

“May He give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed.” Psalm 20:4

The Assemblies of God,  
Singapore EXCO wishes everyone  
an awesome New Year



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CHIEF EDITOR: Rev Simon Ang  
ASST. EDITORS: Rev Winnie Wong  
Miranda Zhang  
COORDINATOR: Carol Lim

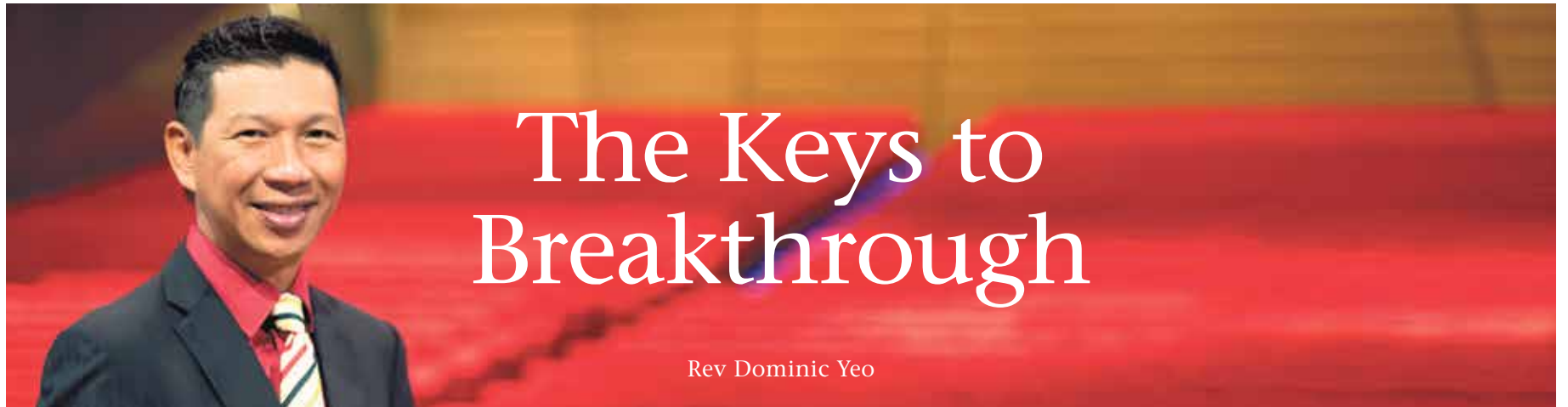
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# The Keys to Breakthrough

Rev Dominic Yeo

God desires to take us from blessing to blessing, from glory to glory, and from faith to faith. That's why the new year will bring new situations that will stretch us. Some of us might even be carrying over challenges from the previous year.

Friends, keep pressing on, for you are on the verge of a breakthrough! By looking at King Jehoshaphat (2 Chronicles 20), we discover five keys for our breakthrough in this new year.

## Key 1: Declaring who God is

Judah was facing a tremendous problem: a vast army was getting ready to attack. But instead of crumbling under the weight of the problem, notice King Jehoshaphat's prayer language.

*"Lord, the God of our ancestors, are you not the God who is in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. Power and might are in your hand, and no one can withstand you." – 2 Chronicles 20:6*

We can react to challenging circumstances in many ways. But you and I can also choose to combat negativity and fear with faith. When we dare to declare God's power and might, our words have the power to take us into our breakthrough!

## Key 2: Fixing our eyes on God

Where our attention goes is where the power flows. When we fix our eyes on the giant, then we give the giants power. That's why it's so important to focus on God, despite whatever we may be going through.

*Our God, will you not judge them? For we have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you. – 2 Chronicles 20:12*

Declaration is one thing, but when we can see God for who He is, something begins to happen—hope rises, faith is built up and we find the strength to press through. When we enthrone God in His rightful place, we can hold fast to the truth so we will not be overcome. Let God be the source of your power today!

## Key 3: Worshiping in every circumstance

*Jehoshaphat bowed down with his face to the ground, and all the people of Judah and Jerusalem fell down in worship before the Lord. – 2 Chronicles 20:18*

Worship is important because it creates the right atmosphere. When we learn to give God a sacrifice of praise, our environment of fear and hopelessness turns to an environment of hope and anticipation. We might be down, but we are not out because we know that our God is for us!

## Key 4: Holding fast to God's Word

*Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Listen to me, Judah and people of Jerusalem! Have faith in the Lord your God and*

*you will be upheld; have faith in his prophets and you will be successful." – 2 Chronicles 20:20*

God always has a word for us, especially in times of crisis. In those days, His Word came through the prophets. For you and me, God's Word comes from the Bible. If we want to activate breakthrough, it starts by hearing and holding on to the Word. In this new year, dare to invest more time internalizing in the *logos* Word, so that God can turn it into the *rhema* Word for every season and circumstance.

