

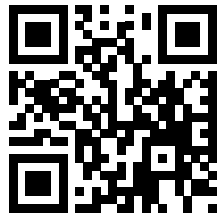
June 2025 | Issue 46

BRANCHES

A Mill Lake Church
publication

"For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love to all who call upon you. Give ear, O LORD, to my prayer; listen to my plea for grace. In the day of my trouble I call upon you, for you answer me."

PSALM 86: 5-7



milllakechurch.ca

[I AM] THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

Men of Honour | pg 8

Gospel Marks of a Shepherding Parent | pg 14

How is Jesus the Good Shepherd? | pg 16



"THE MAN OF INTEGRITY WALKS SECURELY ..."

PROVERBS 10:9

HAPPY FATHER'S DAY

Hello Friend –

When I hear the word shepherd, my mind travels to green rolling hills with clusters of large rocks and lush trees that offer the ideal place for a shady rest. It reminds me of when I walked as a child through the fields of my grandparents' farm. Buttercups, dandelions, daisies and, oh yeah, cow pies left by the grazing cows—something we learned to avoid at an early age. Those warm sunny afternoons were peaceful, with only a distant bull to watch out for. Overall, as children, we felt safe there. No fear.

Sadly, we grow older and develop fears that are sometimes logical and sometimes irrational. We let fear dictate our actions. We shrink back from opportunities God puts in our path because we're afraid. Rather than trust the Good Shepherd who guards, guides, and gives what we need to fulfill the job He designed for us, we let fear dictate our choices.

This month, we continue in our I AM series and focus on I AM The Good Shepherd. Through articles like "Gospel Marks of a Shepherding Parent," "How is Jesus the Good Shepherd?" and "Jesus the Good Shepherd," we learn more about how our Good Shepherd guides, protects, and provides for each one of us.

In this issue, you'll see articles like: "Why Parenting Strategies Won't Work" and "Men of Honour." You'll also find the final part to Lyndon's "Unpacking God's Word" series, another book review by Denise, features like "Sage Words for Servant Leaders" and "Mill Lake Kids Corner," and so much more.

With each issue of Branches, we endeavor to give you a range of articles on various subjects—some written by Mill Lakers and others from outside sources. We welcome your suggestions for the magazine, so please tell us what you'd like to see. We're listening.

In closing, thank you to the men and dads of MLC who faithfully shepherd their families and live in a way that makes a difference for eternity.

Know you are loved.

Ann Griffiths
Editor



BRANCHES

Issue 46

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WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Submit articles, comments & ideas to Ann Griffiths at ann@milllakechurch.ca

Submit photos and media to Leah Cobb at hello@milllakechurch.ca



To Make the Hope of Jesus Known

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WORSHIP EVERY SUNDAY AT 10 A.M.

You can also stream the service at
www.youtube.com/@milllakechurch4620

Mill Lake Church is affiliated with the
Evangelical Free Church of Canada

WHAT'S INSIDE

- 6 Jesus, the Good Shepherd
- 8 Men of Honour
- 9 This Month's Music Moment: *Find Us Faithful*
- 11 Book Review: *The Lawyer and the Laundress*
- 12 Unpacking God's Word: Pay Attention to the Words (Part 3 of a 3-Part Series)
- 13 This Month's Bible Reading
- 14 Gospel Marks of a Shepherding Parent
- 16 How is Jesus the Good Shepherd?
- 18 Sage Words for Servant Leaders
- 19 Kid's Corner: What We're Learning in June
- 20 Why Parenting Strategies Won't Work
- 22 Pastor Randy's Recommended Reading: *14 Gospel Principles That Can Radically Change Your Family*
- 23 Calendar of Events
- 23 Put on the Armour

Regular Features

Special Features

LET'S CONNECT!

ADULTS TOGETHER

God's Wisdom in Proverbs: Every Sunday, 9-9:45 a.m. at the church.

Delve Deep in the Bible: Every Tuesday, 7-9 p.m. at the church. To confirm dates during June and July, contact Mike Davies at mike@masterstouchsprayshop.com.

COMMUNITY GROUPS

Interested in joining a small group?
Contact Harry Unger at harry.unger7@gmail.com.

YOUNG ADULTS

Meets bi-weekly on Tuesdays at 7 p.m. at the church. This month: June 10 & 24. Contact Jeff Rusu at jeffrusu4@gmail.com

YOUTH

Meets weekly on Thursdays at 7 p.m. Contact Jeff Rusu at jeffrusu4@gmail.com.

MEN

Breakfast at JoJo's: June 10 at 10 a.m.

Prayer Time: Every Tuesday at 9:30 at the church (except 2nd Tuesday of the month).

Bible Study in Galatians: Meets the 2nd and 4th Saturday (9-10:30 a.m.) at the church. This month: June 14 & 28. Contact Dwayne Mitchell at dwaynemit@gmail.com.

WOMEN

Summer Meet-up at Mill Lake Park (Bevan Ave. entrance): Come & go on Wednesdays, 2-3:30 p.m. July 9 & 23; Aug 13 & 27.

KIDS

Every Sunday during worship. Kindergarten to Grade 5. Sign in at the Lobby table by the Nursery. Kids are dismissed part way through the service to go downstairs with their teachers.

On the 1st Sunday of each month, when our kids stay with us through the service, Activity Bags are available at the Connect desk in the Lobby.

TOTS

Every Sunday during worship. Newborn to age 5. Sign in at the Lobby table by the Nursery.

PRAYER

Afternoon Prayer: Meets every Thursday, 1 p.m. with the Prayer & Care team in the Lower Lounge.

Evening Prayer: Meets monthly on Wednesdays at 7 p.m. Everyone welcome. This month: June 10



Jesus, the Good Shepherd

by Randy Lemke

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep" (John 10:11 ESV).

If you grew up in the church, you likely saw a picture of Jesus as a shepherd. It's one of the most iconic illustrations of Jesus we have in the Bible. In the Gospel of John, Jesus used this powerful image to describe His relationship with His people: He is the Good Shepherd. To understand the full weight of what He's saying, we need to grasp both the role of a shepherd in ancient Israel and the significance and theological richness of Jesus calling Himself the Good Shepherd.

