



EVA

Issue 36

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Do-It-Yourself Decorating

By Pat Veretto, *About Frugal Living*

Throw out the rulebook; let's get frugal. Don't automatically assume that you have to budget a huge amount of money to decorate; it's cheaper to do it yourself, even if you consider the cost of learning—and more fun, to boot.

Make a house look fresh again by using few simple and frugal decorating ideas.

The best tip of all: Let your imagination go, take your time, and enjoy making your home beautiful.

Hide the flaws:

Painting floors is an old decorating trick used to simulate the expensive rugs of the upper class years ago that will camouflage a multitude of flaws. Scratches and worn places disappear when painted, and you have many options. You can paint your floor to look like tile, brick, terracotta ... any way you like it. Splatter paint over a base coat, stencil an intricate pattern to create an area "rug," or just stain an existing wood or tile floor.

Use a good quality floor paint. It's still a lot

more frugal than new tile or flooring of any other kind, and floor paint will last much better than any other kind of paint.

Cover cracked or otherwise unsightly walls with fabric—sheets, drapes, tablecloths, bedspreads, blankets—they're all fair game. Staple the fabric to cover the entire wall or a part of one.

Change the color:

Afghans or "throws" warm a room's personality and can be used to give a color and style boost. They can be bought, crocheted or knitted, or made from cast-off bedspreads or blankets. Use your imagination to add flair by adding bindings, appliques, or doubling a blanket and "quilting" it.

Throw pillows can be easily recovered if you wrap them in fabric, gift-wrap style, and simply tack-stitch wherever you'd use tape!

Think about switching area rugs with another room. You might be surprised at the new look, and it won't cost you a penny.

Move the lighting: Try moving a lamp from one area to another, or from

one room to another. Open windows that are usually closed, or close open ones.

Make use of light colors in areas where it seems dark, and use a mirror to reflect light into a dark corner. The mirror doesn't have to be large or expensive (or new) to do the job.

More quick and frugal decorating tips:

- Why not bring the mirrored dresser from the bedroom and use it for a side table in the living room? Or use a chest of drawers to hold towels and sundries in the bathroom? (Paint makes it match, if needed.)

- Got one of those old rolling chrome and metal kitchen "butlers" hidden away? Drape it with fabric and use it to display your treasures, or to serve coffee to guests.

- A small bookshelf can stand in as a plant holder. Put small trinkets on lower shelves, or put it in a window where you can use all of it for plants. You can even decorate (very frugal!) with the garden plants you're getting started.

- Drape a tablecloth over a curtain rod—not

only for a window, but to frame (with illusion) a large poster, a picture blanket or a tapestry. Pull the ends down to accentuate the corners.

- A bath towel can cover a small pillow, changing color and texture. Wrap the pillow with the towel as if you were wrapping a gift, then safety pin or sew the edges in place.

- If the top of your coffee table or piano is tired or scratched, cover it with a small decorative throw rug. Another tip—you can

make the rug yourself by crocheting or knitting, weaving or painting canvas. The possibilities are limited only by your imagination.

- Blankets and afghans thrown over a couch or chair seat or back brings warmth and color to a room as well as camouflaging worn areas. Do it casually by draping it over an arm, instead of tucking and pinning ... unless you like it that way.

- An unused bedspread is big enough to make a complete couch cover. Tuck

it behind the cushions and secure with safety pins or needle and thread at every corner. If you don't have one, a secondhand store is sure to, and at a much more frugal price than furniture "throws," which are the same thing—large pieces of material.

Rearranging furniture—an instant facelift: Here are some furniture arrangement tips:

- Decide on or create a focal point—something to arrange furniture around. In many living rooms, the TV fills this spot, but if you have a fireplace or ornamental heater, you may find this more inviting.

- Forget the square corners—put a chair or couch or bookshelf at an angle (cater-corner). It rearranges space completely.

- Look at the floor space instead of wall space. Leave paths from doorway to doorway, but pay attention to unused floor space, and use it!

- Break out of the square mold. Think triangle, think circle, think rectangle. Arrange seating in those shapes.

Buy a few inexpensive (secondhand) things:

Here are some tips on what to buy:

- Throw rugs, even if you have wall-to-wall

Decorating with a Purpose

The people who are labor leaders, who have potential to really go somewhere for Me and become teachers and preachers, teaching others and spreading the message, are usually going to be those who will appreciate and respect a higher standard. If you are ill-mannered and lack a vision for your life or work, if your children are rude and dirty; you live in shabby, unkempt, run-down Homes, you're going to turn off and turn away those who need you, and who you need in order to reach your country.

Some of you might think that the poorer you appear, the more people will want to give to you, but that's not true. No one likes to give to a failure. Nothing succeeds like success. I'm not saying you should live in extravagant mansions and drive the most expensive cars, but you do need to have a good standard of stewardship. The things you do have should be in good shape, maintained, and clean. And if they're beyond the point where they can be in good repair and clean, then you should have faith that I will supply better things—better houses, better vehicles, better furniture. You and your children should also be the kind of people who represent My Kingdom well, with good manners and an appealing presentation of My truth ("Reach the Rich," ML#3400:61–62).

carpeting, can define and enhance a particular area.

- Cheap or secondhand frames can hold pictures from calendars, catalogs and magazines.
- Use cake plates or platters to hold an

assortment of small items that would otherwise be unnoticeable.

- Use coffee mugs for small bouquets; teapots for larger ones.
- Brightly patterned, sturdily woven blankets

can double as a floor covering (assuming the blanket texture and floor surface allow).

- Patterned or picture blankets or throws make large wall hangings.

Cheap Tricks for Decorating Your Home

By Blanche Evans, Web reprint

Just because you are on a shoestring budget doesn't mean you have to be hamstrung when it comes to style. Your aim should be to make your home comfortable,

attractive and a place in which you like to be.

You'll be able to achieve a lot with an ordinary bed sheet. As a textile resource, the bed sheet is a relative bargain. It can be cut,

trimmed, disguised and reborn for all kinds of uses—decorative pillows, café curtains, placemats, vanity skirts, tablecloths, shower curtains, and even painted as a dramatic backdrop for a living area or bedroom. Flat sheets can be found on sale almost any time of the year, and in a wide assortment of colors and patterns.

For most of these color-enhancing and practical products you don't even need to know how to sew. Fabric glue, scissors, some trim goods and patience are all you need to brighten a sofa or a tabletop with color. Straight pins will secure your fabric as you work with it, and prevent you from gaping seams or crooked edges.

If you aren't artistic but can follow a pattern, invest in stencils. You can use them to paint borders around your ceiling or on the backsplash of your

10 Tips for Accessorizing Your Home

From the *Decorating Bible* Web site

1. Personalize your home with art and accessories.
2. Repeat a color at least three times in a room.
3. Relate your art to its surroundings. Art prints placed about 6"—9" above a sofa will create a unified look.
4. Cover two thirds of the space above furniture with one or more pieces of art to achieve proper proportion.
5. Position artwork at eye level to look at the center of it from either a sitting or standing position.
6. Vary the height of tabletop accessories for balance and interest.
7. Create a formal look with symmetrical groupings of art. Create an informal look with asymmetrical groupings.
8. Place mirrors so they reflect something beautiful. Use them to add dimension, expand space or reflect light in a room.
9. Display art on easels to create interest in corners, bookcases or on tabletops.
10. Custom frame artwork to coordinate with room decor. Select a frame that compliments the decorating style. Select mat colors that enhance both the art and color scheme.

Redecorating Your Home

Web reprint

kitchen (the tile area behind sink or stove) and repeat the pattern in your tabletop cloths, napkins, or mats. Carry through the theme to color-coordinated oven mitts and dishtowels.

If you can fold fabric into a forty-five degree angle, you can add a contrasting fabric to corners on placemats and shower curtains. Again, fabric glue can come to your rescue if a sewing machine isn't handy. For a shower curtain, you don't need to make ring holes. You can find fabric ring clips at most fabric stores, hardware stores and department stores that clip on. Just make sure your clips are sturdy enough to support both a plastic liner and your fabric overlay. Add pizzazz by gluing fabric trim with loops or tassels across the top, or by scalloping the bottom so it suggests waves on the water.

