



A Monthly E-Newsletter For CenterPeace Parents Volume 10 March 2022

The Other Side of the Boat

PART 6: DOES LOVE REALLY WIN?

By Gil Vollmering

Parents and friends, you have journeyed with me and Dena on this six-month trip discussing the life in Christ for us and for our kids. Now we ask ourselves, "Does love really win?" My winding journey led me here: "Am I confident in my faith enough to make the bold claim that love does win?"

Next month, my son Connor will have been out for a decade. Memory fades of what life was like before that momentous day. So much of who we are as a family has been altered in these last 10 years. I'm not sure I would recognize my old self. And that is a good thing, a grateful thing.

DOES LOVE REALLY WIN?

This question is answered by a series of questions and answers.

- Is God Love? – Yes!
- Is Jesus Christ as the God Immanuel the best example of love I know? – Yes!
- Do the Gospel accounts of Jesus' life provide me with concrete examples of love lived out boldly and courageously, even with those whom the religious world found unworthy? – Absolutely.
- Does Paul write that love does no harm and does he provide real details on the characteristics of love? – Yes, he does.

- Doesn't John say that when I love others as God loves me then my standing in this world is like that of Christ? – Yes, Gil, he does.

With all of those positive affirmations, logic would suggest that if my standing in this world is like that of Christ, then I am free of fear, free of judgment, and free to express love as brightly and boldly as I can KNOWING that I am doing so as if it were from Christ. Doing so makes me a true ambassador of Christ. Even if I love too hard, or am too lenient (as some would see it) or too forgiving, I believe through my faith journey that my spiritual condition is safe and assured.

"Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better." - Maya Angelou

With these bases, the question really becomes how can I NOT love? How can I stand by and not care for others? How can I not deeply love my child and whomever my child loves? I am compelled by the call of my ambassadorship to do so. As such, my love for my son and his husband is enough. In fact, it's more than enough, it will be the means by which I hope

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UPCOMING EVENTS

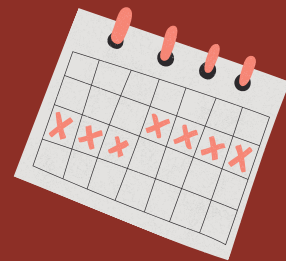


Peace Prints Retreats

A safe place for parents to express their feelings with fellow believers in Christ

[More information](#) on PeacePrints

- Mar 25-27, 2022 - Nashville, TN



Group Spiritual Direction for Parents

A place to help grow your awareness of God's work in your and your family's life and to share this spiritual journey with others

[More information](#) on Group Spiritual Direction

CenterPeace Conference

- Nov 3-5, 2022 - Wilshire Baptist Church, Dallas, TX

[More information](#) about Conference

2022 CENTERPEACE CONFERENCE: A PLACE AT THE TABLE

The gospels are replete with stories of Jesus reaching out to everyone: people on the margins – the poor, the sick, He sat among the despised and honored, the rejected and the revered, dining in their homes and drinking from their cups, But He also reached out to those who were wealthy and the ones who were well. Jesus is still inviting all of us to feast with him today. Parents, LGBTQ+ people, pastors and allies, this conference is for you. Because the message of the gospel is clear – each of us has a place at the table. Together. It is Christ's table, not ours, and Jesus does the inviting.

[Register here](#)

PART 6: DOES LOVE REALLY WIN? (cont'd from page 1)

they experience Jesus. It will be the channel by which old wounds are healed and lives are reconciled. All of these are the blessings of God.

I look back and realize that in my doubt, in my study, in all of my head-space, God moved my heart beyond all of my 'logic' and returned me to the first love: to love first. A pastor friend said to me once, "If God can have mercy on my errors of behavior, I think he'll have mercy on my errors of knowledge." What I'm realizing more and more is that for me, my 'errors of knowledge' existed before my son came out, not after. I'm embarrassed to some degree of how bad of a Christian I was before. How I failed to see others or was not really interested in anyone different than me. And as I contemplate the Christian, the husband, the father, the person I used to be, I can see how the fruit that came from that tree looked whole and fresh, but in reality was brown and had a worm hole or two.

But now? Ten years ago, I started a journey that I thought was to reconcile my faith with my



son's sexuality. Looking back I can see it was really more about my faith than his sexuality. What needed to be fixed was me, was my self-righteousness, my pride, my attempts to shove God into a box.

But love does win and it wins completely. The cultural hashtag #LOVEWINS is true and it is biblical. And when love wins, it grows a graceful tree from which the fruits of the Spirit bloom, and they smell so very sweet.

Nourish Your Faith



PRAYING THE WOUNDS OF CHRIST

By Chris Altrock

For centuries, Christians have used the 40 days of Lent as a time for intentional meditation on the life and death of Jesus. One way was by praying through the five wounds of Christ on the cross. Join that gentle self-reflection by using your hand as the wounded hand of our savior, tying each wound to Jesus' Great Command – the call to love God with heart, soul, mind and strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself.

THUMB

Action: Close your eyes and breathe slowly, in through the nose, out through the mouth. Hold one hand loosely in a fist. Extend the thumb outward. As you do, picture the first wound of Christ, the wound on Jesus' right hand/wrist, where the spike holds that hand to the wooden cross.

