

The Christian life is a journey.

TrailNotes speaks to forward movement, paying attention to the “landscape” we are passing through in this trail-laced wooded hillside and valley, not to mention the world beyond. *TrailNotes* is an unfolding, ongoing journal of the people who share the trail with us and the things we’re learning and doing.

ElderTalk: Love, an Impossible Task

JON VEGA

The Wedding Homily for Samuel and Amanda Heining 5-15-21

“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.”

We see the ideal set before us, set before you two. Love covers all and is the answer. Love is perfection, but neither of you is perfect. In short, we see an impossible task.

You will (at some point in your life together) fail at most if not all of these. It’s foolish to think you won’t and dangerous to despair when you do. So, if you cannot love each other perfectly, what can you do?

First, you must have faith, in each other and in the One that the book of Hebrews refers to as “*the author and finisher of our faith.*” Christ Jesus.

You are not the author of your faith. Christ is.

You are not the finisher of your faith. Christ is.

Take comfort in that.

It may seem odd, but neither of you started this moment of faith called marriage. Neither do you have the strength to carry out that faith until the end. Christ is the originator of both your hearts’ faith and He alone will give you the strength to make it to the finish line. To think otherwise is to make an idol of your loved one and to make an idol worshipper of yourself. The prophet Jeremiah said:

“For the practices of the people are worthless; they cut a tree out of the forest, and a craftsman sharpens it with his chisel. They adorn [the idol] with silver and gold; they fasten it with hammer and nails so it will not totter.”

Don’t dress-up problems. Don’t cover-up issues. Don’t try the newest fad fix for your fights in order to nail down a rocky relationship. It won’t work.

Just as Christ is the author and perfecter of your faith and your love, He is also the author and perfecter of your unity. In it we see an imperfect model of the

Trinity. Include just two and you create another idol, but...include Christ and the Trinity emerges. Only by mutual submission to each other, as iron sharpens iron, and to Christ will your statement of marital faith blossom into a sustainable model of eternal love.

As you lay down your individual lives for each other today, remember that the nails of Calvary, the only nails that could save you individually, are the only nails that will hold you both together as one in marriage and keep your vows from ‘*tottering*’ because the wear and tear of life lived together as one.

You are not the author of your love. Christ is.

You are not the finisher of your love. Christ is.

Draw strength from that.





Just as Christ is the author and perfecter of your faith and unity, He will perfect your innate imperfections through the gift of grace. In 2 Corinthians 12, we read,

“But He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weakness, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. That is why for

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JUNE 2021

- 3** Women of Grace 6:30-8:00 pm at church.
- 6** Pastor Eric Byrom preaching on Mark 9:2-29. 
- 13** Eric Byrom preaching on Mark 9:30-50.
- 17** Women of Grace 6:30-8:00 pm at church.
- 19** Men's prayer breakfast 9:00 am at McDonalds.
- 20** Eric Byrom preaching on Mark 10:1-31.
- 27** Elder Jon Vega preaching on Mark 11:1-25. 

Congratulations to Samuel Heinger who recently graduated from Ohio Northern University with a Bachelors Degree in Engineering and a Bachelors Degree in Vocal Performance.

Want a Great Cookie? Try Silo Cookies *(from Joanna Gaines!)*



- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter at room temperature
- 1 cup packed light-brown sugar
- 1/4 cup granulated sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. kosher salt
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1-1/2 cups rolled oats
- 1-1/2 cups semisweet chocolate chips
- 1-1/2 cups peanut butter chips
- 1/2 cup chopped walnuts

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper.
2. In a standard mixer fitted with paddle attachment, cream butter, brown sugar, and granulated sugar on medium speed, and add eggs, one at a time, until blended at each addition. *(continued on page 4)*

Love, an Impossible Task *(continued from p. 1)*

Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Your unity will be sustained by weakness, by submission to one another. By submission to one another, you will find strength to forgive each other, to give and receive healing for hurts, to settle disputes and fights, to agree on where to work, where to live, how to live, how to raise a family, how to discipline children, how to spend your money, how to give your money, what church to attend, where to spend your vacations and holidays and with whom...it goes on and on. It's infinite and requires an infinite love with a source of infinite grace.

We can only learn what we have seen and we can only practice what we have experienced. As good as they are, your own parents are not perfect examples of love or faith or grace, but they were never meant to be. None of us are. Our Heavenly Father is. We (myself, and all the other witnesses here) are only meant to point to Him and His ongoing work of grace in the perfection of our weaknesses.

So, I ask again, if you cannot love each other perfectly, what can you do? Have faith that though you will fail, you are not forsaken. Admit that you are weak and find your strength in submission to one another and also to Christ. Be assured that unity is sustained through grace, the grace that we have already seen modeled both perfectly through Christ and imperfectly through those who have gone before. That is what you can do to love each other perfectly.

What is impossible with man is possible with God.



"The Wedding Feast At Cana" by Jacopo Tintoretto (~1545)

Andrea has been leading a women's group in her church for three years. She does not see that she can continue much longer, because every time there is a conflict between her and another woman in the group, Andrea goes into depression.

Sally, on the other hand, is very happy as the leader of a small group of women in her church. Although leading the group adds to her busy life, she handles her responsibilities well, and the women find the group a source of strength.

Sally is succeeding where Andrea is having difficulties. Why? What are the qualities and skills that go into being an effective leader of a women's small group?

Pastoral leaders who are setting up women's small groups in the fellowship need to consider carefully which women they are placing over the groups. A failure to do this, resulting in ill-suited leaders, can create disasters in women's small groups.

I have found that the following attitudes and marks of character should be present in the life of a woman if she is going to lead others.

