

CATALYST

Towards a Missional Movement

Tasmanian

BAPTISTS



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Living Beyond the Clichés

Jeff McKinnon

Sue and I have been married for over forty years. When we first met in Bathurst NSW, we were about as different as two people could be.

I had just come to faith from a rugby league background and a mostly male family. By contrast, Sue was from a predominantly female home with a strong church connection and had just returned from studying at the Australian Ballet School in Melbourne.

We were about as opposite as one could get. The one thing going for us was our shared intent to follow Jesus – and of course His grace which is always sufficient!

Jesus is described in the Bible as “Christ” or “Messiah”, literally ‘the anointed one’. Jesus is King.

We often miss the context and language of our beloved Christmas stories that emphasise that this baby is a

For Your Diary

- Special Assembly
November 13
3pm at Riverlands
- Mission Summit
Cancelled due to Special Assembly
- Christmas
December 25



new king. Jesus is Messiah over against all the other kings and emperors of this world. His kingdom of justice and peace will never pass away.

And Jesus is also King in my little world... and in Sue's too. Jesus is King of our marriage and family. We live to honour him, serve him and replicate his values – with His help!

The Apostle Paul was, of course, a follower of Jesus too. Along the way he had learnt a valuable lesson in relationships that has also served Sue and I well. In Romans 15:7 Paul advises, "Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you ..."

Notice "Christ" [double quotation mark] (King) here? In fact this is no less than the third verse in succession where Paul emphasises that Jesus is Messiah. Paul places acceptance and healthy relationships firmly in the context of the Kingdom of God.

Now the virtue of acceptance really only kicks in when you engage with someone who is profoundly, deeply different to you. After all, it only takes a smidge of acceptance to get on with your closest friends.

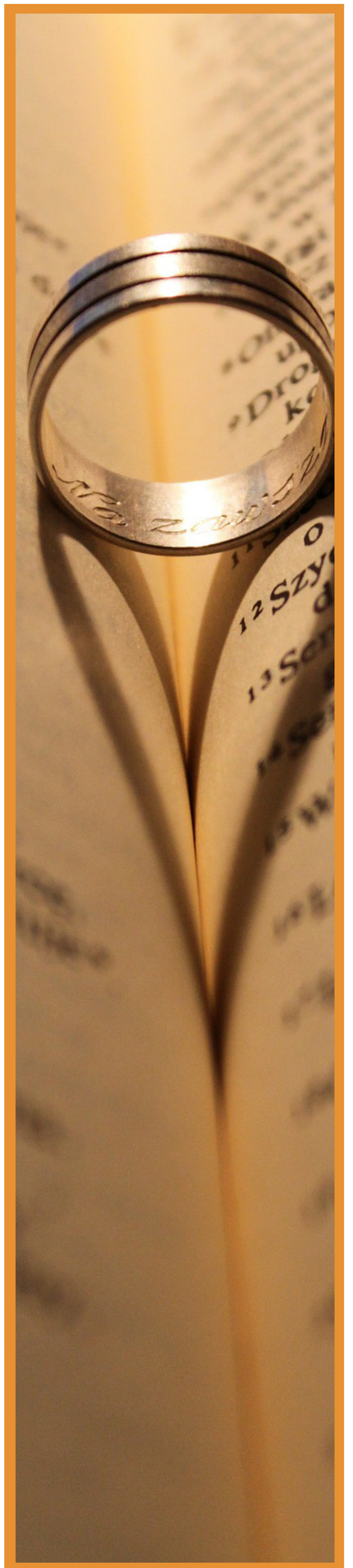
But when somebody habitually acts entirely contrary to your fine way of doing things, whose thought patterns are from an entirely different universe, and who doesn't even like rugby league ... how am I supposed to accept that?!

"Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you ..."

There it is. That is what changes everything. I know what it is to be accepted by Christ. My morals, my behaviours, my relationships were a mess and yet Christ (of all people) accepted me just the way I was.

I grew up in a family where acceptance was thin on the ground; a family where compliments and encouragements were few. With Jesus, for the first time in my life, I felt loved – accepted.