Without a large investment, you can brighten and adorn your home by having some fun with sheets. And when you are tired of the look, start over!

Eve: If any of you have any tips to contribute or how you've beautified your Home, or testimonies of how the Lord has supplied your needs for improving the standard of your Home, please feel free to send them in to eve@wsfamily.com. Thank you!

A little creativity goes a long way in getting the look and feel you want without having to spend much—if any at all. Half the fun of decorating is in rediscovering something you already have, inside or out, and using or displaying it a new way.

Think natural. Flowers wake up a room anytime; in the fall, gather “winter bouquets,” grasses and “weeds” that have seeded out have attractive colors and shapes. In the spring, gather wild flowers (even if your neighbor calls them weeds).

Small pieces of weathered wood, varnished against splinters, make interesting paperweights.

Gather large baskets of pinecones and put them on the floor.

Fill baskets full of anything interesting—wood, dried flowers, or rocks.

Think color. Find a new color that won't clash with your floors and walls, for a quick makeover of any room.

Paint a wooden chair, add an inexpensive throw, or use brightly colored napkins under lamps and on coffee tables.

If you don't want to change your color scheme, find another color that goes with it, or deepen (or lighten) the color for accessories.

Add a bright throw rug or two, and don't limit them to the floor. Put them on the coffee table, on the back of the couch, on the wall.

Think fun. Small rocks, arranged on a tray or plate, in some sand with a miniature house or animals make a fascinating coffee table display. Use a small mirror for a pond and get creative with the scene.

Display kids' art prominently on a bulletin board so you can change the artwork frequently. Add your own flair with cutouts or small tackable objects.

Think recycle. Old picture frames look new with a fresh coat of paint or gilding.

Dye your own curtains a deeper or different color, or embroider them.

Use an old trunk for a coffee table.

Use an old freshly painted dresser for a hall table or sideboard.

Use an empty can for a planter, covered with fabric or spray paint.

FEATURE: STEP TO THE BEAT

Super-Easy Thigh and Rear Firm-Up

By Miriam Nelson, PhD, Prevention

The same stairs that burn calories can also strengthen and tone your legs and buttocks. But you needn't traipse a whole set of them. One step (or low bench) is all you need for this exercise, called a step-up. Simple footwork turns this everyday

activity into a fabulous thigh and rear exercise that you can do practically anywhere.

1. Stand about 12 to 18 inches (30–45 cm) from a bench (or a step on a staircase). Slowly lift your left foot onto the step, keeping your right leg perpendicular to the floor. Don't look down,

and keep your shoulders relaxed and your back straight.

2. Bring your right foot up and gently tap the bench, but don't put any weight on this foot. Pause, then slowly place your right foot back down onto the floor, followed by your left one. Continue alternating legs.

Step-Bench Training for Fitness and Fun

American Council on Exercise

Within the last few years, step-bench training's popularity has climbed rapidly. Vigorous

stepping provides the cardiovascular benefits of running but stresses the joints little more than walking. Performed to invigorating music with creative choreography, this low-impact workout is also lots of fun.

Getting started: Before beginning step training, be sure your step—the platform—is secure and at the proper height for your fitness level. If you are new to step training, or just beginning a fitness program, start with a platform height of four to six inches (10–15 cm). (Regardless of fitness level, the platform height

should not require bending your knees more than 90 degrees.) Keep the area around your platform dry and remove objects that could interfere with your workout.

Align your body: Proper body alignment during step training helps prevent injuries. While stepping:

- Relax your neck and keep it straight.
- Always keep your knees soft; don't lock the knee joints.
- Maintain good posture with shoulders back, chest lifted and pelvis tucked under.
- Lean from the ankles, not the waist, as you step

NEED SOME NEW MOVES?

Check out this Web site:
www.turnstep.com/moves.html

You'll find an extensive dictionary of step aerobic moves, complete with animated instructions for how to execute each one. Using this you can make up your own workout patterns and do it to music, even if you don't have a step aerobic workout video. Have fun!

onto the platform. Do not bend from the hips.

- Don't arch your back.

Proper stepping techniques: Correct stepping technique also prevents injuries and improves your workout:

1. Always place your entire foot on the platform; no part of the foot should hang over the edge.

2. Step close to the platform, allowing the heels to contact the floor. Note: Only the ball of the foot, not the heel, should touch the floor during lunges or other rapidly repeated movements (such as "repeaters").

3. Step quietly. Pounding can unduly stress the ankles and knees.

4. Keep an eye on the platform at all times.

5. Don't use hand weights. They greatly increase the risk of injury and provide no benefit.

Stepping out: If you initially find step training difficult to follow, focus on learning the foot patterns and omit arm movements. You can add arm movements later. Remember that raising your arms above shoulder level makes your heart work harder and can leave you breathless. If you have a hard time keeping up, lower your arms and catch your breath.

Alternate step training with a variety of aerobic workouts like bicycling, walking, or other recreational activities.

Step-training workouts may seem difficult at

first, but they're habit-forming! Just remember to maintain proper body alignment and stepping technique to keep you stepping injury-free for years to come.

Ask Kathy Smith

From the iVillage Web site

Q: I am 44 years old and have been doing step aerobics to videos since 1991. I work out four to five times a week and consider myself to be in good shape. However, my friends warn that I'm too old to still be doing step aerobics and may be risking injury to my knees. Should I lower the height of the step (currently 8–10 inches)? Use less intense videos? Or put step aerobics out of my routine entirely?

A: Please, 44 years young! No, you're not too old to be doing step, but you and your knees will be able to enjoy it for many years to come if you take some precautions. I always lean towards safety and since the higher the step, the higher the risk of a knee

injury, I never go higher than eight inches. You will get a much more intense workout if you lower your step and add propulsion moves to your workouts.

Here's how to tell if the step height is safe for you: When you rest one foot on the step and then lean forward to initiate a step up, your knee should only be bent to about 60 degrees. The closer it is to 90 degrees (shin perpendicular and thigh parallel to the floor), the more you increase your risk of knee injury. And even though you love stepping, I would still recommend that you cross-train twice a week, doing a low-impact activity like walking, cycling or swimming, to give your muscles and joints a break.

File a Flight Plan

By Carol Krucoff, *The Washington Post*

One of the world's best

exercise devices is free, easy to use and readily available—in fact, you

probably have dozens in your home and workplace.

They're stairs, and lifting your body against gravity to climb them is one of the best exercises you can do for your heart, muscles and bones. In a "no time for exercise" age, the steps all around us provide an ever-present way to fit physical activity into daily life.

Yet most people avoid them. Given the choice between riding an escalator or climbing an adjacent flight of stairs, 95% of people observed by researchers in Baltimore chose the path of least physical effort.

This finding confirmed conclusions of a classic study by Yale University obesity expert Kelly Brownell, who also discovered that he could triple the slim percentage of stair climbers by posting a sign that read: "Your heart needs the exercise, here's your chance!"

Brownell contends that America's obesity epidemic results in part from living in a culture where moving walkways, automatic doors, remote controls and other conveniences make it less necessary—or possible—to move our bodies throughout the day. "Most people don't realize how little physical activity they

actually get," he says, "and how important it is to use every opportunity they have to be active."

Lifestyle activity, such as choosing stairs over elevators, is increasingly being urged by public health experts, who point to mounting evidence that small amounts of exercise accumulated throughout the day can provide significant health benefits.

For those who want a more intense workout, continuous stair climbing can be an effective way to build lower body strength and cardiovascular endurance. One of the most popular exercise trends of the last decade,

step aerobics, is based on going up and down a step for 30 to 60 minutes. And one of the most popular exercise machines during that same time period, the stair climber, relies on this same motion.