## Key 5: Walking in simple obedience

*After consulting the people, Jehoshaphat appointed men to sing to the Lord and to praise him... as they went out at the head of the army..." – 2 Chronicles 20:21*

As strange as King Jehoshaphat's order was, simple obedience led to a great move of God. Suddenly the enemy forces were turning against each other! All Judah had to do was carry away the spoils of a battle (v22-24).

Imagine what kind of breakthroughs God has in store for us! Today, dare to walk by faith and believe that God will clear our path.

Friends, if you are at the point of breakdown, know that you are at the point of breakthrough. Press in, press on, and press through! Blessed 2020!

# 突破的关键

神的意愿是让我们祝福加祝福、荣耀加荣耀，信心加信心。这就是为什么新的一年会带来新的情势，挑战我们超越极限。我们当中甚至可能有人在新的一年里仍面对去年的挑战。

朋友们，坚持下去。因为你的突破就在眼前！我们能从约沙法王的事迹中（历代志下第20章）发现五个关键。它们能为我们在新的一年里带来突破。

## 关键一：宣告神是谁

犹大国面对一个难题：有大军准备攻击他们。值得注意的是，约沙法王并没有在重大的压力下崩溃，而是这样祷告：

*“耶和华我们列祖的神阿，你不是天上的神吗？你不是万邦万国的主宰吗？在你手中有大能大力，无人能抵挡你。” – 历代志下20:6*

面对挑战，我们会有不同的反应，但是我们应该选择以信心迎战负面思想和惧怕。当我们勇于宣告神的大能大力，我们的话语就有力量带来突破！

## 关键二：定睛于神

我们的注意力在哪里，大能就往哪里去。当我们定睛于巨人，我们就给了巨人大能。这就是为什么不管我们的处境如何，聚焦于神是那么重要的。

我们的神阿，你不惩罚他们吗？因为我们无力抵挡这来攻击我们的大军，我们也不知道怎样行，我们的眼目单仰望你。— 历代志下20:12

宣告是一回事，可是当我们能看到神就是神，有些事情就开始发生——希望燃起、信心被建立，我们也找到力量去克服困难。当我们把神立在祂的宝座上，我们能紧抓住真理，就不会被击倒。今天就让神成为你的力量吧！

## 关键三：在每个情况中敬拜

约沙法就面伏于地，犹大众人和耶路撒冷的居民也俯伏在耶和華面前，叩拜耶和華。— 历代志下20:18

敬拜是重要的，因为它制造适当的氛围。当我们学习向神献上赞美为祭，惧怕和绝望的处境就转变成盼望和期待的处境。我们跌倒，但必站起来，因为我们知道神是我们的帮助！

## 关键四：抓紧神的话语

约沙法站着说，犹大人和耶路撒冷的居民哪，要听我说，信耶和華你们的神就必立稳。信他的先知就必亨通。— 历代志下20:20

神总有话语给我们，特别在危机的时候。在旧约时期，神的话透过先知释放出来。至于你我，神的话从圣经而来。如果我们要开始突破，就要先听神的话语，并且抓紧神的话语。

在新的一年里，让我们勇于投入更多时间内化圣经中神的话语 (*logos*)，好让神将它化为适用于每个季节和情况的神当下所说的话语 (*rhema*)。

## 关键五：走在简单的顺服中

约沙法既与民商议了，就设立歌唱的人，颂赞耶和華，使他们穿上圣洁的礼服，走在军前赞美耶和華说，当称谢耶和華，因他的慈爱永远长存。— 历代志下20:21

虽然约沙法王的命令听起来很奇怪，但是简单的顺服导致神大大地动了工。突然敌军自相击杀！犹太人只需要收取敌人的财务。（第22–24节）

试想象，神为我们预备的突破有哪些！今天，让我们敢于走在信心的路上，相信神必为我们铺平道路。

朋友们，如果你正在崩溃的点上，要知道你就在突破的点上。坚信，坚持，坚守！2020年蒙福！



# Smyrna AG Supports Guest Workers with AGWO Initiative

## Reaching out to bless our guest workers

By Clara Ravindaran, The Bible Society of Singapore

Singapore has relied on the labor contributions of guest workers since its early years. These guest workers have played significant roles here, through building our infrastructure and contributing to industries with labor shortages. However, they are often out of sight and unrecognized. As such, the struggles and needs of many of these workers remain unknown and unmet.

