

# reach

Spring Edition | Issue • 8

**For as the heavens are higher than the earth,  
so are my ways higher than your ways and my  
thoughts than your thoughts (Isaiah 55:9)**





## Reach Community Church

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## CHURCH SERVICE

**Celebration Service • Sunday | 10am - 12pm**

*Chinese Service runs concurrently with the English Service in a separate room*

**REACH Kids • Sunday | 11am - 12pm**

## MONTHLY MINISTRY & PRAYER

**First Friday Of The Month • 7.30pm - 9.30pm**

## BIBLE STUDY

**Young Adults • Wednesday | 7.30pm - 9.30pm**

**University & Youth Groups • Friday | 7.30pm - 9.30pm**

**Family • Monday | 7.30pm - 9.30pm**

**Friday | 7.30pm - 9.30pm**

## OTHER ACTIVITIES

**Praise Dance • Thursday | 10am - 12pm**

**MOPS (Mothers of Pre-schoolers) • Every 2nd & 4th Friday  
| 10am - 12pm**

**Ladies' Meeting • Quarterly**

**Men's Breakfast • Quarterly**

## Welcome

to the eighth issue of Reach Community Church newsletter. Are you ready for a spring cleaning? How do you hear God's voice? How do you practise self-control? Find the answers in this issue of REACH, plus a testimony from trials to triumphs, the story of D.L. Moody, a book review and recipe.



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# Spring Cleaning

By Joanne Huynh

Spring is in the air! It is a great time to clean and declutter the areas in your home which need attention. There is much satisfaction to be found in culling pantry items past their use by dates, cleaning cupboards, dusting dusty corners or simplifying your wardrobe. The thought of decluttering may seem like a mammoth task. However, stick to some basic steps and you'll be able to complete your task with ease.

## 1) Be realistic

Choose an area of your home to begin tidying. The idea is to choose a section where completion of the task should only take 1-2 hours. That way you won't feel like you've spent half your day decluttering but completion still seems a long way away.

## 2) Remove everything

Remove everything from your selected space and separate items into categories. For example, if you have chosen the linen cupboard, separate the towels, pillowcases, doona covers and sheets into different piles. This will give you a visual on what you own.

## 3) Donate, recycle or throw

Sort within each category for items you can donate, recycle (many charities such as Planet Ark repurpose clothing/sheets/towels into industrial rags or weed matting), or throw away.

## 4) Clean

Give your now empty storage space a clean to remove accumulated dust.

## 5) Return to space

By now, you should have less to return to your storage space. Items requiring folding should be done in a uniform manner. There are many methods of

tidying, such as the KonMari method (coined by tidying guru Marie Kondo). A quick search on the internet might help you find inspiration for creative methods.

## 6) Repurpose

Reuse storage boxes which are too nice to throw out – such as gift boxes or baskets. Rectangular baskets, jewellery boxes and phone/tablet boxes are the most useful. These can be easily arranged in a drawer or shelf.

## 7) Tidy the space

Arrange all items back into the space. You should now have a more streamlined, neater and tidier space. Congratulations on your achievement so far! You have created a space which you love. You will be able to find things easily, saving you time rummaging for that much needed item. Whenever you look at this space, it will be an inspiration for you, for completing a task you previously thought was too daunting.

## 8) Everything in its place and a place for everything!

Return items to their original place after each use, a simple rule to reduce the need of re-tidying or looking for that lost item!



Storage boxes  
(image credit: @ viesimplepy)



Kids' t-shirt drawer  
(image credit: @ mariekondo)

# “My sheep hear my voice!”

**“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.” (John 10:27)**

Hearing God’s voice is a common discussion among Christians. Does God still communicate to His people today? If so, how does He do it? What does it mean to hear God’s voice? How can we be sure that it is from God?