Here is the paradox I have learnt. Jesus accepted me – and my life changed! The quickest way to change someone is not to criticise but to accept as Christ has



accepted you!

Our marriage has been a long journey in learning acceptance and understanding - both ways. We certainly aren't perfect at it. But we sure are much better than when we started out.

What a privilege to have Jesus' revolutionary love in both our lives!

Not Perfect, But it's Fine

Renata Carmichael

This month Christians around Australia have been fasting and praying for marriage and families. If you follow what Tasmanian Baptists do on Facebook, you will have seen that we have been sharing articles focusing on this subject this month as well. Throughout October, I have been looking to try and find an article which says something I think is very important. I still haven't found it, so I'll have to write one myself.

To all you married couples in the church leading home groups, mentoring people and generally setting an example for people around you:

You're not perfect and that's fine.

Better than fine, it's a good thing. Because the media doesn't show us an accurate depiction of love and marriage. Most of what we see is the extremes. There's the classic love story where two people fall hopelessly in love, have a nice wedding, and then live happily ever after. Then there's completely dysfunctional couples, screaming and fighting and tearing each other down. Fairy-tale perfection and dystopian chaos get people's attention so those are the stories the media focuses on.

Of course, we know the stories sold to us on TV aren't real life. That's why there are advice articles in magazines and on the internet. Advice columns that say if you aren't perfectly happy in a relationship then you should leave because obviously you are with the wrong person because relationships aren't supposed



to be hard. Articles which say relationships are hard work and focus only on that because if you wanted two words to describe relationships, those words would be “hard” and “work”.

But then there’s you. The married people we know, who we respect and look up too. The people who seem to have life figured out and have it all together. And then you tell us about the embarrassingly recent time you had a fight which ended up with one of you getting out of the car and walking home, and was so stupid you can’t even remember what you were arguing about. And that is beautiful, because it shows us the reality of two imperfect people walking through life together and enjoying it. By choosing not to present a perfect appearance in front of other people, you demonstrate what grace can be, namely that there is room to make mistakes and to recover from them.

What you’re doing, sharing your life honestly with people, is valuable and encouraging. What you’re doing can give hope to people who see unrealistic expectations and need to know that it is normal to not have a movie-worthy relationship all the time. You’re demonstrating that having an argument or two is not the end of the world, and that while it does take some work marriage is a whole lot more than that. In a world full of bad influences and unrealistic expectations, it is important for people to see examples of healthy, good-but-not-perfect marriages around them.

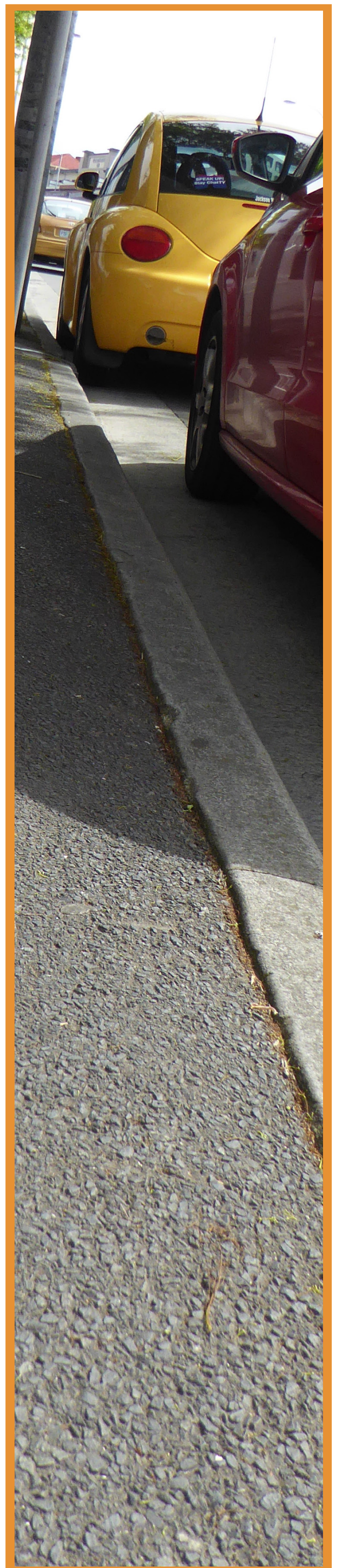
Thank you for being comfortable enough to be yourselves and set this example.