Athletes have been running up and down stadium steps as part of training for years. Business travelers, like *NBC Nightly News* anchor Tom Brokaw, often climb hotel stairs as a workout. "I find the back stairs in the hotel and run up and down them for 12 to 15 minutes," Brokaw told *Men's Health* magazine. "Then, back in my room, I do 35 to 40 push-ups and three sets of sit-ups."

From Dad on Daily Exercise

Exercise is the cure! Exercise in the fresh air and sunshine. It's been proven time and time and time again! A lot of times we are very tired and don't feel like going, but we know we have to. Whether we want to or not, we get out and walk, rain or shine.

I remember seeing a famous movie about a young English nobleman given up to die as a tubercular, lung trouble. So since he had always wanted to see the world and especially Canada,

he decided that would be a good place to die, camping and fishing in the woods and the forests and the lakes and streams of Canada; in other words, on a permanent vacation, to die. Instead of that, he fully recovered and became of robust health from all that fresh air and exercise and sunshine and camping and fishing!—That's what he needed: to get away from the tension and worry and strain of business and all its complications and indoor confinement. (ML #805:5–7)

coming out of the fog

From Gentleness Fighter (of Jahmai), Taiwan

I am finding that life *after* menopause is better than I ever imagined it would be! I can pace myself better, cast my cares on Jesus more easily, and after reading all the sweet, encouraging love whispers that Jesus gave me during that time and since, I have actually come to accept me and like me, as me (well ... most of the time, ha!).

For me, menopause was like going through a dense fog. During that period, I found that my sweet Husband was not only holding my hand, but was encouraging me—through prophecy and His Word—that I could make it through, and telling me how to do so, especially during the most difficult parts. It seems to me that Jesus tailors menopause on a “woman by woman basis,” according to each of our personal needs, so He can reshape us into the vessels He wants us to become.

I had eaten pretty healthy most of my life and had exercised moderately and regularly, so physically I remained pretty healthy and active. Even my hot flashes were mild, and did not occur often. But being peaceful, coping with mood swings and nervousness, and simply knowing how to cast my cares on Jesus had never been my strong points. So guess what kind of menopause I had?—The emotional roller-coaster kind! (One of my older FGA friends told me that her menopause had lasted only about three years, but it was much more intense physically with super hot flashes and hot sweats soaking her bed at night, resulting in her needing to change the bed sheets more than once a night.)

I started my menopause around 42, and it lasted for about eight years. I also did not know I was in menopause until about three years from the end. Once I realized that I was

indeed going through menopause, I started paying close attention to my diet and taking calcium and magnesium supplements.

I incurred a back injury during that period, which has since encouraged me to be very faithful with my get-outs and to continue taking my vitamin supplements. I found I *had* to take a minimum of an hour walk (sometimes longer) daily. Walking was and still is such a wonderful, therapeutic way for me to eliminate stress. During those times I sing, have praise times, prayer vigils, and sometimes stop and get a prophecy, then walk some more.

I learned not to read heavy messages late at night or have heavy conversations right before bed. I usually tried to read something light and positive before going to sleep. Sleeping became (and still is) quite a battle. (Sometimes I keep a tape recorder in my bed

to listen to a tape to get through those sleepless periods.) Many times my Home would let me sleep in the next morning to catch up on lost sleep, if possible—so sweet!

The Word that I read and literally clung to helped a lot. Letters like “Let Jesus Bear the Weight,” the two menopause GNs, “My Heart Belongs to You,” and “Be Encouraged” were some of my

soon as my eyes opened, and then I’d have my “whisper time” (hearing from the Lord) the very next thing. If I didn’t do this very faithfully and immediately, my mind would start me down the road to worrying, and the end of it—I knew all too well—would not be pleasant.

I would often repeat this Word and whisper process after my rest at quiet time, too. Sometimes I’d get an evening prophecy as well. After receiving a prophecy (however short), I found it much easier to give that piece of the day into Jesus’ loving hands. I felt like I was living by “whisper propulsion.” It’s so comforting to reread those sweet messages that I wrote down during that period. I’d get longer messages on my rest day.

Now I have a prophecy log over five years long, of all those sweet messages Jesus has given me. When I reread prophecies from that period, I can sense and vaguely remember the desperate, confused emotions I felt then, but which happily I no longer feel. Getting regular prophecies

is a firm habit now, mainly because of that menopause period, and it continues to be a great source of encouragement to me. Now when new trials come up, I go back and reread those Letters that are pillars for me, and then I ask Jesus for current prophecies and His perspective on things. Then the new trying and/or perplexing situation passes much more easily than before.

Another source of comfort for me was listening to soothing and strengthening Family music tapes—*When You Need Him Most*, *Embrace* and *Dancing with Jesus* were some of my favorites. At the end *Face the Wind* was my top choice. The many brethren I lived with over that time period were very supportive, patient, and encouraging to me, God bless them! They had a lot of patience with me, as I was not always easy to be around during that time. Some of them even got prophecies for me. Women in menopause can now put themselves on their area prayer lists to get needed prayer support. Memorizing and claiming the keys

“Call on the power of the keys to override the symptoms of menopause and you will experience miracles of answered prayer.”

mainstays. I made my own condensations of these Letters so I could reread them regularly. When the “Casting Your Care on Him” GN came out, I was just a few years from the end of menopause. This Letter was like a road map of how to get through that time, a needed lifeline; I followed its counsel as much and as often as possible. I kept a GN and my prophecy notebook by my pillow, so I could read some Word as

promises on menopause during prayer vigils or in seasons of prayer with your Home could be a big help. I've found it's a key to not try to do it alone, but to get as much spiritual backup from others as you can.

In going through menopause, I have also come to realize that Jesus has given my body only so much physical strength each day. It's my "daily energy salary," so to speak. So I have to spend that lessened amount of energy a lot more wisely than when I was younger; I need to pace myself more than ever before. I'm not sure if this has happened to other women or only to me, but I find my nervous system (with my body following hard after) is more delicate than before. Things like

changing time zones, climates, or not pacing myself sufficiently during a fundraising push can affect my body for a long time afterwards, so I'm continually learning that moderate living is a better—and necessary—way to live my life.

It took me literally years of leaning on the arm of the flesh—with little, if any success—until I was able to realize that I was not going to get through this on my own. But towards the end I began to cling more desperately to the strength that His Word gives, and the encouragement that His personal love whispers bring. I learned I had to let Jesus take over more, and He did; He gave me the courage to hang on.

I received no major revelations; there were no lights or visions. (But TYJ, I didn't have to take any artificial hormone replacement either.) His strength was given, along with a closer, more intimate relationship with Him. Now that it's over it seems like a shadow, but then, intense was the best word to describe it. Yet as trying as it was, Jesus' strength is perfect. And now I know

how to avail myself of His strength more than ever before.

I now feel so much contentment and fulfillment in my life and service for the Lord. In bringing me through menopause, Jesus has trained me how to rise above an experience that many women out in the world literally fear. But for us, His brides, it can become an intimate symbol of His personal love.

He has taught how much He loves me, in His being willing to help me by carrying the burden of that time period for me. Menopause is a very stressful period of a woman's life, but I fully believe that our sweet Husband has a wonderful, personalized solution for each woman through His Word and whispers, that are not past finding out. All we have to do is ask and He'll be more than willing to answer with a way of escape, a safety valve against that pressure. Then we *will* be able to bear it, and know His love in a deeper way. And we will come through menopause a more refined vessel that He can continue to use in the future.

Menopause is a very stressful period of a woman's life, but I fully believe that our sweet Husband has a wonderful, personalized solution for each woman through His Word and whispers, that are not past finding out.

SOLVING RELATIONSHIP PROBLEMS

BY MARK GOULSTON, MD

One of the most common causes of relationship problems is presuming to really understand your partner, when it's clear to him or her that you couldn't be more off target. Over time, such presumption—which goes in both directions—can kill off a relationship.

Presuming is something you do at your partner from your inside out. Exploring sincere curiosity, on the other hand, is something

you do with your partner from their inside out.