John 10:27 tells us that hearing God’s voice is not a mysterious abstruse subject, to be exercised only by the handful, but **all should hear, and all should follow**. A famous Christian writer, A.W. Tozer once wrote, “Our eternal welfare depends upon our hearing<sup>1</sup>”. This is not to say that it is always easy to hear and to follow God’s voice. When God first called Samuel, Samuel did not recognise God’s voice (see 1 Samuel 3:1-10). When God first called Moses, Moses did not want to obey, “Oh, my Lord, please send someone else” (see Exodus 4).

It is paramount to understand that God is not constrained by our limited minds, He can speak to us in numerous ways. God works in each individual in a unique way. This article focuses on 4 steps in hearing God’s voice:

1. Preparing our hearts to hear from God.
2. God’s methods of communication.
3. Confirming the word of God.
4. Obeying God’s voice.

## Preparing our hearts to hear from God

A.W. Tozer expressed succinctly, “God will speak to the hearts of those who prepare

themselves to hear; and conversely, those who do not so prepare themselves will hear nothing even though the Word of God is falling upon their outer ears every Sunday<sup>2</sup>”. How do we prepare our hearts?

**Guard your steps** when you go to the house of God. **To draw near** to listen is better than to offer the sacrifice of fools, for they do not know that they are doing evil. **Be not rash with your mouth, nor let your heart be hasty** to utter a word before God, for God is in heaven and **you are on earth**. Therefore **let your words be few** (Ecclesiastes 5:1-2, emphasis added).

First of all, we need to guard our steps. In King James Version, this is translated as “keep thy foot”; in another word, keeping our feet from going the wrong way, keeping ourselves pure, and resisting to sin deliberately.

*Mark out a straight path for your feet; stay on the safe path. Don’t get sidetracked; keep your feet from following evil. (Proverbs 4:26-27, NLT)*

It also means to have a deep reverence for God and His holiness, a command given to both Moses and Joshua in the Bible.

*Then he said, “Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.” (Exodus 3:5)*

<sup>1</sup> In “The Pursuit of God”, by A.W. Tozer

<sup>2</sup> In “The Root of Righteousness”, by A.W. Tozer

## Reach Message

*And the commander of the Lord's army said to Joshua, "Take off your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so. (Joshua 5:15)*

Keeping ourselves pure allows us to draw near to God to listen. Sin compels us to hide from God, like Adam and Eve when they sinned against God.

*But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." (Genesis 3:9-10)*

To draw near to listen also means to make a conscious decision to obey when we hear from God. Hardened hearts prevent us from hearing: *"His ears are open, but he does not hear" (Isaiah 42:20b)*. God knows our hearts, He does not reveal His plan to us when He knows that we are not ready to obey. On the other hand, as we obey in faith, He will reveal more to us.

In addition, we need to be still and not to be rash with our mouth. *"Be still, and know that I am God" (Psalms 46:10a)*. Be still to listen rather than bombarding God with our requests. Communication with God should be two ways. When it is time to listen, we are to listen with an open mind, which enables us to understand God's heart, and help us not be hasty with our own hearts.

*My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. (Psalms 73:26)*

Finally, we are to approach God in humility, for God is in heaven and we are on earth.

*For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:9)*

## God's methods of communication

### The Bible

There are many commands in the Bible which are still relevant to us today. In addition, God speaks to us through the lives of many Biblical characters. The numerous encounters between Jesus and people with diverse backgrounds often resonate with our own circumstances, and may speak specifically into our lives. In fact, when we dig deeply into Scripture, there are countless opportunities to hear from God. However, God's Word is not limited to printed form.

### The Holy Spirit

Before Jesus died, he told His disciples that He will send the Helper, the Holy Spirit, to believers.

*But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. (John 14:26)*

Christians often refer to the "nudging" of the Holy Spirit as our conscience, a small inner voice telling us right from wrong.