Prayer: "Thank you Jesus for loving me and so many others in a way that engaged all of your strength. Forgive me when my own love is anemic and compartmentalized, forgive me for my abuse of my own gifts, energy and body. Grant me the ability to love all – myself included – with tenacity and resilience and to marshal everything I have and am for the good of God and others."

INDEX FINGER

Action: Keeping your thumb extended, extend your index finger. As you do, picture the second wound of Christ, the wound on his left hand/wrist.

Prayer: "Thank you Jesus for loving me and so many others with all your mind; for the ways you are so attentive to us. Forgive me when I'm preoccupied and thoughtless of others, including you. Grant me the ability to think good things of those around me and always be present with them."

MIDDLE FINGER

Action: Keeping your thumb and index finger extended, extend your middle finger. As you do, picture the third wound of Christ,

the wound on his right foot/ankle, where the spike holds that foot to the cross.

Prayer: "Thank you Jesus for loving me and so many others with all your soul, for a love that is not superficial, but that emanates from your very core. Forgive me when my own love is skin-deep and lightweight. Grant me the ability to love from the inside out."

RING FINGER

Action: Extend your ring finger. As you do, picture the fourth wound of Christ, the wound on his left foot/ankle.

Prayer: "Thank you Jesus for a love that envelopes every neighbor, even me. Thank you for enlarging 'neighbor' to include all and exclude none. Forgive me when I narrow that definition and reserve my love only for those like me. Grant me the capacity to tear down those walls and let love loose."

PINKY FINGER

Action: Finally, extend your pinky finger. As you do, picture the fifth wound of Christ, the wound on his side, piercing his heart.

Prayer: "Thank you Jesus for a love that involves your entire heart. You love so deeply even when it costs so dearly. Your fervor for me brings me constantly back to you. Forgive me when I'm half-hearted, when I hold back parts of my heart from you and others, when my own devotion doesn't beat as loudly as yours. Grant me the ability to live and love whole-heartedly. May my every day pulse with passion."



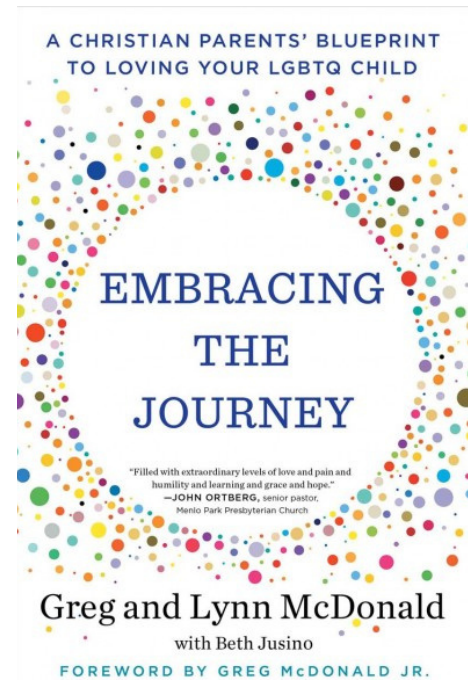
BOOK REVIEW: "EMBRACING THE JOURNEY"

BY GREG AND LYNN MCDONALD

Embracing the Journey by Greg and Lynn McDonald is a thoughtful book written by parents who have been there, serving as a Christian parents' blueprint to loving your LGBTQ+ child. The McDonalds wrote this book with a focus on developing a healthy relationship with your child and on the premise that parenting is a journey to be embraced. Can parents love their child, love God, and love the church when those three seem to be at odds with one another? Yes, it is possible! The McDonalds break the journey down into three parts: fear, surviving, and thriving. Each chapter captures the perspective of both mom and dad as they detail their recollections. What makes this such a valuable resource is the way each chapter ends with key learning points that make it personal to your own journey. These take-aways consist of practical advice you can implement immediately.

When our son came out to us six years ago, fear was an overwhelming emotion – fear for his safety, his salvation, and of what others would think. I was desperate for a guide that would spell out step-by-step how to deal with this situation – a book that would help us navigate the unknown – and this book does just that. Emerging from fear, we landed squarely in survival mode. Anyone who hasn't lived through this may find it difficult to understand what a constant battle it is to feel torn between

Life Continuum With an LGBTQ+ Child



traditional values and your child's authentic self. For us, this was a time when we asked hard questions – questions that led us to delve into scripture like never before, to unlearn stereotypes, and to analyze misconceptions. It was a time when we had moved past the initial, life-stopping fear, but were nowhere near embracing our new lives.

Thriving means engaging each person as a creation of God, worthy of respect and unconditional love. When you thrive, there is no more tension or concern for what others may think or believe. Instead, you trust God explicitly, love like Jesus, and experience peace that surpasses understanding. The practical details of thriving may look very different for each family. Your relationship with your child and God are unique and deeply personal. Parents, the important thing to remember is embrace the journey and every step of it!

A recommended reading list can be found on the [CenterPeace Resource Page](#)



CenterPeace

A place to belong

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