The next time you and your partner are stuck in a heated argument that's not going anywhere, try this surefire three-step strategy:

1. Realize when you're being on the offensive or defensive, and stop talking.
2. Admit to yourself that you and your partner are having a problem.
3. Ask yourself, "What's it like for my partner right now?"

You will discover an amazing fact about human nature: You can't be sincerely curious about how and what another person is feeling and be angry with him or her at the same moment.

For instance, if you were to say to your partner during a tense time, "I didn't like where this conversation was going, and then I stopped and wondered what it was like for you. I realized that you don't like where it's going either, do you?"

If your partner agrees that he or she doesn't like what's happening, make the following offer: "If you don't like where it's going and I don't either, why don't we stop, start over, and both try to talk without becoming hostile or defensive?" Unless your partner enjoys arguments, there's a good chance he or she will take you up on your invitation. (Eve: *For some good practical tips, please see "Loving Interaction," ML #3234; "Stay Humble," ML #3235; "Loving Kindness," ML #3237; "Do the Humble Thing," ML #3251; and "Show Appreciation," ML #3252.*)

DAD SPEAKING:

This is good advice, and those of us who know and love the Lord can and should take it a step further. This fellow is on the right track, but all the head-knowledge in the world is not enough if it doesn't take you to the heart of the matter. And the One Who really knows best the deepest secrets and inner workings of each of our hearts is, of course, the Lord.

So to that list above I would add a point 4, and that would be, take the time to stop and pray together, and then ask the Lord to speak and tell you how the other person is thinking and feeling. Or if you can't hear from the Lord right then and there because you're too riled up, take some time out to pray personally, and get back together to discuss it a little later. You could hear from the Lord together or separately, whatever's easiest for you. But the point is that it's important to do so.

Putting yourself in the other person's shoes is a good thing, but the very best way to do that is to ask the Lord to explain to you and show you how the other person is feeling and how best to relate to him or her and what kind of agreement can be come to that will be agreeable to both parties. •

KEGEL FACT SHEET

ADAPTED FROM THE THIRD AGE WEB SITE

Men and women alike can enhance sexual functioning and fulfillment in the time it takes to read this sentence. Our list of little-known facts on the benefits of Kegel exercises shows you how. As you'll learn, Kegel exercises can be a tool for enjoying new and different, even great sex.

1. Kegel exercises are performed by contracting the pubococcygeus (pc) muscle.

It's the hard-to-pronounce pubococcygeus muscle—usually referred to as the pc or Kegel muscle—that gets this job done. It's located on the pelvic floor between the anus and the genitals; you can locate yours by stopping the flow of urine in mid-stream as you pee.

By learning to contract this muscle at will, you can postpone or intensify orgasm. Coordinate Kegel exercises with deep abdominal breath work by contracting the pc muscle with each inhalation. Start with 10 to 15 contractions per day. Hold each breath for four seconds and then release. Slowly work your way up to 25 or more.

2. Kegel exercises may be performed just about anytime, anywhere.

You can do Kegels when you're stopped in traffic, when you're on hold on the telephone, while watching television or making love. Think of all the opportunities you have to do these simple contractions! Make Kegels a part of your daily routine.

3. Kegel exercises may help improve women's sexual health by strengthening the key muscle that contracts during female orgasm, promoting optimal sexual function and fulfillment; plus preventing urinary stress incontinence.

Kegel exercises (so named by Dr. Arnold Kegel, who developed them as a way to strengthen the pelvic floor and alleviate urinary stress incontinence) are vital to building the pc muscle, which is the key muscle that contracts during female orgasm. A strong pc muscle promotes optimal sexual function and fulfillment while helping prevent urinary stress incontinence.

4. Kegel exercises may help improve men's sexual performance by improving control over ejaculation, maintaining an erection, and intensifying orgasm.

Prolonged Kegel or pc contraction can stop the pulsating multiple contractions that accompany ejaculation. This helps prevent ejaculation and helps maintain erection, thus building to a more powerful orgasm.

5. Kegel exercises may help women recover from physical stresses of pregnancy and childbirth such as weakened pelvic floor muscles, plus urinary stress incontinence.

Pregnancy and childbirth can weaken the pelvic floor muscles, causing urinary stress incontinence (an involuntary loss of urine that occurs during physical activity, such as coughing, sneezing, laughing or exercise). "When done properly, Kegel-type exercises are 90% effective in alleviating mild urinary stress incontinence," writes Christiane Northrup, M.D.

Kegel exercises will not improve lagging libido or an inability to reach orgasm, which are often a result of emotional and physical causes. Kegels only affect the mechanical aspects of sexual anatomy and function.

6. Kegel exercises may help improve prostate health by helping reduce an enlarged prostate gland by massaging it.

Kegel exercises can help improve prostate health by massaging the prostate

gland. “Contracting or tightening the prostate gland pushes against or ‘massages’ the prostate,” writes Dr. Robert Ivker. This massaging effect may help reduce an enlarged prostate.

FOR ADAM... THE CARE AND TENDING OF A WIFE

BY PAUL MCGUIRE, *HOW TO LIGHT HER FIRE*

When it comes to sex, men and women see things differently. Men often are clueless about cultivating a passionate and romantic relationship with their wives. At the same time, women often have no idea how important sexual fulfillment is to men both physically and psychologically.

These are things that men can do to ignite their sex lives:

1. Learn to tune in to your wife. Actively discipline and train yourself to be sensitive to your wife. It will require concentration and hard work, but when your wife senses that you are being truly sensitive to her she will respect you, open up to you, trust you, and desire to be physically intimate with you (Eph.5:25).

2. Romance your wife. When you were courting, you knew instinctively how to be sensitive, caring,

and romantic. Maybe you took her out for coffee, wrote her little love notes, brought her flowers, and listened to her intently when she poured her heart out to you. Slowly—without knowing it—you lost the romantic tenderness and passion. Now when you approach her sexually, she seems uninterested and unavailable. Have you stopped being her lover on the kind of romantic level that every woman craves? Begin to find ways to be romantic again and don’t expect an instant payoff (SOS.4:1–15).

3. Cultivate a romantic relationship. Actively enjoy, delight, and rejoice in your wife. Many men want the passionate sex without the emotional and spiritual relationship, but God did not design women this way. Become the lover of her soul before you become the lover of her body.

4. Don’t ignore unresolved conflicts. If you ignore conflicts, tensions, and disagreements in your marriage relationship, you will find that your wife will not be interested in being with you. Be the leader in healing any conflicts.

5. Be understanding of where she is physically and emotionally. Generally, men need sex more often than their wives do, with little or no preparation. But many women are exhausted from balancing the demands of work, family, and other activities. She may be exhausted, physically run down, depressed, anxious about something, or not feeling well (Eph.5:28–29).

6. Stop begging and start talking. Don’t complain, pressure, demand, or beg for sex. Never pressure your wife to do things sexually that she is not comfortable with.

You must respect each other's wishes, needs, and desires (Eph.4:25,29–32).

7. Be creative about how you approach your wife sexually. For most women, physical intimacy is about love, romance, and emotional connection. They enjoy candles, bubble baths, love notes, foot rubs, massages, and soft music. Your own cleanliness, smell, and grooming are also

important. Sex between a husband and wife should be passionate and holy at the same time. It should be a celebration of your spiritual union in Christ (Pro.5:18–19).

8. Find ways to praise and compliment your wife. A woman wants to know that she is admired by her husband and that she is special to him (SOS.1:8–10).

9. Be a friend to your wife. Let your sexual

relationship flow out of true friendship and close companionship. Your relationship should not just consist of talking about bills, children's problems, household chores, and to-do lists. Share laughter, dreams, inner thoughts, and your relationships with the Lord. A woman is physically turned on by this kind of emotional intimacy and closeness (Eph.5:33).

ALL WORK AND NO PLAY

BY MICHAEL WEBB

I once heard someone describe romance as adult play. I like that concept. I personally believe true romance involves much more play than passion. While passion is important, we often feel "too mature" to have fun. Nonsense!