*They (the Gentiles) demonstrate that God's law is written in their hearts, for their own conscience and thoughts either accuse them or tell them they are doing right. (Romans 2:15, NLT, parenthesis added)*

# My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.

John 10:27

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Frequently, this small inner voice is in fact the voice of God in our hearts. Brian Pickering, the National Coordinator of the Australian Prayer Network, taught that, "If we're trying to understand what God wants us to do in a certain situation, if we're walking in total obedience to Him..... and we come to God and we ask God a question, and we ask Him for an answer..... If there is no known sin in our life, and we're genuinely seeking the heartbeat of God, usually the first voice we hear is God." This voice however can be drowned by the enemy's voice or our own voice.

## People

God also speaks to us through the sermons preached during church service, through prophecies, prayers, or our conversations with other people.

## Visions

Hearing from God is not restricted to our sense of hearing, God also speaks to us through visions and dreams.

*I will take my stand at my watchpost  
and station myself on the tower, and  
look out to see what he will say to me.*  
(Habakkuk 2:1a, emphasis added)

## Confirming the word of God

When we think that we have heard from God, it should be tested against Scripture. God does not speak contrary to His commands or moral standard as recorded in the Bible. It should also be tested through Godly counsel. "Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counsellors there is safety" (Proverbs 11:14).

A pastor and Christian writer, Mark Virkler emphasised the content, in that when God speaks to us, the content often differs from our own mind, "they will be wiser, more loving and motive-oriented", and often "cause a special reaction within our being (e.g. a sense of excitement, conviction, faith, life, awe and peace)". He concluded that there are three categories of our thoughts:

- 1) spontaneous positive thoughts, which come from the Holy Spirit;
- 2) spontaneous negative thoughts, which come from the demons;
- 3) analytical thoughts, which come from us.

## ● Reach Message

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Brian Pickering concurred, "God will never ask you to do anything that's going to hurt yourself, or hurt anyone else; he won't ask you to do anything that will embarrass you or embarrass someone else; and it won't give you a word of criticism of someone else. The prophetic word of God is to build up, to encourage and to release..... Even a hard word is a liberating word."

### **Obeying God's voice**

Finally, God speaks to us for a purpose. It often requires us to make a decision or take action, which might be outside our

comfort zone. It requires us to trust that God sees circumstances that we do not see.

*But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing. (James 1:22-25)*

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**God still desires to speak to His people today.  
We need to take time to prepare our hearts,  
so we can discern God's voice, through His Word,  
the nudging of the Holy Spirit,  
people around us and visions.**

**When we hear, we are to take the step of faith, and see His word come to pass.**

**In time, and with practice,  
hearing from God will no longer be a mystery.  
And the blessings are ours,  
when we hear and obey God's voice in our life.**

**My sheep hear my voice, and I know them,  
and they follow me.**

**John 10:27**



# UNLOCKING THE BIBLE

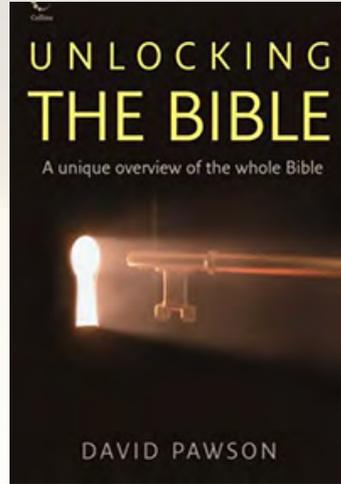
Reviewed by Troy Truong

Casually perusing through a local bookstore one afternoon, I stumbled on this huge book. "Unlocking the Bible" is written by David Pawson, who is widely known as a respected speaker and writer on Christian faith. The book takes you on a grand adventure through every page of Scripture, to give insight, understanding and better appreciation of the history, geography, cultural background and spiritual significance of each book of the Bible, and of the entire bible in its proper context.

On that afternoon, I was completely captured as the book divulged the many secrets within Genesis alone. Reading on, one book to the next, as I peered in depth at the astonishing insights and nuggets of wisdoms found, I was completely enthralled! Each page is an eye-opener, as the author gives clear and concise explanation that would be otherwise missed, if it had not been pointed out.