To bring to light their contributions and better appreciate their labor, which has built our Lion City state, Smyrna Assembly of God (AG) has worked collaboratively with the Alliance of Guest Workers Outreach (AGWO)—as well as some 100 other voluntary welfare organizations (VWOs), civil organizations, corporations, professional bodies, guest worker dormitories, and government agencies—to organize a series of initiatives in the last quarter of 2019.

The first of these events was the *‘Walking in Your Shoes Exhibition’* at Far East Plaza, from September 20 to 29. The exhibition was launched with an opening ceremony on September 19, which was graced by Mr Zaqu Mohamad, Minister of State in the Ministry of National Development and the Ministry of Manpower.

Drawing hundreds of visitors over nine days, the exhibition showcased replicas of the living spaces of guest workers. Through these installations, individuals were able to experience the routines of guest workers at work and in their dormitories. The exhibition also featured their untold stories and lesser-known trivia about their community—inviting Singaporeans to understand them beyond their occupational role of being guest workers.

Visitors could also learn words of appreciation in the native languages of guest workers—to engage them in conversation and breach social divides. Key phrases such as “how are you?” and “thank you!” were available in Bengali, Burmese, Hindi, Mandarin, Sinhala, Tamil, and Thai.

In the same spirit of expressing appreciation to the community of guest workers in Singapore, Smyrna AG also partnered with AGWO in hosting the inaugural *‘Banquet of Appreciation’* at the Fullerton Hotel on October 13. The banquet saw the attendance of Mr Heng Swee Keat, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, as the Guest-of-Honor.



Chinese guest workers with Rev Ezekiel Tan, Chairman of Hope Initiative Alliance, and Ps Samuel Gift Stephen, Chairman of the Alliance of Guest Workers Outreach.



South Asian guest workers in great spirits at the AGWO Cricket Cup



Nepali guest workers at the inaugural AGWO Banquet of Appreciation

Gathering 350 guest workers from nine different Asian countries—as well as dormitory owners, community partners and government officials—the banquet sought to thank guest workers and encouraged dialogue on how to better care for their community. This inaugural *‘Banquet of Appreciation’* also launched 24 other *‘Feasts of Appreciation’* for guest workers across Singapore, as well as an AGWO app that aims to provide guest workers with access to services and adequate assistance.

To provide guest workers with an avenue for recreation, a cricket tournament was also organized on October 28 at the Migrant Workers’ Centre (MWC) Recreation Centre. Cricket is a popular sport among South Asians, with almost 900 million fans in India alone. Through this tournament, we aimed to alleviate their feelings of homesickness and encourage fellowship with one another.

Involving nearly 3,000 guest workers participants, the AGWO Cricket Tournament was a resounding success. In addition to playing cricket, guest workers also enjoyed scrumptious Briyani meals and received free medical care and legal consultation services at the event booths.

Ps Samuel Gift Stephen, Chairman of AGWO and Senior Overseer of Smyrna AG, emphasized the need for a collective

effort to care for this marginalized community. He shared that, “With guest workers forming nearly one-third of our working population, it is our responsibility to cultivate an environment that protects and holistically cares for their well-being. More than isolated efforts, it is vital that we work collaboratively to pool together resources and services, so that we may effectively meet their needs.”

If you wish to bless the initiative, individuals may support AGWO through administering and/or facilitating assistance and services for guest workers. More information on partnership with the AGWO and volunteering opportunities can be found at [hia.sg/agwo](http://hia.sg/agwo).

### ABOUT AGWO

The Alliance of Guest Workers Outreach (AGWO) is an initiative of the Hope Initiative Alliance (HIA), in partnership with over 100 other organizations.

The AGWO seeks to provide guest workers in Singapore with holistic care in a sustainable manner through establishing a platform for collaborations, partnerships, and the sharing of resources and services—in the areas of healthcare, legal assistance and skills acquisition.

# “I am a Witness” Workshop

Participants were empowered to evangelize pre-believers.

By Ps Maggie Kuek, Great Shepherd Assembly of God

Last year's theme for Great Shepherd Assembly of God (AG) is: Witnessing Year (见证年). Coinciding with our church's mission—to reach out and preach the Gospel of the Word to our communities—we wanted to motivate our church members to fulfill the Great Commission through sharing the Gospel to their loved ones and friends.