Those who know me consider me to be one of the biggest kids around. I don't

know of any rule that says I can no longer participate in water balloon fights. I still get excited when I hear the music of the ice cream truck as it comes into our neighborhood.

Playing is a big part of my wife Athena's and my blissful relationship. Sure, there is always work to be done around the house or in the yard, but living life and enjoying it is so much more important, healthy—and fun. I could spend every waking hour doing paperwork, removing weeds or cleaning up around the house, but I much prefer taking my wife out to eat an ice cream cone or looking for four leaf clovers in a big clover patch. When was the last time you did that?

Do you ever walk in the woods or meadows together and pick bouquets of wild flowers? How about playing hide and seek or kick the can with your children or the neighborhood kids? When did you last skip rocks on water or race leaves down a stream?

I love to bake cookies with my wife and eat them piping hot out of the oven and drink a big, cold glass of milk. Yum!

Some in the media call me the World's Most Romantic Man (which I doubt is true); perhaps it's because I am the world's biggest kid. I think there might be a connection. Is the kid inside you lost? If so, why not go find him? (Eve: *Please see ML #3437, "Have Fun with Jesus!"*)

(Dad speaking:) Take time for the simple things of life. Stopping for praise time makes for a natural time to relax and have a little fun together in the Lord. We don't have a sad God—we have a very happy God who wants us to be happy too. So love Him and love each other, and take time to enjoy the sweet and simple beauties that He sends your way every day. The more you look for them, the more you'll find.

A Candidate for VBAC?

FROM THE MARCH DIMES WEB SITE

Repeat C-sections used to be the rule—"Once a C-section, always a C-section." That was because years ago doctors feared a rupture along the previous incision, which was usually a high, up-and-down cut in the uterus. Today most women can try to give birth naturally after having

a previous C-section and have a successful vaginal delivery if no other risk factors are present. The horizontal incision, which is made low across the uterus, has made such ruptures rare.

You may be a candidate for vaginal birth after cesarean (VBAC) if:

* A low, horizontal

uterine incision was used previously.

* You experienced no complications during or after your C-section, which could affect this pregnancy and birth.

* You will deliver your baby in a hospital or birth center where an emergency C-section can be performed, if needed.

MORE On VBAC

FROM MERRYHEART PSALMS, USA

For many years the rate of delivery by cesarean section was 3–4%. The rise started in the early '70s: In 1973 it was 8%, then 1987 showed it to be 24.4%. Hospitals differ, but the average in the U.S. now is 25% and above.

This rise did not go unnoticed. A woman named Nancy Wainer intended to have a natural birth, but due to interventions in the hospital, she ended up with a cesarean. When she wrote of her

experience, she got a flood of mail—thousands of letters from other women who questioned their cesareans, many expressing grief and outrage. Support and informational groups were formed. The old dictum, "Once a cesarean, always a cesarean" was questioned. She was the one who coined the term "VBAC" and wrote two books on shared experiences, called *Silent Knife* and *Open Season*.

Around this time (early 1980s), and

perhaps because of public concern, the U.S. Federal Government called a national conference to address the sharp increase in C-sections. The conclusion was: VBAC is appropriate, with certain cautions. Physicians in Western Europe had been doing them for years.

The most recent stand of ACOG (American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists) was to discourage VBAC. The guidelines now make it almost impossible for physicians to consider

VBAC should they wish to, and most don't want to bother with it anyway. But this also impacts whether a midwife can assist with a VBAC legally.

The reverse on the former stand of giving women with cesareans a trial of labor was because of some poor outcomes in hospitals. Some OBs and hospitals were giving VBAC a chance, but still doing it the hospital way, with interventions, which can lessen an optimal outcome. Midwives had a better success rate, very likely due to the lack of mechanical interventions and working with the women in labor.

During the time of VBACs, some studies rated VBAC a 90%

success rate (usually 70%-80%). The fear of VBAC was usually uterine rupture, which has a high mortality rate for the child and puts the mother in peril of death if not interceded quickly. The incidence of uterine

rupture was very low and usually associated with the use of oxytocics (drugs to start or stimulate labor). (Uterine rupture also occurs in women who have never had cesareans, but are induced with these oxytocics.)

FAITH FOR CESAREAN & Beyond

FROM ESTHER (SGA, OF TOM), AUSTRALIA

I am the proud mother of five angelic rascals. My first was born by cesarean, and all the rest were born vaginally. The cesarean wasn't planned. I was at the end of a 36-hour labor, exhausted. My water bag had broken 12 hours

into the labor, I was fully dilated thanks to a drip at the 34th hour, and had been pushing for a whole hour, but the baby wouldn't descend. He was lodged against my hipbone and it turned out that he had the cord wrapped around his neck three times.

Dr. Koger speaking:

You'll need to hear from the Lord very specifically and have full faith before proceeding with a VBAC delivery. Because though it is definitely possible to have a safe vaginal delivery after a C-section, and statistics show this as well, it's still a very big decision and one that you have to have the faith for. Some of the complications that could arise are real, and only the Lord knows what's best for you. I'm not saying this to instill fear in your heart, but you do need to aware of the risks—not so you can be fearful, but that so you can knowledgably bring it all to the Lord and find out what His will is for you.

You sure don't want to make a potentially life-and-death decision based on what the doctor says, or what the statistics prove, or even someone else's personal testimony. You have to have faith personally before the Lord. You've got to follow His will for you, and hear His Words specifically in order to do so. That's the bottom line. Yes, VBAC deliveries do happen all the time and they can be perfectly safe, but there are also risks. So the only way you can know for sure you're doing the right thing is if you ask Him. You and your baby's safety are of utmost importance to Him, and I guarantee that He'll lead and guide you as you look to Him.

The doctors were advising a cesarean. I was dead set against it, but my husband and the sister with me coaxed me into accepting the doctors' advice. The doctors were Italian and I couldn't understand a thing, so the sister with me was translating. Exhausted and at the end of my rope, I was hardly coherent; all I could think was that I wanted a natural delivery. But they explained that the baby and I were in danger, and then I realized that maybe this was the Lord's will, and that if I fought it I could end up doing more harm than good.

I was in a transition room which had a sound system, and the tape *When You Need Him Most* was playing. Suddenly the Lord gave me peace that I was in His hands and everything would work out okay.

In explaining how I felt at the time, I hope I can bring out the point that no matter what expectations you have for your labor and delivery, it is important to be open to the Lord's changes, as He may have some lessons He wants you to learn—like He did with me. This is not to worry you, because thousands

of women do deliver naturally every day. But it's important to be fluid and relaxed, go with the flow of His Spirit, and especially to bathe in His Word ahead of time, which will give you faith that as His beloved bride, He won't let anything happen to you that isn't for a very good purpose.

The main thing the Lord was trying to do with me was to break my pride and humble me, and help me to have more compassion and empathy for others. LHM! I had a lot to learn on that one. If everything had gone hunky dory and I'd had a completely natural delivery, I probably would've thought it had something to do with me. It would've ministered to my pride. But as everything was out of my control, I had to rely on the Lord to help me get through it; there was nothing else I could do.

With each subsequent delivery I felt so thankful that they went well, with no complications. I just knew He was in control of everything, throughout each one.—I learned that in the hard school of experience.

Actually, each labor and delivery has gotten easier. All glory to Him!

My second child was born only 14 months after my cesarean. We had to really pray, because most doctors weren't willing to try for a natural delivery so soon after a cesarean. They prefer that mothers wait at least a year before becoming pregnant again, to give the scar time to heal properly. We went to quite a few hospitals before we found one that would take a chance on delivering the baby naturally. It was all by faith!

One thing that helped was that the scar was a bikini cut. Apparently that incision heals the best because it is done across the grain of the uterine muscles instead of with the grain, so there is less chance of the uterine action in subsequent labors causing the scar to separate.

The Lord did it all, and our second child was born after a much more manageable 12-hour labor. I was on the continental prayer list during my pregnancy, so thanks to those who prayed for me during that time!