It is a large book, over 1,300 pages, devoid of pictures, other than the odd diagrams to drive home the point. Its format is systematic, carefully structured, and the author's approach is a conservative, literal interpretation of the Scripture, yet he does not shy away from airing differing viewpoints.

After completing the book in some weeks, I felt very much in awe of God's heart, what He knew and yet endured - men's pride, rebellion and sin since time immemorial. I understood His long-



suffering, enduring patience, and the length He will go into calling us back to Him. It is about His story, in a clearer light.

From an educational level, the book helped me to become more knowledgeable and adept in Scripture; guiding me to gauge deeper and deeper into God's Word. Simply put, scholars go through years of studies to gain these wonderful truths, yet this book will encapsulate and thrill you with its action-packed, delightful and breathtaking round-up of centuries of knowledge and insight, in just a matter of weeks!

Unlocking the Bible will satisfy the appetite of those with an unquenchable thirst to peer further into God's Word; and will reward those who earnestly seek to understand the Bible better! The book is better suited for believers who are more established in the faith.

# Practise Self-Control

“A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls” (Proverbs 25:28). The importance of self-control is greatly emphasised in the Bible. It is one of the fruit of the Spirit: But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law (Galatians 5:22-23). Let’s look at some ways to practise self-control in our daily life.

<b>S</b> ubmit to God	Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (James 4:7)
<b>E</b> xercise patience	Better is the end of a thing than its beginning, and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit. (Ecclesiastes 7:8)
<b>L</b> ove righteousness	And the effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever. (Isaiah 32:17)
<b>F</b> lee from sexual immorality	Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. (1 Corinthians 6:18)
<b>C</b> hoose your speech carefully	Put away from your crooked speech, and put devious talk far from you. (Proverbs 4:24)
<b>O</b> bey God’s Word	They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do. (1 Peter 2:8b)
<b>N</b> ever conform to the wrong crowd	Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. (Romans 12:2)
<b>T</b> hink before you act	Seeing then that these things cannot be denied, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rash. (Acts 19:36)
<b>R</b> efrain from anger	Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath! Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil. (Psalms 37:8)
<b>O</b> vercome procrastination	The hand of the diligent will rule, while the slothful will be put to forced labour. (Proverbs 12:24)
<b>L</b> ive prayerfully	Pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17)

# Godly Character

A good name [earned by honourable behaviour, godly wisdom, moral courage, and personal integrity] is more desirable than great riches. (Proverbs 22:1a, AMP)

A good name is better than precious ointment. (Ecclesiastes 7:1a)

Match each character with its definition, and reflect upon how you can display these characters in your daily life.

## Characters

Alertness	Faith	Sensitivity
Decisiveness	Initiative	Sincerity
Discernment	Resourcefulness	Thriftiness
Discretion		

## Definitions<sup>1</sup>

1. Eagerness to do what is right with transparent motives.
2. Confidence that actions rooted in good character will yield the best outcome, even when I cannot see how.
3. Allowing myself and others to spend only what is necessary.
4. Recognising and doing what needs to be done before I am asked to do it.
5. Understanding the deeper reasons why things happen.
6. Recognising and avoiding words, actions, and attitudes that could bring undesirable consequences.
7. Finding practical uses for that which others would overlook or discard.
8. Perceiving the true attitudes and emotions of those around me.
9. The ability to recognise key factors and finalise difficult decisions.
10. Being aware of what is taking place around me so I can have the right responses.

The quality of your character is more important than the power of your gifts. – “Leaders of Destiny”

*Character is not cut in marble – it is not something solid and unalterable. It is something living and changing, and may become diseased as our bodies do – George Eliot, in “Middlemarch”*

1. Sincerity	5. Discernment	8. Sensitivity
2. Faith	6. Discretion	9. Decisiveness
3. Thriftiness	7. Resourcefulness	10. Alertness
4. Initiative		

Answers

<sup>1</sup> The definitions are taken from the Character First! Program, Character Training Institute

Reach Testimony

# From Trials to Triumphs

By Pastor Joel Pinga



This is a testimony of God's constant care, protection and grace in my life and those of my loved ones. It is impossible to single out one extraordinary event. Many events occurred simultaneously during a major period of our lives, which demonstrated God's unfailing and immeasurable love for us.

