tim. 6:18-19)
16. **Peace-Loving.** "Father, let my children make every effort to do what leads to peace." (Rom. 14:19)
17. **Joy.** "May my children be filled with the joy given by the Holy Spirit." (1Thess. 1:6)
18. **Perseverance.** "Lord, teach my children perseverance in all they do, and help them especially to run with perseverance the race marked out for them." (Heb. 12:1)
19. **Humility.** "God, please cultivate in my children the ability to show true humility toward all." (Titus 3:2)
20. **Compassion.** "Lord, please clothe my children with the virtue of compassion." (Col. 3:12)
21. **Responsibility.** "Grant that my children may learn responsibility, for each one should carry his own load." (Gal. 6:5)
22. **Contentment.** "Father, teach my children the secret of being content in any and every situation, through Him who gives them strength." (Phil. 4:12-13)
23. **Faith.** "I pray that faith will find root and grow in my children's hearts, that by faith they may gain what has been promised to them." (Luke 17:5-6; Heb. 11:1-40)
24. **A Servant's Heart.** "God, please help my children develop servant's hearts, that they may serve wholeheartedly, as if they were serving the Lord, not men." (Eph. 6:7)
25. **Hope.** "May the God of hope grant that my children may overflow with hope and hopefulness by the power of the Holy Spirit." (Rom. 15:13)
26. **Willingness and Ability to Work.** "Teach my children, Lord, to value work and to work at it with all their heart, as working for the Lord and not for men." (Col. 3:23)
27. **Passion for God.** "Lord, please instil in my children a soul that, followeth hard after thee," one that clings passionately to You." (Ps. 63:8)
28. **Self-Discipline.** "Father, I pray that my children may acquire a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair." (Prov. 1:3)
29. **Prayerfulness.** "Grant, Lord, that my children's lives may be marked by prayerfulness, that they may learn to pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers." (1Thess. 5:17)
30. **Gratitude.** "Help my children to live lives that are always overflowing with thankfulness and always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Eph. 5:20; Col. 2:7)
31. **A Heart for Missions.** "Lord, please help my children to develop a desire to see Your glory declared among the nations, Your marvellous deeds among the peoples." (Ps. 96:3)