The Role of the Shepherd

In ancient Israel, shepherding was a central part of life. Shepherds led, protected, and provided for their sheep. They knew each one by name and often risked their own lives to protect them from predators. Unlike hired hands, who might abandon the flock at the first sign of danger, a true shepherd stood his ground, facing whatever threat came his way. This is the backdrop against which Jesus declares, "I am the good shepherd." In saying this, He contrasted Himself with the false shepherds described in Ezekiel 34—leaders who exploited the sheep rather than care for them.

The Sacrifice of the Good Shepherd

When Jesus says, "The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep," He is not speaking metaphorically. This is a prophetic statement of His sacrificial death. In the Old Testament, shepherds fought off lions, bears, and thieves to protect their flock. But Jesus does something far greater—He willingly lays down His life to save His sheep from the ultimate threat: sin and eternal separation from God. Jesus is far more than a protector. He is Saviour. His sacrifice is substitutionary and intentional. John 10:17–18 is incredible. "For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again." Jesus powerfully demonstrated His authority and His love.

His love is not conditional or temporary; it is sacrificial and eternal. The heart of the Gospel is that Jesus willingly laid down His life to rescue us from sin and death. His sacrifice was not an obligation, but an act of true love. We, like sheep, were vulnerable and exposed to the threats of sin and condemnation. Yet, He stepped in willingly, giving His life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45).

Consider the story of David as a shepherd boy in 1 Samuel 17. When a lion or bear threatened his flock, David did not hesitate to defend his sheep—even risking his life. Jesus, the greater Shepherd, does not just defend us; He conquers sin and death itself for us. We should feel a sense of gratitude and confidence in knowing this. If Jesus willingly lay down His life for us, will He not also watch over us in our daily activities and struggles? His sacrifice guarantees not only our salvation but also His continual care and presence in our lives.

The Care of the Good Shepherd

In John 10:14, Jesus says, "I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me." This knowledge is not merely factual; it is deeply personal. A shepherd knows his sheep intimately. Christ knows us fully—our struggles, our fears, our deepest needs. And more astonishingly, He loves us despite what He knows. His care is not distant or detached; it is personal and compassionate.

There is nothing hidden from Him. When we face trials, uncertainties, or moments of fear, we can rest in the truth that Jesus is not distant. David's own experience led him to write Psalm 23, allowing him to say with boldness and confidence, "The Lord is my Shepherd." In describing God as his shepherd, David goes on to say in Psalm 23:4, "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me." Jesus is the Shepherd who walks beside us, guiding us through every valley and leading us to green pastures.

This is the beauty of our relationship with Christ. He does not merely save us and leave us to fend for ourselves. His shepherding care is constant and unwavering. He leads us through His Word, comforts us through His Spirit and strengthens us through His promises. In moments of doubt, His voice calls us back to truth. When we wander, His hand gently guides us back. We are never alone under the watchful care of our Good Shepherd.

The Unity and Mission of the Shepherd's Flock

Jesus also speaks of bringing "other sheep that are not of this fold" (John 10:16). Jesus was alluding to God's salvation, not being only for Jews. He declared He had more followers besides those who were already with Him. There were other followers who had not yet believed, including Gentiles. This is a beautiful promise of unity. Jesus's message emphasizes that His mission extends to all people who will listen and follow Him, uniting them into one flock under one shepherd. The Good Shepherd's flock is not limited to one group or nation but extends to every tribe, tongue, and people. His sacrifice was for the world. This truth should inspire us to look beyond our immediate circles and recognize that Christ is gathering His sheep from every corner of the earth.

Picture a shepherd standing on a hillside, calling out to sheep scattered across different pastures. One by one, they respond to his voice and come to him, regardless of where they started. In the same way, Christ is calling His people from every nation, uniting them under His care.

This mission continues through the church as we proclaim His gospel and call His sheep to Him. This also reminds us of our calling to reach out beyond our comfort zones, recognizing that Christ's flock is far larger

and more diverse than we often imagine. We make it a priority at Mill Lake Church to share the Good News of the Good Shepherd who laid down His life for all who would believe.

Living Under the Care of the Good Shepherd

What does it mean to live under His care, practically? It means resting in His protection and provision. It means trusting that when trials come; the Shepherd has not abandoned you but is leading you through them. It means walking confidently in His promises, knowing that He knows you by name and calls you His own. In times of confusion, you trust that His voice will lead you forward.

To live under his care is to walk in faith, not fear. When challenges come up, we don't scramble for solutions; we turn to the One who holds our lives in His hands. When we feel isolated or weary, we find comfort in knowing the Good Shepherd knows and loves us. He calls us by name, and as Romans 8:38–39 assures us, nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

May we at Mill Lake Church rest and find strength in the Shepherd who laid down His life for us. Let us faithfully share this Good News with others, inviting them into the fold where they can fully know and experience Christ's loving care.



Pastor Randy is lead pastor at Mill Lake Church where he and his wife, Allana, and their five children have served for the past 23 years. Randy enjoys movies, books, music, and hanging out with his family. You may also want to ask him about his interest in fountain pens.

Mill Lake Men

June 07
Mountain Road Retreat
\$55

ONE DAY RETREAT

connect + grow

MEN OF HONOUR

by Ann Griffiths

After almost 65 years, Mill Lake Church still serves our community from the corner of Marshall and Ware. In that time, God has blessed us with dedicated men and women willing to serve the One who called them here.

In this month of June, as we celebrate fathers, we want to say, "Thankyou" to the men whose lives made/make a difference. Men who selflessly used/use their gifts of administration, prayer, helps, knowledge, discernment, teaching, faith, and more, to serve God within the body of Christ.

Over the past nine months, four of our church family's "Men of Honour" graduated to heaven. They no longer sit with us in congregation or team meetings. They no longer worship with us on Sunday mornings. And they no longer offer words of wisdom, or roll up their sleeves to lend a hand, or contribute to a project, or chat over coffee. They're no longer physically present with us, but they left fingerprints all over this church, and on individual lives. We love, respect, and miss them.

These four men, along with their chosen verses, are:

DEL REIMER



March 14, 1929 - September 28, 2024

"And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8).

GLENN STARE



November 19, 1941 - December 27, 2024

"Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10).

DARREN CHARLTON



March 27, 1965 - April 25, 2025

"All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be" (Psalm 139:16).

"I know that my redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand on the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!" (Job 19:25-27).