## Trials

My wife Teng and I joined Reach Community Church (RCC) less than three years ago. Prior to this, both of us were physically ailing, emotionally exhausted and spiritually drained. Many negative events bombarded us concurrently. Any one of these events alone would have been catastrophic, together they were too much for us to bear.

Our son was heavily into illicit drugs, to the point that he stole to support his addiction. As a result, he was being arrested, released, rearrested and imprisoned. In the past, we had counselled families facing drug-related issues, yet we were utterly unprepared for our first-hand experience, and the resultant devastation and anguish upon us.

Simultaneously, our then days-old grandson had a serious medical condition that required multiple operations on his digestive system. The following seven months, he had surgeries resulting in a tube coming out of his abdomen, where he excreted waste, unable to do what came naturally to us.

In addition, we encountered disturbing issue in the church we used to pastor. Some troublemakers tried to turn the church against us, by propagating lies, and thus damaged our reputations. They went to the extent of trying to rob us of the car that we had paid for! Fortunately, the godly intervention of influential national church leaders put a stop to it.

As if these were not enough, my mother unexpectedly passed away. This was the breaking point! When I attended her funeral overseas, I did not want to come back to Melbourne, I couldn't face all the miseries and hardships we were experiencing.

On top of these overwhelmingly daunting events, my wife's health deteriorated and she was diagnosed with an incurable lung disease. She could only walk a few slow steps before gasping for air. As a result, she had

to quit her fulltime job, and worked only a few hours per week. She would have retired, but for our dire financial straits, after these past years of tumult.

So there we were - unemployed, burgeoning debts to pay, failing health, broken reputations, severed relationships and no apparent future!

## Healings

At that time, Pastor Victor Soo invited us to RCC. We liked what we saw – a welcoming atmosphere, people committed to serving God, a church family closely knitted by God’s Word. Not to mention a brand new building! The weeks that followed became a time of healing for us. RCC became our haven of rest - new friends, new relationships, in an environment with loving and caring ethos.

With the support of plenty of prayers, we experienced miracles after miracles. Our young grandson Joshua recovered from his illness. Today he is extraordinarily active! He recently attended RCC and made many friends here.

With the persistent prayers of Pastor Victor, other pastors and members of RCC, our son is now a changed man. Amazingly, he has completely come off drugs, lives in his own home, holds a job and is engaged to be married to a lovely lady! He has also become more serious and committed in his walk with the Lord. Even his estranged daughter from his previous relationship now sees him regularly, both on the path of reconciliation!

Miraculously, Teng was healed of her lung affliction. She is now stronger, even able to babysit our grandkids on her own (she was afraid to do so in the past, lest she collapse from the strain). The last time I brought Teng to her regular check-up, it was comical to watch her doctor moving his stethoscope to and fro on her chest,

and declared incredulously, “Your lungs are clear. Now stay well!” She no longer needs any of her many medications. Hallelujah!

Many people in the church have been very generous to us, with their time, talents and treasure. I know my recovery is near-complete. People I hardly know have encouraged and inspired me. Someone even generously allowed me to use his car, so that I am able to work productively. I now see life from a more positive viewpoint, I no longer feel trapped in a hopeless abyss.