Since then, each labor has been shorter and easier. My babies tend to be late, so I had to be induced at two

weeks overdue with our fourth child. But even with a mobile drip in my arm, that labor and delivery was really easy. I squatted to deliver our fourth and fifth children, and during the contractions also. It helps to open up the cervix more efficiently and shortens the birth canal for the delivery, making use of gravity so you don't have to push as hard as if you were lying on your back. I also recovered a lot quicker from the two deliveries in which I squatted to deliver. I didn't even tear during the last delivery, which was a real miracle, as I was given an episiotomy for the birth of our second child and since then tore every time.

I read in *Eve* that olive oil helps make the skin more pliant, so I thought I'd give it a try. So I rubbed it on my vaginal area every night for two weeks before the due date, and also when I was in labor. The midwife also coached me to go slowly during the delivery of the baby's head, only pushing with the contraction and panting with short little pushes instead of long ones. All that seemed to help, and of course a lot of prayer.

TIME FOR A Second Cesarean

FROM ALINA (OF ZACK), CHINA

My due date for my second child was on August 28, about three months before my first son's second birthday. As my son was born by C-section, people on our mission field—both professionals and common folks—warned me not to get pregnant before my son's 3rd or 4th birthday. My husband and I went to the Lord, prayed about it, and asked Him to not let me get pregnant if it was truly that dangerous. To my great surprise, shortly after my son's first birthday I found myself pregnant again.

That is when the tests came. At four weeks PG, I was already worried about the delivery. Well-meaning acquaintances all advised me to "be responsible and get an abortion before it was too late." Due to an infection in the first three months of my pregnancy, I went for check-ups more frequently. The local doctors were horrified that I had dared to get pregnant, and they all predicted disaster. I told them that I believed children were God's gift and that if He didn't think

my body could handle another pregnancy so soon, He wouldn't have let me get pregnant.

However, in my heart—despite all the prophecies, encouragement, and Word from the Lord—I just kept remembering all the scary things people had told me. I was so full of fear.

We had to make a trip to Hungary, where I ended up having the baby. I told our sweet doctor friend that I really wanted to have this baby naturally. He was honest with me about the possibility of needing another C-section, yet he was willing to try.

On August 29th I woke at 6 a.m. with slight contractions. The Lord showed me I was going to have the baby that day! My husband and I prayed, and Jesus told us to use the keys and call on their power, for nothing is impossible with them.

My friend Sara, whom I had asked to be my coach, met us at the hospital about 1:45 p.m. As soon as the staff heard I had a foreign husband, they asked if I was a "Family girl." When I said yes, they told us that they love

missionaries, and were so happy to have another “Family birth” in their hospital. This really got me desperate, as I didn’t want to be a bad testimony!

When our doctor checked the baby’s heartbeat, he said that he was sorry, but it looked like I needed another cesarean, because the baby’s heartbeat got really weak during contractions. Now in the midst of major contractions, I became so disheartened that I just said: “Okay, let’s just have it quick and get it over with.” So everyone left the room to prepare for the operation.

Sara looked at me and said, “Don’t believe them!” Then she closed her eyes and started to pray, claiming a natural delivery by the power of the keys. God bless her!

By the time the midwife came back and gave me

the paper to sign for the operation, the contractions were so strong that they all realized there wasn’t enough time for anything else but to coach me through the transition stage. All I could repeat: “I can do all things through Christ!” Then when I had to push and couldn’t speak, Sara and the sweet midwives would say: “Yes, very good! You can do all things through Christ who strengthens you!”

At 3:20 p.m. Arisa was born, a beautiful Virgo girl. She just popped out, in spite of all the impossibilities, to show me that truly all things are possible by the power of the keys. We all praised the Lord, then put on the *Fear Not* tape, dimmed the light in the room, and got to witness more to the midwives. They were so precious and shared with us some of the testimonies

that they have seen at Family babies’ births.

It really is incredible how other people see us! I felt like such a failure, having so little faith, yet the Lord made it a testimony in spite of my lacks. All glory goes to the Lord! I’m very thankful that He let me experience such a wonderful thing; I felt so unworthy of such great love.

I hope this is an encouragement for those who feel that they don’t have enough faith, or that they don’t deserve the Lord’s goodness—all those things the Devil loves to flood our mind with before and during labor. God bless you all with healthy, happy babies, and if He happens to allow you to have a cesarean birth, all I can say is that He knows what we need. Whatever He does, He always does everything in love.

HAVE **Baby, Will Travel**

FROM HANNAH, INDIA

My husband and I have just had our seventh child, and each one has been a miracle and testimony. Our first son,

Titus, was born in Lahore, Pakistan. Just prior to this we had to leave our field of India when I was seven months pregnant due to the “emergency” put out by

Indira Gandhi in 1975. At the time I had never heard of an abnormal delivery in the Family, only wonderful testimonies of beautiful, short, miraculous births.

One of the reasons I wanted to write this testimony is to encourage anyone who may have also had to seek medical help; sometimes that's how the Lord does it, and we shouldn't feel condemned. On the contrary, we should thank the Lord for it, and of course, still put our faith in the Lord and trust Him for the outcome. I guess this is the other side of the coin to all the testimonies of quick, easy labor and deliveries. For some of us it just ain't necessarily so, but the *Lord* has to do it nevertheless.

I was preparing for a home delivery by a Pakistani midwife, and the pregnancy was progressing smoothly. Then a few days before the due date I woke in the middle of the night to a gush of fluid which I thought was my water bag, but when we turned on the light, to our dismay we found it was blood! Having had two years of nursing training prior to joining the Family, I knew right away what it was: a condition called "placenta previa," where the placenta is implanted over the opening of the cervix. When the baby's head comes down in preparation for the birth, the placenta begins to tear away and causes bleeding.

I knew this meant I would have to have a cesarean, as it is usually impossible to deliver the baby normally, unless the placenta is only slightly covering the cervix. So I lay down and we called the midwife and she said just one word: "Hospital." Lord help us, we hadn't even investigated the hospitals there, as we were so confident of having a normal home delivery. They took us to a hospital, and by a miracle the leading gynecologist of Pakistan was there. He told us I would have to have an emergency cesarean. My poor husband (Asher, now Philip) was down on his face in desperation, not knowing whether the baby or I would be all right, or if I would be able to have more children afterwards. He cracked open his Bible and got the verse Titus 3:14: "And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful." So that's how we named the baby Titus.

After the birth we suffered great condemnation, wondering why the Lord had allowed this to happen to us. The hospital's hygiene standard was also very poor, and no one spoke

English except the head nurses and doctors, who were rarely seen. Well, the whole experience certainly made us trust the Lord, as at the height of my trial the Lord showed me that it had to be Him, and that He was doing it. I just had to trust that everything was going to turn out all right—and it did. Thank the Lord!

Well, our testimony surely encouraged others over the years, especially as we were shepherds and I'm sure they felt that if that had happened to me, I could understand their position better. (I think this was the main point the Lord was trying to get through to me on: having more compassion and understanding for others.)

Titus was healthy and strong and a real pioneer baby; he went with us into India again, then back overland through Pakistan and Afghanistan to Iran, while I was pregnant with our next child, Laura. Again the pregnancy was very good, but the test of faith came when I had to decide whether I would have another cesarean or a normal delivery. I felt the Lord wanted me to have a normal delivery unless there were complications again, and He gave me a very

encouraging verse—Luke 1:45. So I held out until I found a British doctor who was willing to let me try.

Well, I went into labor and it was back labor!—Quite uncomfortable, and only occurring at night. This labor went on for three consecutive nights, but went away almost entirely in the day. I was too excited to rest much in the day, so by the third night I was exhausted. That morning the water bag broke and the contractions came much stronger, so we went to the hospital. (I didn't want to go earlier as I was concerned they would rush the delivery.) By the time I was fully dilated, I didn't have the strength to push the baby out, and the doctor was becoming concerned at the baby being in the birth canal for so long, so we consented to a forceps delivery. But she came through the birth canal, and I was very happy that the Lord did it and she was healthy and well.