NEIL ALLERT



August 5, 1933 - April 28, 2025

I could go on and on about the many boards and committees these men served on, the businesses and professions they built, the activities they mastered, and the families and friends they loved and nurtured. In all these roles, they used their God-given gifts to serve. But, more importantly, it's how they selflessly served that made the difference.

Others wrote about these four men with words such as: eternal optimist, vibrant, devoted, encourager, faithful, kind, humour, lighthouse, family man, friend, and zest for life. I also read phrases like: "dependable with a work ethic and values that shaped his personal and business life every day," "able to balance his busy life with fun," "lived out his faith with humility and grace," and "lived to please his Lord." These all speak volumes about the fingerprints left behind by these men alone. As "Men of Honour" they left examples for us all to follow, from generation to generation.

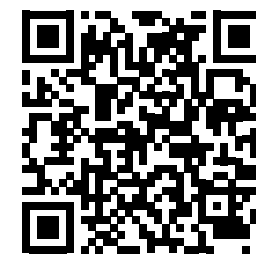
As we remember these men and how they served, let's also continue to pray for and come alongside their wives and families—Noreen (Del), Pat (Glenn), Nancy (Darren), and Shirley (Neil).

We grieve but not without hope (1 Thess. 4:13). And, as the plaque fixed to the front of our church building says, "To God be the glory."



Ann Griffiths is an award-winning author, speaker, writing coach, and editor. She and Jim are active MLC members and have attended here for 21 years.

MUSIC
Moment



FIND US FAITHFUL

by Steve Green

Scan the QR code with your phone camera to enjoy this month's uplifting music choice.

Alternatively, you can find it by searching on www.youtube.com.

LYRICS:

We're pilgrims on the journey
Of the narrow road
And those who've gone before us line the way
Cheering on the faithful, encouraging the weary
Their lives a stirring testament to God's sustaining grace

Surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses
Let us run the race not only for the prize
But as those who've gone before us
Let us leave to those behind us
The heritage of faithfulness passed on through godly lives

Oh may all who come behind us find us faithful
May the fire of our devotion light their way
May the footprints that we leave
Lead them to believe
And the lives we live inspire them to obey
Oh may all who come behind us find us faithful

After all our hopes and dreams have come and gone
And our children sift through all we've left behind
May the clues that they discover and the memories they uncover
Become the light that leads them to the road we each must find

Oh may all who come behind us find us faithful
Oh may all who come behind us find us faithful

Baby Bottle

Campaign

runs from
Mother's Day -
Father's Day

SCAN ME



Fill a bottle.
Save a Life.



Babybottles.ca

**All funds raised help vulnerable
women & families facing
unplanned pregnancy.**



Pick up an empty bottle from the church lobby!

The Lawyer and the Laundress

by Christine Hill Suntz

When you near the end of a novel and don't want it to end, you know you've found an amazing story.

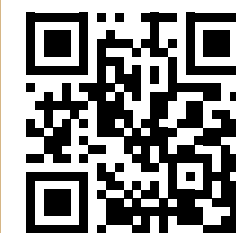
I first heard about this book a few months ago when I had the opportunity to read an advance copy. It made it all the more fun to see it set in Canada, and by a new author who hails from Ontario where she lives on a hobby farm with a plethora of animals, including an attack rooster and a herd of entitled goats.

Christine Hill Suntz knew she wanted to write novels the day she finished *Anne of Green Gables*, and her imagination has captivated her ever since. Her love of language led her to study French and German and pursue a graduate degree in Comparative Literature before finding a home teaching high school French.

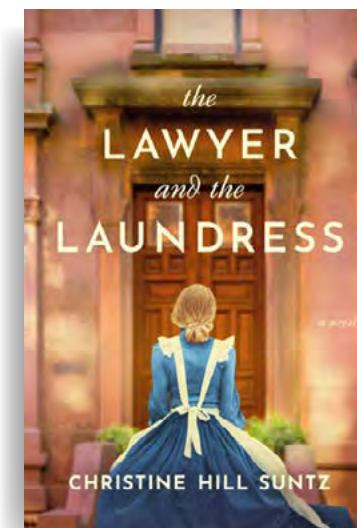
It was such a pleasure to read her debut novel, *The Lawyer and the Laundress*. I knew quickly this was going to be a 5-star book because I had difficulty putting it down. And, yes, I read it in one day with multiple cups of herbal tea and a warm blanket. One thing I totally fell in love with was the setting: Toronto, Canada, 1837 with the Tories, the rebels, and much political unrest.

It starts with widower James Kinney and his precocious daughter, Evie, (whom I also fell in love with). Mr. Kinney's educational needs were more than just his lessons on law and logic. Unfortunately, Toronto offered few options at the time, so he thought it best for Evie to attend classes with the neighbouring children—until they discovered her spending too much time with the mysterious laundress Sara O'Connor.

Sara is both gracious and loving, filled with the faith of her granny, while James is seemingly gruff. Fearing a scandal, he forbids the friendship between Sara and Evie. But when



Buy the book!



Evie contracts an illness that's ravaging the city, he finds he needs Sara's medical knowledge. The British colony is on the brink of rebellion and James's career cannot withstand the scandal of having Sara in the home. To remedy the situation, he devises an unexpected solution: become his wife, in name only, and help raise Evie as a proper young lady.

If Sara can ignore the sparks she feels when they're together, his logical proposal could keep her secret secure forever. But soon, the rebellious forces unravel their tidy arrangement when someone accuses James of treason. Sara must now find the courage to face a past that could save her husband's life.

Faith, love, adventure, and humour fill this novel. If you love authors like Julie Klassen, Laura Franz or Tamera Alexander, you will fall in love with Christine Hill Suntz. Some days I read to learn, other times for simple pleasure. *The Lawyer and the Laundress* fits both needs: interesting Canadian history and unique and loving characters.



Review by *Denise Ramsay*.
Denise is an avid reader with a busy family life, attends Mill Lake Church, and is Book Manager at House of James.



UNPACKING GOD'S WORD

Pay Attention to the Words

Part 3 of a 3-Part Series

by Lyndon Unger

In our previous articles, we discussed two basic principles to help make sense of the Bible and give us more confidence in our interpretation of Scripture:

1. Read a text in context
2. Words mean what they normally mean.

In our third installment, we'll discuss a principle that sounds so simple it seems obvious: Pay attention to the words.