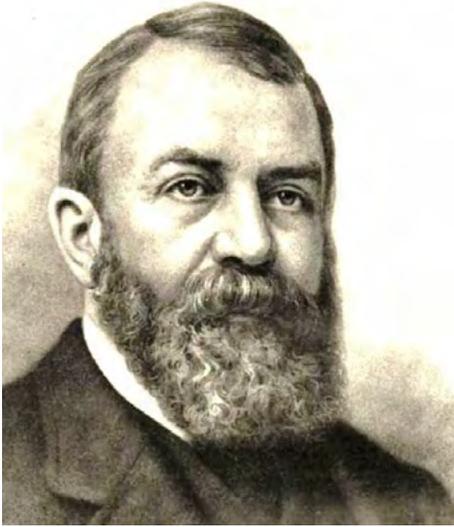
## Ministries

Teng and I are now actively involved in a cell group, which recently multiplied into two groups. It is amazing to see the commitment of the members of these groups – their genuine love and concern for each other’s welfare. Their continual prayers have strengthened both Teng and me. We truly treasure their friendships that run deep.

During the trials, we had mistakenly thought that it was the end of our calling and ministry. I now understand that it was just a transition into something much more profound and meaningful. I can now impact, influence and inspire others in a much bigger way. By the grace of God, I still passionately preach and share God’s Word. My zeal for overseas missions was rekindled. We scored big hits in Myanmar and the Philippines through the mission trips earlier this year!

And this is only the beginning. I am now older and wiser through the many daunting trials of my life. As the Lord told Joshua:

***“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go” (Joshua 1:9).***



# THE LIFE THAT IMPACTED THE WORLD

By Gabriel Lee, 13 years old

**“God never made a promise that was too good to be true.”**

This is one of the many famous sayings by D.L. Moody, whose interesting upbringing makes his works fascinating and his writings absorbing. Dwight Lyman Moody was born on the 5th of February 1837, to Edwin and Betsey Moody, in Northfield, America. He was brought up in a single parent household. God used him mightily despite his impoverished upbringing.

D.L. Moody was born into a brick masons family. His father Edwin J Moody died 4 years after D.L. Moody was born. He had 8 siblings, 6 of whom were older than him and a set of twins born soon after his father's death. He was raised in a Unitarian church. Because he was sent out early to earn money for the family, his education only lasted for 4 years and he never went to the university. Moving to Boston at the age of 17, D.L. Moody competently sold numerous pairs of shoes at his uncle's shoe store. During his youth, D.L. Moody attended Sunday school and the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), and was eager to learn about

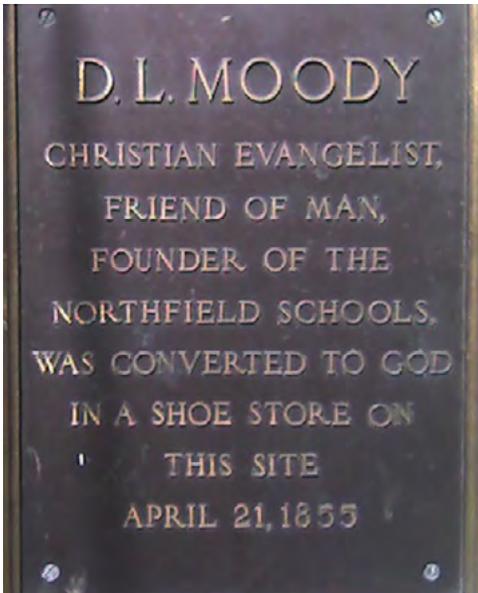
the Bible. However, his upbringing did not indicate that he would become an evangelist.

Throughout his lifetime, D.L. Moody preached over 10,000 sermons, reaching out to over 100 million people, which is almost four times the population of Australia! Apart from building two schools and founding the Chicago Evangelisation Society (now Moody Bible Institute), D.L. Moody also held bible conferences at his home. Unfortunately, the great Chicago fire in October 1871, which lasted for 3 days, destroyed his home, church and the YMCA. The depressed D.L. Moody then decided to relocate to New York City. Settling in New York City, he felt that God was calling him back to Chicago. Willingly, he headed back to Chicago, where he continued to preach the gospel for many years. He saved many more people. In the month before his death, he still preached six sermons a day, ministering to over 20 million people.