Our next four babies

were all miraculously normal deliveries, but with each one I had some sort of test of faith. I became pregnant with our next son Christopher in Iran, and at two months I was exposed to German measles. We were very concerned about this, and the doctors there said the only recourse was to abort the baby or risk having a deformed child. We really prayed and the Lord gave me some precious promises, including Deuteronomy 7: 12–15: “He will also bless the fruit of thy womb ... there shall not be male nor female barren among you ... and the Lord will take away from thee all sickness.”

How I hung on to those promises! We knew the Lord had to do it, though I did get attacked with doubts during the pregnancy. When I was seven months PG the revolution broke out in Iran and we had to flee to Kuwait, so Christopher was born there. At his birth my faith was tested

once again, as we had thought that Asher could attend the delivery, but then found he couldn't. So I again found myself alone with people who couldn't speak English and no one to help me. But I felt the presence of the Lord and his angels so strong; I could even hear them singing to me. The Lord kept encouraging me with beautiful Scriptures throughout the labor and delivery. It was a beautiful natural delivery with no problems!

My next pregnancy with Catherine, our fourth, was in Greece and my test of faith came at the due date when the baby didn't come! I checked my dates and realized I was a week off. So I waited, but still no baby and she didn't come until two weeks later. By that time my doctor was getting alarmed and wanted to induce labor. He gave me until a certain day to go into labor. Sure enough, on that day I went into labor, and she was fine.

For the birth of our next son, Nicolas, the Lord had us travel all the way from Amsterdam to Sri Lanka when I was eight months PG. It was a time when Dad was encouraging us to go south ('81), so we sold our

Promise:

“All things are made perfect in the power of the keys. The keys will form the babe in your womb; the keys will deliver this child into the world.”

caravan and set out by faith. The Lord really kept me, and provided a new Home and everything we needed on our new field before the baby was born. It was also a beautiful natural delivery, TTL!

Our next child, Rose, was born during the Sri Lankan revolution in the hills of Sri Lanka. We were staying on a farm and were far from any hospital, so the Lord gave me the faith to have her at home. I must say it was by far my most beautiful and relaxed delivery! We were able to find a sweet midwife and doctor who came over. (Because my first child was delivered by cesarean, I normally always went to a hospital in case there were any complications, but the Lord had to do the miracle in this case as there was virtually nothing we could do.—We were hours away from any hospital, and there was political trouble and violence all around!)

Our seventh child, Elaina Miracle, actually started out with a pregnancy I had in between. In 1984 I became pregnant, but miscarried at four months. It was quite shattering for me, as it was very sudden with no warning. The Lord had already

showed us that it would be a girl and that her name would be Miracle. After I miscarried, a sweet brother was reading to me from the *MOP* section “Comfort,” and one quote stood out to us: “The child is happier now. Infinite love has called the child ... you shall have [her] again.”

That helped give me the victory, and it was one of many promises to come that we would have another child. Soon after that I had a breakthrough in my life, and the Lord showed me to change my name to Hannah (from Lydia). Then while reading the story of Hannah in the Bible, she prays a prayer after she had Samuel and it says, “the barren hath born seven.” I took that as a promise from the Lord that I would have at least one more child.

After this experience, for some months I had bleeding off and on; I was a little concerned, so I went to the doctor. She said that I might have to have a D&C, possibly I had a “hormonal imbalance,” and she wanted to give me hormones. This really got me desperate and when I searched my heart, the Lord showed me that deep down I was a little

relieved I had had the miscarriage in order to have a break in between babies. I believe the Lord was displeased with my attitude. So I confessed it to the Home and asked for prayer and laying on of hands for healing, and right after that I had a perfectly normal period, then I got pregnant the following month! It certainly made me much more appreciative of the Lord’s precious gift, and showed me that it all had to be Him.

This pregnancy also was very healthy, with no problems. Then two weeks before the due date, my water bag broke! Being this early was a first for me, and I didn’t quite know what to do, so I just waited as it was at night. I had a few contractions in the night, but they stopped in the morning. I walked around quite a bit but nothing happened, so that afternoon we decided to go to the hospital. Before leaving for the hospital we prayed and received some beautiful and encouraging verses.

I should explain here that I had been through some recent lessons about mercy and compassion for others, and the Lord had spoken to me from the Letter “These All Died

in Faith,” which I had studied over and over and found so many needed lessons in. Of course I really prayed that the Lord would not have me go through such an ordeal to teach me that lesson, and I had prayed for and expected an easy, normal delivery. So when they examined me on arriving at the hospital, I was very surprised to find that I had started bleeding!

They were very concerned about it and suggested I go on a hormone drip, as the baby was in danger due to the water bag having drained, and they wanted to carefully watch the bleeding. We asked if we could wait a little longer; in the meantime they called another consultant who examined me again. This time I started bleeding heavier, and she said it was “placenta previa” again, and that I would need another cesarean.

We were shocked, as we had had no indication up to that time that anything was wrong. Of course we were disappointed, but we realized of course that whatever was best for the baby should be done. Now it was an emergency, as the water bag was

gone and the placenta was tearing away, so the baby was in danger. They rushed me in for the operation.

I felt filled with His beautiful promises of protection and deliverance, and claimed that everything would go well. As I went in I put myself completely at the mercy of the Lord; I didn’t feel I was putting myself in the doctor’s hands at all, but in *His* hands, and that He had to do it as He had promised.—And the Lord did it. Little Elaina Miracle soon came into the world, and all the staff said it was really “lucky” that she was okay. All glory to our precious Husband!

One of the reasons I wanted to write this testimony is to encourage anyone who may have also had to seek medical help;

sometimes that’s how the Lord does it, and we shouldn’t feel condemned. On the contrary, we should thank the Lord for it, and of course still put our faith in the Lord and trust Him for the outcome. I guess this is the other side of the coin to all the testimonies of quick, easy labor and deliveries. For some of us it just ain’t necessarily so, but the *Lord* has to do it nevertheless.

LNf: Since writing this testimony I have had four other natural deliveries, so we have a total of 11 children. The first and the seventh were cesareans. My labors are always very slow and long (one or two days from start to finish) but I believe the Lord has it that way because of the first cesarean, so the scar is not put under too much strain.

C-SECTION OR NOT, FOLLOW **My Lead**

JESUS SPEAKING:

While C-sections are often performed for legitimate emergencies, in many countries they’re becoming commonplace for even minor complications—failure for the labor to

progress, or maybe even because the doctor wants the birth to hurry up and happen, in order to fit into his timetable. C-sections are becoming more popular, even in situations where they’re not absolutely necessary. That’s why there

has been a sharp increase in the percentage of C-sections in recent years.

In some situations C-sections are necessary, and I use this surgery at times to My glory—to get a woman and her baby safely out of a truly dangerous and life-threatening situation. But at other times they’re not necessary, and only being performed because the doctor wills it. That’s why you have to be very prayerful and open to My leading, knowing for sure what My will is. The decision of whether or not to have a C-section could be a life-and-death decision, and should never be made lightly or without My consultation.

Having natural deliveries after a C-section is very possible and safe if the conditions are right. If you have been in good health since your C-section and haven’t experienced complications, if your body is physically capable of

delivering vaginally, and if you have had a healthy pregnancy and your labor progresses normally, there shouldn’t be any problems. Of course, the most important thing is to ask Me how I want you to deliver your baby, because I am the only One Who knows all of the unseen factors. I can tell you clearly which way is safest for you to deliver your baby, if you ask Me.

There are things you can do to increase your chances of being able to have a natural birth after a C-section. For example, asking the doctor to give you a horizontal incision instead of a vertical one, finding a doctor who is willing to allow you to try for a natural delivery; exercising, eating well and keeping healthy during pregnancy (as well as before you ever get pregnant); and availing yourself of united prayer and claiming the power

of the keys. It is slightly more risky to deliver naturally after a C-section, but nothing is impossible to Me. Even those in the world who don’t know Me deliver vaginally after C-sections, so with My power the odds in your favor are even greater.