That seems rather redundant, right? I mean, how does one read words without first paying attention to the words? Is this some sort of joke? Is this a trick? Not at all.

Far too often, we read a passage and remember what we think it said without paying attention to what it actually said. Let's look at a common example: 2 Chronicles 7:14. That passage says, "if my people who are called by my name, humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land."

I've seen that passage used countless times as a call to national repentance and a promise of national restoration. Many use it as a promise that if Christians bring back school prayer, or outlaw abortion, or (insert issue), then God will bless the economy, or bring people back to church, or (insert consequence).

The sentiment is good and generally true and, of course, God wants us to be humble (Ps. 147:6; James 4:6), wants us to pray (Phil. 4:6), wants us to seek His face (Ps. 24:5-6), wants us to turn from wickedness

(Ezek. 18:23), and blesses nations who honour him (Ps. 33:12). The Bible makes that all explicitly clear, but that is not what 2 Chron. 7:14 is promising.

A quick look at the surrounding context shows us what the term "heal" means in verse 14, and it's not some sort of metaphor for "revival" or national economic blessing or something like that. 2 Chron. 7:13 says, "When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command the locust to devour the land, or send pestilence among my people" and verse 14 follows directly with the promise of God hearing the prayers of the people and promising to "heal their land". Verse 13 specifically talks about God sending drought, locusts or pestilence, and the "healing" in verse 14 is the removal of the drought, locusts or pestilence that the Lord sent. When one pays close attention to the words in the preceding verse (the immediate context), the possible interpretations are reduced to one.

Jesus regularly appealed to specific grammar and syntax of the words of Scripture as important to understanding a passage. For example, in the gospel of Mark, the Sadducees attempted to prove that the resurrection was a ridiculous concept with a hypothetical case of a woman who had had seven husbands, each of whom died. They thought they had Jesus in an inescapable trap when they asked, "In the resurrection, when they rise again, whose wife will she be? For the seven had her as wife." (Mark 12:23).

Jesus turned the trap on them when he asked, "Is this not the reason you are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God?" (v. 24). He corrected them by explaining that in the resurrection, there will be no marriage (v. 25). Then, he asked them whether they had ever read the Old Testament passage about Moses and the burning bush where God said to Moses, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" (v. 26). He explained the importance of that statement by pointing out that "He is not God of the dead, but of the living" (v. 27). In other words, Jesus's whole argument boiled down to God using the present tense when He said "I am" in Exodus 3:6. Moses knew that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob's bodies were dead, but God was their God at the very moment He was speaking with Moses, meaning that though their bodies were dead and buried, they didn't cease to exist. God was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, not only in the past but also today. If He was their God now, then they were still alive now, and they could reasonably be alive in the future.

Paul even went so far as to make a point of whether a word was plural or singular, as he interpreted the Old Testament. In Galatians 3:16, Paul spoke of the promises made to Abraham and his offspring and stated, "Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, 'And to offsprings,' referring to many, but referring to one, 'And to your offspring,' who is Christ." Paul recognized that the Holy Spirit, when He inspired the text of Genesis, purposely chose plural and singular nouns.

This means the words matter, including their grammar and syntax, and we should pay careful attention to them rather than gloss over them with the lassitude that comes from familiarity. Instead of glossing over familiar texts, we should slow down, pay attention, and ask questions to dig deeper.

Ask questions like: Who is the audience here? To whom are the pronouns referring? Are the nouns plural or singular? Are words being used in one sense in one verse and another sense in a following verse? Is the author making an argument? If so, what is the argument? Is the author using a quote? If so, where is it from and why is the author using the quote?

A careful eye to the words of scripture will help us dig far deeper and plumb the endless depths of treasure it has in store for us.



Lyndon Unger is the proud father of two middle-schoolers, an elder, teacher, musician, and resident Bible geek at MLC. He is a graduate of Briercrest and Master's Seminary and can be found preaching and teaching around Western Canada, but lives in Abbotsford.



We trust you're still on track to read through the entire Bible in 2025. To help you on your way, here's another tip to help you keep up.

Tip: Tie your Bible reading to an existing habit—like reading after breakfast or before bed. Routines make consistency easier.