Casual Discipleship

Paul Stevenson

There are so many discipleship programs available today. And most of them contain very valuable material, but is the concept of a discipleship program for all Christians Biblical?

In Deuteronomy 6 we read:



“These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the door frames of your houses and on your gates.”

In Old Testament times Israel’s children were to be taught the laws of God ‘casually’. Not in formal classes or lessons, but as they sat at home with their parents, when they went to bed, when they rose again in the morning. They could always overhear their parents’ conversations, and learn as they lived their everyday lives. These laws were always ‘visible’ -- tied on the forehead, written on the door frames and gates. Wherever the children went, whatever they did, there were opportunities to learn and talk about God and his laws.

If they were helping dad look after the sheep, they might have the opportunity to talk about how God is a Shepherd over all of Israel. When they helped mum cook the bread, they could talk about Elijah and the Widow’s bowl of flour which was never used up. As opportunities came along, the parents were supposed to use that opportunity to teach their children about God and his ways.

In the same way, in New Testament times -- Jesus used the same technique to train his disciples. As far as we know he didn’t run a twenty-six week Wednesday evening study group. He basically lived his life with them, and in front of them, for a few years and used every opportunity available to teach them more.



New Christians are Spiritual children. The best way for them to learn about God is to 'hang out' with older mature Christians who are always talking about God's character and his works, and how they relate to us in our walk with each other and with him. While the new Christian helps you shop for the food for dinner, you could talk about Spiritual fruit. If they are around for afternoon coffee and share something about a good looking student at their school, there is an opportunity to talk about God's principles for relationships. And not just an opportunity, but one which is immediately relevant to them because of their current life situation. No need to wait for week seven of the 'Studies for Christian Disciples' before you can talk about it.

The best learning is learning which is relevant to the students' needs. Sometimes these needs are obvious, but usually you have to really get to know a person before their needs become apparent. Growing a deep relationship in 1-2 hours, one night a week, with fleeting greetings on Sundays is extremely difficult. But growing a deep relationship with someone you hang out with all the time is almost unavoidable.

Learning about fasting because it is now week 13 of 'The Study' could well be a waste of time. But learning about fasting because they have just read Matthew 6 and the Spirit is prompting their hearts could lead to deep life changes.

By all means we (mature Christians) should have a plan of what we want to impart to our disciples, but the issue is really when and how we impart it. When is simply as the need related opportunity arises. How is by developing a deep relationship as a foundation for effective teaching. Of course a lot of what we want to teach will be simply caught by



them as they live with us. (We probably won't have to teach them much about how to pray because they will pray with us so often). But of course this also means we have to know our stuff. We might not get three weeks notice for a study on Spiritual Warfare. It might rise out of a sudden crisis in the life of a disciple. We might need to say, "Come around again tomorrow night and we'll study it together", but we need to know at least the basics now, and we certainly can't ask for two weeks to prepare, by then the warfare might be over, and the disciple may have already fallen.

Like Jesus — having disciples will cost you a lot more than just an hour a week on Wednesday night. At times it may well be inconvenient, but the next generation of the church needs our attention now more than ever. The world is becoming an increasingly busy place, and this style of discipleship might not suit your lifestyle. You might not have time to spend together with them 'doing nothing', and just building relationships. But what is more important? Your lifestyle or the next generation of Christian leaders?

Having weekly studies may well be part of discipleship, but if you are a mature Christian, then sharing your life with your disciples will transform your discipleship (and their spiritual growth) to a whole new level.

Share your life with your disciples. Share your music, your books, your secrets, your self. Build a deep relationship with them and teach them at every opportunity in a relevant and empowering way.

Editor's note: Yes, we have previously published this article [here](#). It seemed important to draw your attention to it again.