It’s important to hear specifically from Me about where to have your baby. A well-equipped hospital or clinic is best, in the event you would need the expertise of the doctors in case of an emergency. Having a doctor who has experience with VBAC births is also a plus—his experience will give him more faith, patience, and respect for your wishes.

Put Me on the spot, claim what you desire in full faith, and I will supply everything that you need. But in the end, remember that I am in control. The outcome is in My hands, so just trust Me. *(End of message from Jesus.)*

MORE On Multiple C-sections

Q: Could we have more input about C-section births? I have already had three C-sections in the past, and am now

pregnant again. We prayed for the Lord’s permission to have this child, with the danger involved in mind, and He immediately answered our prayer within just

one week. Our last child just turned two. The last time we went in for a checkup, the first thing they asked me was whether I wanted to abort it; they looked

at me as though I was weird. During my last delivery they even forcefully suggested tying my tubes. I know I need to soak in prayer and the Word for greater faith; I am holding the Lord's Word and promises very closely and dearly.

I just want to be well informed in this subject so that I will know how to handle each situation that comes up during the course of the whole pregnancy. And I appreciate any information available from you, our loved ones out there.

—*Mick and Filly, China*

A

(*Jesus speaking:*) In the natural, there are

dangers to multiple C-sections. Each time you deliver a baby by C-section, your uterus gets just a little bit weaker. It's very different than having a baby naturally, because the uterus is cut open; it's a muscle, and it gets weaker each time it is cut.

Of course, there are many factors involved in determining how strong your uterus is—for example, which type of

incisions you've incurred, how meticulous and thorough the doctors were in stitching you up after surgery, whether or not you experienced complications during pregnancy or after delivery, your natural physical strength, as well as the length of time between pregnancies.

To say that it is safe to have X number of C-sections is a wrong statement. Or to say that to have X number of C-sections is dangerous and will kill you is also wrong. Each woman's body is different, what each woman can handle is different, and the physical contributing factors all play a part. Again, it comes down to seeking Me, hearing from Me, having faith in your heart and not relying on the faith of others—and likewise, not being dissuaded by the fears of others. "Hast thou faith? Have it thyself before God."

Yes, there are dangers to multiple C-sections, but don't forget My power and My protection in the equation. If it is My will for you to have another baby, and there is no other way than to have another C-section, then you'll have to

trust Me to bring you through—to keep you and your baby safe. If you have My Words and promises to stand on, then you won't be swayed by the fears of the doctors or their horror stories. You have to have faith; no one else can have faith for you.

I am in control, and I know what's best for you and what your body can handle. I can protect women through multiple C-sections.—I have done so in the past, and I will yet do more such miracles. But some women are weaker physically and some circumstances make multiple C-sections more risky, so My will for each one is different. Only I know what's best. If multiple C-sections are My will for you, I will protect and keep you no matter what the doctors say—but, you'd better be sure of My will and clearly hear from Me to receive My plan for you personally. It can be a matter of life and death *not* to have a C-section, so you've got to be very prayerful.

You need faith, you need to be able to stand on My promises—that's the criteria. (*End of message from Jesus.*)

MY Ten Miraculous C-sections

FROM JOY (OF MICHAEL), DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Many people have told me I should write a testimony about my C-sections, as many have been so “impressed” with my “faith.” I always thought that was funny, because for me it was so much more impressive to observe the Lord at work in the natural births that I had the blessing and privilege to see, including my grandchildren’s births with my daughters, Lisa and Carmel.

That is not to minimize the miracles of birth of any of my wonderful children, either. I know that the fact that the Lord made each of my C-section births so smooth and easy is remarkable, as our wonderful Jesus had control of each situation.

I had my first cesarean in Ecuador in 1974. She was my first baby, and I was totally unprepared for the long and difficult labor, and the eventual C-section birth. Back then all I had ever read were miraculous testimonies of natural childbirth, and I was pretty self-righteous. I was ashamed to not have

such a glorious testimony of a “last-minute natural birth.” I felt I had somehow failed and was a little saddened that it wasn’t a big testimony of faith. It’s sad that I was so proud and let the circumstances dampen my joy for a bit, because the miracle is that in spite of complications and danger for myself and the baby, the Lord gave the doctors the wisdom to take action in time and deliver my firstborn safely. My recovery was quick and relatively easy, and the hospital and doctors were very helpful.

My second child came a couple years later in Puerto Rico, and after having prepared for a natural delivery and found a doctor who agreed to it, I was once again disappointed that it just didn’t happen as we had hoped and planned, and ended up having a second C-section.

After two C-sections I knew it would be very difficult to find a doctor who would consider risking a natural birth, due to the danger of the uterus rupturing. The Lord in His wisdom spoke to me during

this second pregnancy and gave me the verse, “He hath strengthened the bars of thy gates; He hath blessed thy children within thee” (Ps.147:13).

The medical profession always made a big deal of the dangers of repeat cesarean deliveries, and rebuked me greatly after my fourth. In some countries they compel you to tie your tubes after the third. I wasn’t the least bit worried about it, though, as the Lord gave me the faith for each and every one.

The Lord’s promise was ever present to me through each of my ten pregnancies. He kept His Word.—And not only that, but this promise shot holes in any fears or worries of complications, etc. In short, He gave me the faith.

The Lord faithfully healed me up after each birth so quickly, too. Many times I wondered why I couldn’t have the blessing of natural births. I asked the Lord a few times and finally had a real peace about it—that *how* the baby is born is not the most important thing. Whether I am a shining example

Pregnancy and Childbirth

of miraculous faith wasn't it either. What was most important was safely bringing a healthy baby into the world and knowing that the Lord had sent my child and delivered it.—Even though it was through the assistance of doctors, whom He also supplied. Having a baby is a time when the Lord works in our lives in so many ways. If He knew it was better for me to have my babies this way because it humbled me and made me more dependent on Him and others, then it was worth it.

I later learned from my mother that my grandmother, who had exactly the same build as me, almost died in childbirth several times and had horrendous births, supposedly due to her bone structure and physical makeup. I realized that due to physical reasons, maybe the Lord in His love and mercy spared me painful and agonizing births by events working out as they did. I had always said since I was very young that I wanted ten kids. The Lord took me at my word and delivered them to me. He did it all.

Finding doctors to deliver so many C-sections was quite a test, at times, but though it really got us desperate, He always came through at the right time. When I was pregnant with my eighth child I had a list of doctors to ask to donate the birth at a particular hospital. I had gone through the list, and one doctor told me I must be crazy to have that many C-sections, and that no one would touch me with a ten-foot pole!

I went to the office of the last doctor, and couldn't hold back the tears when the nurse said I couldn't see him that day. When she saw me crying she encouraged me, saying, "He is really nice—just come back tomorrow morning. I'm sure he will help you with whatever your problem is." God bless her; that encouraged my faith. The next day Jasper and I went to see the doctor. Jasper told him, "We have been praying for a special doctor for this situation. We know God will touch someone's heart." He smiled and shook my hand and said, "Welcome to my practice!" This sweet doctor, Cedric, ended up delivering my next

three children, as well as several other Family babies there in Puerto Rico, and is still a precious friend who helps whenever needed. God bless him!

Even on the poor field of the Dominican Republic where I had three of my boys, each time the Lord led me to a good doctor and hospital who donated most everything. I never once paid for the anesthesiologist or pediatrician, and very minimal amounts for the hospitals when we did have to pay.

So if you have to have a cesarean birth, don't worry. Just trust our great and wonderful Husband. Bathe every single aspect in prayer, from beginning to end. Pray with the doctors, anesthesiologist, etc., and be thankful. The recuperation period is a little painful for a couple days and may be a little more drawn out, but it is bearable and certainly worth it "for joy that a man (or woman) is born into the world" (John.16:21).

All glory to Jesus; He knows best. "Who hath delivered, Who doth deliver and Who will yet deliver" (2Cor.1:10).

Cover photo: Lily Fighter (SGA), Nepal.

Note: All Family members in China use pen names for their contributions to *Eve*.
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