Month 6

New Testament		Old Testament	
LUKE	EPHESIANS	PSALMS	1 KINGS
1. <input type="checkbox"/> 1:1-25	<input type="checkbox"/> 1:1-14	<input type="checkbox"/> 119:1-8	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
2. <input type="checkbox"/> 1:26-38	<input type="checkbox"/> 1:15-23	<input type="checkbox"/> 119:9-16	<input type="checkbox"/> 2-3
3. <input type="checkbox"/> 1:39-56	<input type="checkbox"/> 2:1-10	<input type="checkbox"/> 119:17-24	<input type="checkbox"/> 4-5
4. <input type="checkbox"/> 1:57-66	<input type="checkbox"/> 2:11-22	<input type="checkbox"/> 119:25-32	<input type="checkbox"/> 6-7
5. <input type="checkbox"/> 1:67-80	<input type="checkbox"/> 3:1-13	<input type="checkbox"/> 119:33-40	<input type="checkbox"/> 8
6. <input type="checkbox"/> 2:1-20	<input type="checkbox"/> 3:14-21	<input type="checkbox"/> 119:41-48	<input type="checkbox"/> 9-10
7. <input type="checkbox"/> 2:21-40	<input type="checkbox"/> 4:1-16	<input type="checkbox"/> 119:49-56	<input type="checkbox"/> 11
8. <input type="checkbox"/> 2:41-52	<input type="checkbox"/> 4:17-24	<input type="checkbox"/> 119:57-64	<input type="checkbox"/> 12
9. <input type="checkbox"/> 3:1-20	<input type="checkbox"/> 4:25-32	<input type="checkbox"/> 119:65-72	<input type="checkbox"/> 13-14
10. <input type="checkbox"/> 3:21-38	<input type="checkbox"/> 5:1-21	<input type="checkbox"/> 119:73-80	<input type="checkbox"/> 15-16
11. <input type="checkbox"/> 4:1-12	<input type="checkbox"/> 5:22-33	<input type="checkbox"/> 119:81-88	<input type="checkbox"/> 17-18
12. <input type="checkbox"/> 4:13-30	<input type="checkbox"/> 6:1-9	<input type="checkbox"/> 119:89-96	<input type="checkbox"/> 19-20
13. <input type="checkbox"/> 4:31-37	<input type="checkbox"/> 6:10-24	<input type="checkbox"/> 119:97-104	<input type="checkbox"/> 21-22
	PHILIPPIANS		2 KINGS
14. <input type="checkbox"/> 4:38-44	<input type="checkbox"/> 1:1-11	<input type="checkbox"/> 119:105-112	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-3
15. <input type="checkbox"/> 5:1-11	<input type="checkbox"/> 1:12-20	<input type="checkbox"/> 119:113-120	<input type="checkbox"/> 4-5
16. <input type="checkbox"/> 5:12-16	<input type="checkbox"/> 1:21-30	<input type="checkbox"/> 119:121-128	<input type="checkbox"/> 6-7
17. <input type="checkbox"/> 5:17-26	<input type="checkbox"/> 2:1-11	<input type="checkbox"/> 119:129-136	<input type="checkbox"/> 8-9
18. <input type="checkbox"/> 5:27-32	<input type="checkbox"/> 2:12-18	<input type="checkbox"/> 119:137-144	<input type="checkbox"/> 10-11
19. <input type="checkbox"/> 5:33-39	<input type="checkbox"/> 2:19-30	<input type="checkbox"/> 119:145-152	<input type="checkbox"/> 12-13
20. <input type="checkbox"/> 6:1-16	<input type="checkbox"/> 3:1-9	<input type="checkbox"/> 119:153-160	<input type="checkbox"/> 14-15
21. <input type="checkbox"/> 6:17-26	<input type="checkbox"/> 3:10-14	<input type="checkbox"/> 119:161-168	<input type="checkbox"/> 16-17
22. <input type="checkbox"/> 6:27-36	<input type="checkbox"/> 3:15-21	<input type="checkbox"/> 119:169-176	<input type="checkbox"/> 18-19
23. <input type="checkbox"/> 6:37-42	<input type="checkbox"/> 4:1-7	<input type="checkbox"/> 120	<input type="checkbox"/> 20-21
24. <input type="checkbox"/> 6:43-49	<input type="checkbox"/> 4:8-13	<input type="checkbox"/> 121	<input type="checkbox"/> 22-23
25. <input type="checkbox"/> 7:1-10	<input type="checkbox"/> 4:14-23	<input type="checkbox"/> 122	<input type="checkbox"/> 24-25

GOSPEL MARKS OF A

My one-year-old daughter, Evelyn, almost fell off the couch the other day. Thankfully, I was sitting right by her, so could catch her and prevent her from hitting her head on the hardwood floor in our living room. As soon as I caught her, she climbed right back on the couch to look out the window and make it her personal trampoline, clearly not appreciating the fact that I stopped her from getting hurt. But preventing Evelyn's fall got me thinking: how often did I not fully appreciate what my parents did for me as I was growing up?

While Evelyn is one year old and does not even know how to say, "thank you," I know that as a teenager I did not fully appreciate all my parents did for me. All teenagers seem to take their parents for granted in one way or another, but my mom (Tracey) and dad (Al) have been faithful and loving parents because they were shepherds, reflecting the way God, in His grace and mercy, shepherds His people.

The Bible presents a beautiful picture of God's grace, mercy, and care for us in and through shepherd imagery (1 Samuel 16:11; 17:34; Psalm 23; John 10; 1 Peter 5:2). Because Christ, the Good Shepherd, sacrificed Himself on the cross, parents can model shepherding to their kids. Ultimately, parents are also called to care for, watch over, and serve their children in the way a biblical shepherd should.

There are 3 distinct marks of a shepherding parent I understand better now as I see the ways my parents loved, supported, and encouraged me.

1. Shepherding parents establish clear boundaries and set clear expectations.

Because I was confident my parents loved me, both in what they said, did, and modeled for me, I understood their expectations and acknowledged the appropriate boundaries they set for me. Acknowledgement of my parent's authority and obedience to them (while very far from perfect), stemmed from the way they protected and provided for me.

While shepherds have the privilege and responsibility to protect and provide for their sheep, they are also called to "give their sheep pasture." As I look back on my teenage years, my parents were excellent in this regard. My parents desired to foster certain freedoms as I grew and matured. They were not content to confine me to a 2 X 4 space, seeking to fight every battle or overprotect me, as can so easily be the case

for parents. They gave me a lot of room to operate and grow in wisdom and faith.

And yet, I always knew exactly what my parents expected of me. While I never had to have a big sit-down talk about underage drinking with them (as far as I remember), I knew drinking and drunkenness were not tolerated. I never had a curfew in high school, but if I rolled into the house at 12:30, three Friday nights in a row, I wasn't going to be able to hang out with friends that next Friday night.

As shepherds, parents are called to provide and oversee the pasture they give their children. Some teenagers need shorter leashes and less pasture than others, but giving pasture remains the goal. Ultimately, neither parents nor teenagers are completely trustworthy in their relationships with one another, so each will fail to hold up their end of the deal. Teenagers will cross the boundaries and abuse the freedom they've been given. Parents will be too strict in their expectations and overly protective in the way they set and maintain their boundaries. Sin so easily entangles all people (Hebrews 12:1), even those with the best intentions, including loving and concerned parents AND relatively responsible and obedient children.

Yet we can be confident that, in and through Christ, the Good Shepherd, our salvation has been forged with what He suffered (Hebrews 2:10). With well-defined boundaries and expectations within an adequate amount of pasture, parents and teenagers can nurture their relationship with one another because of the grace, mercy, and forgiveness Jesus Christ provides.

2. Shepherding parents enter into the depths of their teenager's lived experiences.

Effective shepherds generally smell and look like the sheep they tend. Shepherds have a consistent presence with their sheep, no matter where they've been or what they've been doing. Because of the deep, unconditional love they have for their children, parents take on the "where" and the "what" of shepherding in the form of their child's burdens, problems, and successes.

Some parents tend to live out of their child's experiences. In doing so, parents unknowingly idolize their kids. Think of the dad who seeks to live vicariously through his son's athletic successes and failures. Athletic success becomes more about himself than it does about his son.