Despite his limited formal education, D.L. Moody wrote over 20 books, 500 sermons each over 30,000 words. Two of his famous books are "The Way to God and How to Find It" and "The Overcoming Life", published in 1884 and 1896, respectively. Creating his own sayings, D.L. Moody used them to challenge, encourage and teach many people. His sayings became popular quotes, an excellent one being "the Bible will keep you from sin or sin will keep you from the Bible." This means that we must read the Bible to keep sin away, and if we sin we will try to keep away from the bible. While the next quote might be harder to understand, it is equally meaningful: "God doesn't seek for golden vessels, and does not ask for silver ones, but He must have

clean ones." This means that God doesn't care if we are rich or poor but we must be pure in heart. These were written by a person with limited education, isn't that amazing?

D.L. Moody did incredible things in the 62 years of his life. He founded two schools, the Moody Bible Institute, wrote over 20 books and 500 sermons. His interesting upbringing made him determined to preach the gospel despite the need to earn money for his family. The most significant thing about him is the fact that he wrote many sermons, quotes, books even though he was only formally educated for 4 years. Those 62 years of his life had impacted the world greatly.



# Dress in Dignity

Dear REACH,

Although I was not raised in a Christian family, I grew up in what I would describe as a 'conservative' family. As a girl, I learnt that certain clothes would be frowned upon if worn publicly. Recently, a good friend of mine shared her concern to me about her teenage daughter, whom she constantly argues with, especially over what her daughter wears. Her daughter started high school two years ago, and since then, has been wearing clothes that my friend does not approve of – too short, too low or too tight. Each time my friend raises this with her daughter, they end up in an argument. Her daughter argues that everyone else of her age dresses the same, even those in church. My friend then started to pay attention to the other teenage girls in her church. To her horror, her daughter was right. I'm a mother of 2 daughters, both are still in primary school. I want to seek your advice:

- 1) What should I do as a mother to prevent my daughters heading the same direction?
- 2) My friend is desperate to change the "culture" of her church. How should she go about it?

Dear friend,

Thank you for your letter. You've raised a very complex issue, it is not just about appropriate dressing for teenage girls (and adults), rather, it is about moral values, and the role of parents and church in developing and instilling those values into children.

To your first question, I want to draw your attention to an article written by Rebecca Hagelin, an American public speaker and author, "America's Little Girls...Or Tramps<sup>1</sup>", where she vented her frustration over the ways teenage girls dress in America. This is an excerpt from the article:

*"How do so many other little girls end up looking like sex objects? How? Because their parents let them..... Most 12-16*

*year olds don't have access to a lot of cash – unless, of course, their parents give it to them..... Nope, it's not the kids' money that is being spent, it's the parents' money..... Face it: Little girls dress according to what their mummies allow..... What chance does a little girl stand of keeping her childhood or innocence intact when it's mommy that's driving her to the store and paying for the thongs, the itty-bitty skirts, the hipster jeans and the plunging necklines? And when did father start letting their precious little girls dress like "ladies of the night"?..... Your daughters are looking for you for direction and protection. Your little girls want you to set loving standards, to let them know they are of value. And there isn't anyone else that's going to do it. Our culture has sold our daughters short – will you be guilty of it too?"*

Although she sounds very critical of parents, there are truths in it. Parents play a paramount role in shaping the moral values of their children, and should not be derelict in this duty.

When children are young, their moral compass comes mainly from the consequences of their actions, and the significant adults (hopefully their parents) in their life. How these adults behave, and what seems to be acceptable to them, have a great influence on those young minds. As parents, it is therefore important not to trivialise any moral issue. For example, allowing little children to wear skimpy clothes and regard that as “cute”, buying toys, books or magazines depicting men and women in skimpy clothes. Most importantly, how parents dress will be observed by children under their care. Children imitate what they see, not what they are told.