1. A leader needs spiritual and emotional maturity.

She needs to be an example to other women. She does not need to be perfect, but her spiritual life should be something other women aspire to. She should have an alive relationship to the Lord, and not be afraid to lead out in prayer, scripture reading, and sharing in group situations. Her speech should encourage others. She is not afraid of whatever situation she is in.

When encountering personal difficulties or problems in relationships, she trusts God and communicates a faith in Him to others. For example, one leader I know was

going through a miscarriage that lasted weeks. From day to day and week to week, she drew on the strength of the Lord, seeing Him as faithful to her and in control of the situation. In difficulty she grew to strength and was an inspiration for others to look to God for help and comfort.

Related to spiritual strength Andrea did not possess the emotional strength to handle the pressures of leadership. She brooded over and rehashed every conflict in her mind until she became depressed. When wronged by other women, she was not able to work it through and let go.

Peace, Order, and Dignity

2. An effective leader's life is in good order.

For a married woman, this starts with proper respect and honor for her husband and pastoral leader. If she has any children, they should be under control, not wild banshees. If a woman is failing in these crucial areas, she forfeits any chance for recognition as a leader by other women. Respect for husband and control of her children are especially important if she is leading married women. Also, if a married woman's husband does not support her in a leadership role, she will not be able to win the confidence of women in her group.

Part of having her life in good order is being in good physical condition in areas that she can control such as weight and exercise. This is not to conform to Madison Ave.'s ideal of a beautiful woman but to reflect a personal discipline that is honoring to the Lord.

A leader's personal manner, how she carries herself in social situations, should also be one of dignity and humility. This is espe-

cially true of her speech: off-color humor, teasing, or a chiding tone are out of place. Her speech patterns will be picked up by those she leads—for better or worse.

The way she dresses communicates something about her. Dressing with a degree of taste indicates a woman's sense of self-respect and is something other women respect also. Does the woman wear appropriate clothing for different occasions? Casual clothes worn to a formal church wedding does not show respect for either the wedding couple or the wearer. That is not carrying oneself appropriately, and other women will not respect such a woman.

Although neatness and cleanliness of the woman's house are another aspect of order in her life, it is certainly not the case that a woman must be a domestic expert and have an immaculate house. But other women will find it hard to follow the lead of a woman who does not do a decent job caring for her house. (There is also a valuable modeling role here.)

When these sorts of things are in order, a woman grows in self-confidence. If the leader does not have self-confidence, it is difficult for others to have confidence in her and it is hard to build others' confidence in themselves. If a woman's life is in order, other women find it easier to trust what she says.

3. A leader should be honest about herself.

Women need to see into their leader's heart and find an openness to share her life and time with others. Christine, a leader I know, is a beautiful example of this openness. Christine had gained too much weight during her pregnancy, so she joined a weight management group.

(concluded on page 4)

Looking for Leaders... (concluded from p. 3)

She lost and kept off all the undesired pounds, and her example of acknowledging her problem and seeking help has encouraged other women to unashamedly seek help in this area also.

Sally, the leader mentioned in the beginning, is able to talk with her sisters about her struggles in an appropriate way and ask for prayer, and the other women in turn open their difficulties to her. Together they often discuss God's answers to their questions. Often it is Sally's experience as an older sister that leads the way to solutions.

Being honest and transparent means being a good listener. Leaders are not required to have all the answers, but by listening they can lend support that leads to answers.

4. A leader is a bridge builder.

A woman leader is able to help relationships flourish. There will be conflicts that she simply deals with as they arise. Spiritual and emotional maturity, an openness and honesty of heart, a life in good order, an attitude of respect, humility, and dignity, an ability to foster friendships and most importantly, a love for the Lord—these are all marks that a potential leader of a small group of women should have. With these traits she can lead other women into godly sisterhood.

(From *Commonlife*, Vol. 4, No. 4, 1984)

An archeological experience

with STEVE and DEB McKEE



The above photo shows part of the ruins of the massive buildings made by the Ancestral Puebloan people, now known as the Chaco Culture, built some time between 850 and 1250 AD. These ruins are located about 100 miles northwest of Albuquerque, NM. Just part of the McKee "summer vacation."

Cookies (continued from p. 2)

Add vanilla and beat until well incorporated.

3. In a medium bowl whisk together flour, salt, and baking soda. Slowly add flour mixture to egg mixture, and beat until incorporated. Reduce to low speed until mixed and add all chips and nuts and beat 15-20 seconds.

4. Using a 2 inch cookie scoop, scoop dough onto a cookie sheet. Refrigerate at least 30 minutes.

5. Baking in batches and leaving reserved dough in the refrigerator, set the balls 3 inches apart on the 2nd baking sheet. Bake until browned, 13-15 minutes. Let cool on baking sheet 10 minutes. Repeat with remaining dough. Store in air-tight container at room temperature up to 5 days.

Makes 18 big cookies. Total time: 1 hour and 30 minutes.

Joanna added chocolate chips for the boys, walnuts for Chip, and peanut butter chips for the girls. (Flaked coconut would also be good!)

Do you have something for TrailNotes?

Send pictures, articles to bucytalent@aol.com by the 20th of the month. We'd love to have them!



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Eric Byrom	Presiding Elder/Pastor
Jadaé Fox	Elder
Andy Heining	Elder
Jon Vega	Elder
Rick Widener	Treasurer
Kay Berry & Karen Gates	Women
Lori Barker	Missions
Andy Heining	Worship
Judy Nichols	Prayer Chain
Kay Berry & Jadaé Fox	Office
Kathy Barth, Manfred & Janet Adalem	Communion
Andy Anschutz	Sound/Power Point
John and Donna Kurtz	TrailNotes