SHEPHERDING PARENT

by Mark Rector

On the other hand, shepherding parents live into their child's experiences, seeking to counsel, encourage, and love them all along the way. Shepherding parents go after the one sheep because everything about that child is beautiful and valuable to them, no matter the amount of brokenness or beauty manifested in him or her (Luke 17:1-7). Put simply, shepherding parents enter into the depths of what is going on with their child, not because of what they can get out of it, but out of pure love.

My parents were adept at shepherding me in this way. I have a vivid memory of getting into my mom's car after finding out I didn't make the JV baseball team. I burst into tears. I was blessed to have athletic success growing up, and I had never not made a team. As soon as 15-year-old Mark began to cry, so did Mom. She hugged and embraced me. She undoubtedly felt the immense pain and confusion I was experiencing because she cared for me in a way a shepherd only could.

The Lord is the one who meets us in all the green pastures, quiet waters, darkest valleys, and everywhere in between. In Him, we lack nothing (Psalm 23). I so appreciate the ways both my parents entered into all of those spaces and experiences and embraced me with a love only they could.

3. Shepherding parents humble themselves in order to lift up and strengthen their children.

No teenager can truly appreciate just how much a shepherding parent sacrifices for them daily. This comes in both small and large ways. But one of the greatest sacrifices my parents made for me as a teenager was in my education.

I went to a very expensive, small liberal arts college for undergrad, and I followed that up with 3 ½ years of seminary directly after. While I was fortunate to receive some scholarships, my parents shouldered the load financially for both. Not once did my parents complain or show evidence of the strain that paying for my education was for them. But given what I know about how much my education cost, it was difficult for them financially. Ultimately, my parents chose to pay for my education because they were willing to invest in me as their son.

In perhaps one of the most tangible ways possible, my parents lifted me up by bringing themselves low. This is the definition of humility, and this is the posture shepherds take as they humble themselves to care for their sheep, even when the sheep do not realize or appreciate it. In sacrificing for their children, often at the expense of their own comfort, parents count their children "more significant" than themselves (Philippians 2:3-4).

I was (and am) far from deserving of the gift of my education, which largely came from my parents. As their son, I simply received my parent's grace and favor and strove to honor them in the way I worked in school while I pursued God's calling for me. I am grateful for how my parents shepherded me, even when I did not fully realize it, and I hope and pray that by the Lord's grace, I might embody that same shepherding spirit for my children in the days ahead.

Source: <https://rootedministry.com>



Mark Rector serves as Associate Minister at Mountain Brook Baptist Church in Birmingham, AL. He has served for six years in both local church and parachurch youth ministry contexts. Mark is married to Anne, and they have three kids, Josh, Evelyn Louise, and Whit. Mark received his MDiv from Beeson Divinity School at Samford University. He enjoys playing golf whenever he can, reading a good book, and watching Josh and Evelyn Louise take care of their baby brother.



HOW is Jesus the Good Shepherd?

by Ian Hamilton

The answer to this great question is simply this: Jesus is the Good Shepherd because He said He was. In John's gospel, Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd" (John 10:11). We could leave the matter there and be content with Jesus's claim—the claim of the One who could say to His accusers, "Which one of you convicts me of sin?" (John 8:46). Not only did Jesus speak the truth, He said, "I am the truth" (John 14:6). However, Jesus never made claims about Himself that were not backed up by evidence. Anyone can make claims about themselves, even extravagant claims. But claims need to be tested to show whether they are true or merely self-delusions.

When Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd," His following words clarify what He meant and give substance to His claim: "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep" (John 10:11).

The pastoral imagery of shepherd and sheep was well known to Jesus's hearers. They lived in a land where shepherds and sheep were everywhere. But more than that, they knew from the Scriptures that God likened Himself to a shepherd who cared deeply for His sheep—His believing people. Perhaps Psalm 23 most vividly and memorably depicts the shepherd-like care the Lord God exercises on behalf of His precious sheep:

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures.
He leads me beside still waters.
He restores my soul.

He leads me in paths of righteousness
for his name's sake.
Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow
of death,
I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.
You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD
forever.
Psalm 23:1–6

I have read this psalm hundreds of times and recited it at over seven hundred funerals throughout my forty years of ministry. These words beautifully capture the care, kindness, provision, protection, and sheer love of the heavenly Shepherd for His precious sheep. They highlight why the Lord is the Good Shepherd.

When Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd," He was making a stunning claim. He was claiming that He is the incarnate Lord who loves, cares for, provides for, and protects His sheep. But Jesus's words exemplify in the most remarkable ways how He truly is this Good Shepherd: "The good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep."

In love, this heaven-sent Shepherd sacrificed Himself so that lost, judgment-deserving sheep might be spared God's just wrath, be restored to His friendship and fellowship, and one day be found in His nearer presence.

Nowhere was Jesus's claim to be the Good Shepherd more wonderfully and astonishingly shown than in Him laying down His life to secure the eternal good of His sheep.

Martin Luther once wrote, "Crux probat omnia," or, "The cross is the test of everything." What he meant was that Jesus's sin-bearing, sin-atonement death on Calvary's cross is the fullest revelation of God's love for sinners. Our sin and fallenness in Adam, our first head, separated us from God and brought us under His righteous and just judgment. We were powerless to do anything to make things right between us and God. But what we were powerless to do, God did by giving His own Son to live and die in our place, bearing the judgment our sin deserved, rising in triumph on the third day, and reconciling us to God.

So, how is Jesus the Good Shepherd? In love, this heaven-sent Shepherd sacrificed Himself so that lost, judgment-deserving sheep might be spared God's just wrath, be restored to His friendship and fellowship, and one day be found in His nearer presence.

This leaves me to ask, have you come in repentance and faith to this Good Shepherd, thanking God the Father for not sparing His own Son, but giving Him up to the death of the cross to die in your place and for your sake? Jesus said:

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one" (John 10:27–30).

Have you heard His voice in the gospel? Do you follow Jesus, not only confessing Him with your lips but obeying Him in your life? If so, rejoice as one of His blood-redeemed sheep, to whom He has given eternal life.

Source: <https://learn.ligonier.org>



Dr. Ian Hamilton is president of Westminster Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Newcastle, England, and adjunct professor at Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Greenville, S.C. He is author of many books, including *Words from the Cross*, *Our Heavenly Shepherd*, and a commentary on *Ephesians in The Lectio Continua Expository Commentary on the New Testament*.