As children grow older, they start to develop their own sense of morals and values, which does not only depend on the immediate consequences of their actions, but also how those actions affect other people and the society. Morality starts to become an inward conviction rather than outward constriction. These morals affect how they behave. However, behaviour can be influenced by other factors apart from moral values, e.g. peer pressure. Many young people nowadays might be following secular fashion trend, without intending to be immodest, to offend or to attract attention.

Christian parents should align their moral standard with God’s standard, rather than the standard of the society or tradition. This in turn should be instilled in their children. We know that children (and adults) who do not have personal conviction of God and His authority, will not appeal to God, His Word (the Bible) or His church as their moral authority. Biblical moral standard cannot take root in children’s hearts without a personal relationship with God, and reverence for His holiness.

*Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it. (Proverbs 22:6)*

Helping children to develop a personal relationship with God is a big topic in itself, beyond the scope of my answer here. One important principle is to make God and Christianity relevant at each developmental stages of their life. We shouldn’t impress on children that Christianity (and church) is about doing the right thing, behaving the right way, or being an obedient child. It is about the truth and a personal relationship with a living God. For many years, in the church and Christian schools, Christians (and non-Christians) were taught biblical facts and its moral standards, without conviction of a personal God. I can’t help but feel that this might have contributed to the decline of the authority of church in our society and the lack of impact of religious education in our schools.



## Reach Forum

To your second question, as a member of the church, your friend can pray, either alone or corporately, to bring the matter of concern to God. There is power in prayer. If she feels compelled, she can bring her concern to her church leadership. I think it is important for her church to be aware of the problem and especially necessary for the leaders to set a good example in this matter. However, before she does so, encourage her to first examine her own heart and attitude. Jesus wept over Jerusalem when the people were oblivious of its impending ruin and "did not recognise the time of God's coming" to them (see Luke 19:41-44, NIV). So if she is to bring the matter to her church leadership, she is to go with a humble heart, rather than being self-righteous and condemning.

In short, moral values need to be instilled in children from young. For Christians, this moral standard should align with God's standard, and the conviction develops from a personal relationship with our almighty God, the ultimate moral authority. If necessary, bring

the matter of concern to the church leadership, but do so with a humble and prayerful heart.

Lastly, a piece of advice for your friend: her daughter's argument with her is not only about dressing, it is about resisting her authority; rules and disciplines cannot control or transform a child's rebellious heart, but God's grace can.

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*"Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life." (Galatians 6:7-8)*

*"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." (Romans 12:2)*



# Juicy Turmeric Chicken Bake

Reach Recipe

By Ellen Kwong

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Reach / Spring 2017



## Ingredients

- 1.5 kg chicken pieces (chicken wings or chicken thighs or chicken drumsticks)
- 1 tbsp potato or corn starch
- 2 tbsp cooking wine
- 2 tsp minced garlic
- 1-2 tbsp minced ginger
- 1-2 tbsp honey or sugar
- 1 tbsp light soy sauce
- 1 tsp turmeric powder
- 2 tbsp coriander powder
- Dash of white pepper powder
- 1 tbsp of oil, for frying

## Methods:

1. Add cooking wine and starch to the chicken, mix thoroughly and leave for 5 - 10 minutes.
2. Add the rest of the ingredients to the chicken, stir to combine. Marinate for at least half an hour or overnight if possible.
3. Heat up a wok or a big fry pan with 1 tbsp of oil, brown the chicken. There is no need to cook through the chicken.
4. Transfer the chicken to a deep oven proof dish and bake in a preheated 180°C oven for 20 minutes.
5. Turn the chicken once during baking to ensure even cooking.
6. Serve immediately with rice.

## Special note:

Baking time may vary depending on the oven, the sizes and cuts of the chicken pieces. Pre grease the oven dish with cooking oil spray, for easy removal of chicken and easy cleaning afterwards.

**Do you have any pressing  
life concerns or puzzling  
life questions?**

**Write to us at:  
reachforum@reachcc.org  
and we will try to address  
and answer them.**

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