

# Family Notes



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A Family Newsletter

for the Cottonwood Seventh-day Adventist Church

"for All who have relationships to improve"

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***In this issue: "The Apostle Paul's Burning Coals"***



## ***Editor's Notes***

***Dear Friends in our Church,***

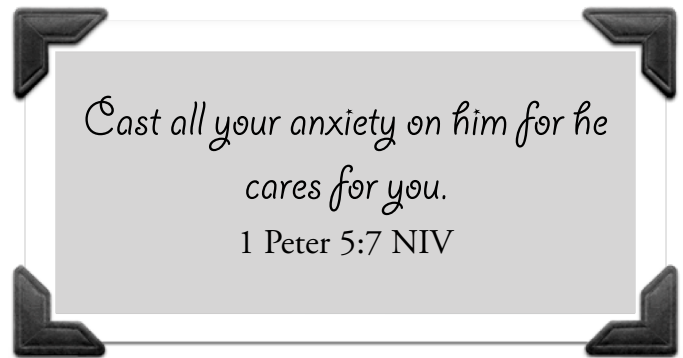
Since our last issue our church has had to close down again because of COVID19. My heart aches with the sadness of those who have lost loved ones, and having been there ourselves, we sympathize with the feeling of chaos in illness & recovery. Others are even struggling with feeling abandoned by their church - at home alone. Please know that we are praying for every one of you, no matter what your needs, be they physical, emotional, or spiritual! God - the ultimate caregiver - is there to hug you, hold you close, and fill you with His love. Keep leaning on Him, and *soon we will be together again!*

Our subject matter in this issue is a continuation of last time when we talked about recognizing the value in each other, and the importance of voicing that appreciation to each other. I hope you did the exercise - and are keeping it up on at least a weekly basis! (And if you are clueless as to what I mean - contact me for a copy of the previous newsletter!)

Let's move on in our adventure to improve our homes, our relationships with friends and co-workers, and our relationships with people at church!

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## ***Paul's Burning Coals***

Last time we looked at how important it is to focus on the good things in each other, and to say to each other encouraging words of appreciation and thankfulness.

Instead of those types of kind, loving words, too often families (and churches!) today use words more like weapons that hurt. We manipulate each other through silence, or through condemning words, and in the home, sexual disfavor. But the apostle Paul suggests that there are more empowering weapons in our arsenal from which we can choose, and as you read these, apply each phrase to your ***own life*** both at home with spouse, children, and extended family, and also with our church family, even reaching out on the phone to some of these people! Paul encourages us with these words —

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## Paul's Burning Coals...

Continued

"Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.

Live in harmony with one another. ... Do not repay anyone evil for evil. .... If it is possible, *as far as it depends on you*, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. On the contrary:

"If your enemy is hungry, feed him;

if he is thirsty, give him something to drink.

In doing this, you will heap *burning coals* on his head."

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." selected parts of Romans 12:14-21 NIV

I said this last time - but it is worth repeating - this is not easy! Kind, careful, loving words are hard work, but they are worth it.

But what are these "burning coals?" Paul is quoting from Pro 25:21,22. The SDA Bible Commentary spells it out:

"Kindness is the best vengeance that a Christian can take against an enemy. That heaping coals of fire

Many long intensely for friendly sympathy.... We should be self-forgetful, ever looking out for opportunities, even in little things, to show gratitude for the favors we have received of others, and watching for opportunities to cheer others and lighten and relieve their sorrows and burdens by acts of tender kindness and little deeds of love.

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on an opponent's head must mean an act of love rather than of malice is clearly indicated by both the OT and NT contexts. The passage in Prov. 25:22 closes with these words, not quoted here by Paul, "and the Lord shall reward thee," namely, for the good deeds done to your enemy. Similarly in the present context, the general meaning is summed up in the words, "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" SDABC6 p.625

I remember a story my Dad used to tell about himself. He was a pretty opinionated person, and when he was a young Pastor, still learning how to do things, he was leading out in building a new school building. As often happens, there came a difference of opinion on how to do something. And one of the leaders of the church kept encouraging a different solution than my Dad's. Faces were turning red before my Dad recognized the signals - and finally the member exploded "Elden! Don't you know there's more than one right way to do a thing!?"

How often we need to remember these simple rules: To listen to others, recognize the value of their opinions, and be kind in all our interactions.



## Looking on the Up Side...

You can implement low-cost ideas to cheer the lives of people in your life: the baby-sitter, the postman, your favorite grocery clerk or carry-out boy [your spouse and children!]....Keep looking for ways to bless others. Compete with yourself to see if you can find more creative ways to live this week than last. Brainstorm blessing projects for next year.



"He who refreshes others will himself be refreshed."  
Pro. 11:25

from "Boomerang Joy" by Barbara Johnson, p.65



## In Coming Issues...

- ★ We'll start a series of newsletters on the subject of communication - why it fails, and how to improve it. - This is something we all can use!