SAGE WORDS *for* SERVANT LEADERS

by Ann Griffiths

Inspired by: *Axioms: Words of Wisdom for Servant Leadership* by Arvid Olson, EdD

Have you ever been so sure of something when you looked out your window during the light of day, only to feel a foreboding, "what was I thinking" as you later tried to sleep in the dark of night?

We've probably all been there. We're confident God wants us to do this or that. We have no doubt He gave us a specific job to do — write, start a business or ministry, open our home to others, connect with a specific friend or family member, volunteer at church, etc. But then, darkness rolls in, the moon takes over from the sun, and we're left with uncertainty.

Did God really want me to do that? I'm not good enough, so God couldn't have chosen me for that responsibility. What was I thinking? And on it goes.

Sadly, many of us miss God's gentle prodding to step out in faith. We doubt His promises, His call on our life, His clear instructions, and the blessings He wants to give us. We let fear shoehorn its way into our thinking. Imposter syndrome tells us we're not good enough.

I must be mistaken. God wouldn't possibly choose me to do that.

Before we know it, darkness overtakes light. We feel confused, sad, defeated, and even worthless.

Dr. Calvin Hanson (1925-2013), founding president of Trinity Western University, often said, "Don't doubt in the darkness what God has shown you in the light." It's a quote that originated with Dr. V. Raymond

Edman (1900-1967), fourth president of Wheaton College, who said, "Never doubt in the DARK what God told you in the LIGHT."

Jesus tells us in John 8:12, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

We know who the author of darkness is, but with the Light of Life within us, there's no need to fear or walk in darkness. When we face difficulties or trials or doubt God's leading, we can count on His promises. They are true. And He is faithful to fulfill His promises to us as we step out in obedience.

What does that have to do with Servant Leadership?

When Jesus called His disciples, He said, "Follow me." They had no idea what they were in for. They stepped out in faith and soon learned that the Messiah they had waited for generations to see now stood and walked with them. Yes, they sometimes doubted. But they also remembered the Old Testament promises, the prophecies and faith of their ancestors, and the teachings of Jesus. And they believed.

For over 2000 years, Christians have believed, followed God's calling, lived and died for it. When we refuse to doubt in the dark what God made clear in the light, we carry on the legacy of those who've gone on before us. We're obedient to God's command to tell the next generation of God's faithfulness through all generations.

In what way is God leading you to step out in faith?



Mill Lake Kids Corner

Kids (Kindergarten through grade 5) are invited downstairs during our worship service time to have their own special Bible lesson! We are always learning. Here's what we're up to for the month of June:



Unit Memory Verse:

"And He said to them, 'Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation'"

(Mark 16:15 ESV)

June 1: FAMILY SUNDAY

Worship with our church family (student activity packs available at Connect)

June 8: Paul & Barnabas Were Missionaries

Acts 16:16-34

God is with His people as they tell others about Jesus

June 15: Paul Preached in Athens

Acts 17:16-34

Christians have a responsibility to help everyone hear about Jesus

June 22: Paul Worked With Aquila and Priscilla

Acts 18:1-4, 18-28

Christians can help others know how to live as believers in Jesus

June 29: Paul Spoke to an Angry Crowd

Acts 21:15

Christians can tell others about Jesus even during difficult times

Why Parenting Strategies Won't Work

by Paul David Tripp

Source: <https://www.paultripp.com>

In 1997, I wrote my first book, *Age of Opportunity: A Biblical Guide to Parenting Teens*. I felt God calling me to write more books, but I was equally persuaded that *Age of Opportunity* would be my only one on the topic of parenting.

But, for the past two decades, as I saw how people used that book (and my brother Tedd's book *Shepherding a Child's Heart*), I grew increasingly uncomfortable. Something was missing in the way these parents were interpreting and applying the strategies detailed in the pages of our books.

It took me a while to figure out what was off. Then it hit me: the missing piece was the gospel. It sounds obvious, almost cliché, but it's more significant in our lives than we realize.

The Centrality of the Gospel in Everything

After I speak, I always have someone ask for an effective strategy for this, a guaranteed formula for that, or a proven approach to something else they're struggling with. I try to impart helpful guidance in the moments we have together, but what they (and I) really need is a big-picture gospel worldview that can explain, guide, and motivate all the things God is calling them to do.

Take parenting. If you're going not only to cope but to thrive with vision and joy as a parent, you need more than seven steps to solving whatever. You need God's helicopter view of what He's called you to do. You need a big gospel parenting worldview that will not only make sense of your task but will change the way you approach it.

The same applies to marriage. If you want a healthy relationship with your spouse, built on the foundation of unity, understanding and love, going to BuzzFeed to find the latest 14 ways to make date night more romantic won't be your best choice. I love surprising my wife with romantic acts, but Luella and I need the

gospel of Jesus Christ to be central in our marriage, and we need the big-picture themes of Scripture to be our guide more than anything else.

Church growth strategies, discipleship curriculums, or evangelism training sessions don't work very well if the gospel isn't central. I'm in favor of all these things, but we need so much more than a 75-page binder for those participating in building the local church, making disciples, and witnessing to the lost. We need our hearts to be awe-struck by the glory of God, captivated by a love for our Savior, and broken by the lost and blind condition of the human race. Only then will strategies work.



Here's the bottom line: what's missing in all areas of our everyday life are the big grand perspectives and principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

These perspectives and principles are radical and counterintuitive. They're simply not natural for us, but they're essential to being what you're supposed to be and doing what you're supposed to do. When you live with what the gospel says about God, you, and your world, you not only approach life in brand-new ways, but you carry the burden of living in a very different way.

14 Gospel Principles for Parents

This may seem hypocritical because I just told you not to rely on BuzzFeed's list of 14 ways to make date night more romantic, and now I'm going to list 14 gospel principles for parents. But this list isn't comprised of strategies or techniques: these are 14 big-picture themes in Scripture that, when properly understood, can change the way you understand God's call on you as a parent.

(For full disclosure, this list is the chapter-by-chapter index of my new book, *Parenting: 14 Gospel Principles That Can Radically Change Your Family*. I ended up writing another parenting book after all!)

1. Calling

Nothing is more important in your life than being one of God's tools to form a human soul. In a couple of brief but profound paragraphs, Deuteronomy 6:4–9 and 20–23 summarize the value that God places on parenting.

2. Grace

God never calls you to a task without giving you what you need to do it. He never sends you without going with you. Ephesians 3:20–21 provides us with the single redemptive reality that makes parenting possible.

3. Law

Your children need God's law, but you cannot ask the law to do what only grace can accomplish. Romans 7:7 tells us we need the grace of wisdom that God's law alone can give, but the rest of the chapter reveals how only the Spirit can produce change.

4. Inability

Recognizing what you are unable to do is essential to good parenting. God has tasked parents with many things, but nowhere in His Word has He tasked you with the responsibility to create heart change.

5. Identity

If you are not resting as a parent in your identity in Christ, you will look for identity in your children. 2 Peter 1:3–9 warns about identity amnesia, and when applied to parenting, it means that if you're not getting your identity from God and the work of His Son, you will probably try to get it from your children.

6. Process

You must be committed as a parent to long-view parenting because change is a process and not an event. Even the world's best teacher—Jesus—had a process mentality and because He did, He was willing to leave His work to unfinished people (John 16:12–15).

7. Lost

Luke 15 is a tremendous help to parents because, in vivid word pictures, it sheds light on the condition that is the reason for all you have to deal with in the thoughts, desires, choices, words, and actions of your children.

8. Authority

One of the foundational heart issues in the life of every child is authority. Teaching and modeling the protective beauty of authority is one foundation of good parenting. The famous Ephesians 6:1–4 parenting passage is very helpful for this principle.

9. Foolishness

The foolishness inside your children is more dangerous to them than the temptation outside of them. Only God's grace has the power to rescue fools. Psalm

53:1–3 reveals that your child has the heart of a fool and because he does, he is a danger to himself and desperately needs God's arms of rescue that come through your parenting care.

10. Character

Not all the wrong your children do is a direct rebellion to authority; much of the wrong is the result of a lack of character. Romans 1:25 and 28–32 connect character issues to the most significant of all human functions—worship.

11. False Gods

You are parenting a worshiper, so it's important to remember that what rules your child's heart will control his behavior. This should be no surprise, considering how often the Bible warns us (Exodus 20:3; Deuteronomy 11:6; 1 Samuel 12:21 and many more).

12. Control

The goal of parenting is not control of behavior, but rather heart and life change. No matter how successfully you control their choices and behavior, your control cannot and will not free your kids from a deeper need—a clean heart (Psalm 51).

13. Rest

It is only rest in God's presence and grace that will make you a joyful and patient parent. This may surprise you, but I cannot think of any directive from the mouth of Jesus that is a more appropriate call to every Christian parent than the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18–20).

14. Mercy

No parent gives mercy better than one who is convinced that he desperately needs it himself. Hebrews 4:14–16 gives us a model for a lifelong mission of humbly, joyfully, and willingly giving mercy.

Why I Wrote Another Parenting Book

Many Christian mothers and fathers are exhausted, discouraged, and frustrated. It's time we consider a new and better way: the way of grace.

Parents, God will bless you with His presence, power, wisdom, and grace. He faithfully parents you, so that by His faithful grace you can faithfully parent your children. In every moment of parenting, the wise heavenly Father is working on everybody in the room.



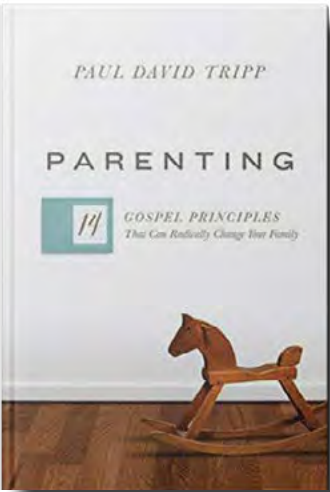
Dr. Paul David Tripp is a pastor, event speaker, and a best-selling and award-winning author. With more than 30 books and video series on Christian living, Paul's driving passion is to connect the transforming power of Jesus Christ to everyday life



PASTOR RANDY’S RECOMMENDED READING

Parenting: 14 Gospel Principles
That Can Radically Change Your Family

by Paul David Tripp



In the midst of folding laundry, coordinating carpool schedules, and breaking up fights, many parents get lost. Feeling pressure to do everything “right” and raise up “good” children, it’s easy to lose sight of our ultimate purpose as parents in the quest for practical tips and guaranteed formulas.

In this life-giving book, Paul Tripp offers parents much more than a to-do list. Instead, he presents us with a big-picture view of God’s plan for us as parents. Outlining fourteen foundational principles centered on the gospel, he shows we need more than the latest parenting strategy or list of techniques. Rather, we need the rescuing grace of God—grace that has the power to shape how we view everything we do as parents.

Freed from the burden of trying to manufacture life-change in our children’s hearts, we can embrace a grand perspective of parenting overflowing with vision, purpose, and joy.

JUNE 2025

1 - Family Sunday - Fellowship Potluck	2	3 - Men’s Prayer - Mixed Bible Study	4	5 - Church Prayer - Youth	6	7 - Men’s Retreat
8 - Bible Class - Volunteer Appreciation	9	10 - Men’s Breakfast * Young Adults - Mixed Bible Study	11	12 - Church Prayer - Youth	13	14 - Men’s Bible Study
15 - Bible Class	16	17 - Men’s Prayer - Mixed Bible Study	18 - Evening of Prayer	19 - Church Prayer - Youth	20	21
22 - Bible Class	23	24 - Men’s Prayer * Young Adults - Mixed Bible Study	25	26 - Church Prayer - Youth	27	28 - Men’s Bible Study
29 - Bible Class - ACM	30	Birthdays! 2 - Leah Cobb 3 - Brody Patton 14 - Rose Carleton 17 - Annette Brandt 17 - Barnabas Weststeign		22 - Denise Ramsay 22 - Phil Vike 27 - Carolyn Grove		



For details on calendar events, flip to page 5 or visit our website!
www.milllakechurch.ca

“For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love to all who call upon you. Give ear, O LORD, to my prayer; listen to my plea for grace. In the day of my trouble I call upon you, for you answer me.”

Psalms 86: 5–7