In view of this theme, our church conducted a workshop entitled, ‘I am a witness (我是见证人)’ on August 4 and 11, 2019. The workshop was grounded in Acts 1:8 *“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”*

During the workshop, participants were introduced to the Modified Engel Scale for Evangelism. The original Engel scale was developed by James F Engel, as a way of representing the journey from no knowledge of God, through to spiritual maturity as a Christian believer. The modified instrument comprises seven stages to help participants understand that the majority of pre-believers will journey through these stages before they make their decision to accept the Lord as their personal Savior.

Participants were given hands-on practice on how to utilize this instrument to identify the specific stages from (-6 to 0) of their individual contacts, -6 being the Resistant Stage and 0 being the Ready Stage. They then learned that evangelism is the process of leading people through these stages, and that people move through these stages at different rates, requiring multiple exposures at each stage before moving to the next. A person can also get trapped at any stage due to fear, anger, and apathy.

Overall, through the workshop, the participants learned that



Participants sharing a group photo

evangelism is God's heartbeat. It is about taking the initiative to share Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit, but leaving the results to God. However, evangelism does not necessarily mean conversion. We need to live a lifestyle of a witness, and that consistent evangelism will result in spiritual growth and confidence.

After the two days of training, participants were encouraged to write their own personal testimonies making it easier to share about God's goodness to their friends and loved ones. And on September 15, the participants came together to share their personal testimonies with one another. It was a great time spent glorifying God and edifying one another in the faith.

These personal stories will also be compiled into a booklet to be used by the church to further spread God's love.

We thank God for all those who participated in this workshop and pray for God to help us to share and fulfill the Great Commission through our personal encounters and relationship with the Lord.

***“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” Matthew 28:18-20***



Ps Maggie teaching in the workshop



Bro Joseph sharing his testimony



# His Colors, My Canvas

## What does it mean to be all for Jesus?

By Sarah Han, Trinity Christian Centre

Early in the year, Trinity's youth ministry, IGNYTE, embarked on its biggest project ever—an outdoor concert on the shores of Sentosa, 'COLORS'. All hands were on deck to bring the church to the world. After months of planning, IGNYTErs took to social media to declare how God had colored the canvases of their lives. More than 500 posts were posted on Instagram in the weeks leading to the event. Declarations filled with joy and courage were shared with their followers.

As evening approached on September 8, people from all walks of life descended on Palawan Beach ready to experience *COLORS*. With 1,594 people in attendance including 1,052 first-time visitors, it was a testament to the truth that when we act in faith, God will draw all unto Him.

As the sky grew darker, the colors from our LED wristbands grew brighter. In a sea of lights, the atmosphere was heavy with excitement as the worship team took to the stage. Opening with the chorus of "Reckless Love," the ground began to shake from the multitudes dancing and praising the King of Kings. Three IGNYTErs took to the stage to testify of a God who gave them purpose and brought healing into their lives.

Growing up in a broken home, Lucas Teng (age 17) became so fearless that he started to break the law. One day, God powerfully met him at an Easter presentation that his friend brought him to and his life started to turn around. Today, he is serving actively in IGNYTE as a Celebration Host and as a leader in his Connect Group. He desires to keep proclaiming the goodness of God all his life.

Unloved and unwanted. That's how Deon Lee (age 19) felt for so much of his life. It was as though he was just a puppet moving about the world. In a moment of desperation, he accepted an invite for a special IGNYTE service with guest speaker Gurmit Singh. As Deon chose to come back to IGNYTE, God met him service after service and started to fill the void in his heart. In time, Deon accepted Jesus into his life. He now lives each day knowing that He is loved by God and is His beloved child.



*All we want is to worship the Lord*



*Ministering to the IGNYTErs*

When she found out her dad had passed away, Esther Ng (age 19) felt that her whole world had come crashing down. As she struggled with the loss of her earthly father, God showered His love on her through her IGNYTE leaders and friends, showing her that He will always continue to pursue her. As her Heavenly Father, He would make sure that she would never be alone.

Bringing *COLORS* together was Ps Gary Chia who shared the Gospel using the colored wristbands.

God's presence that night was overwhelming and undeniable. When the call to salvation was given, many ran to the front eager to receive this invitation.

We praise God for the 111 who chose to let God color the canvas of their lives with His hope and love.

Although *COLORS* has come and gone, may we continue to let God paint our lives into His masterpiece.

The start of *COLORS* felt like an ordinary concert. But as I listened to the testimonies, God touched my heart and I was moved to tears. I now come for IGNYTE service with my friend. I also listen to the songs sung at *COLORS* every day because it is so meaningful to me. I have learned that God is my partner and I can turn to Him in times of need!

— Josephine Ang, 13

When I was asked to serve for *COLORS*, I hesitated. I felt inadequate and my walk with God wasn't the best. At the first dress rehearsal, I understood what God was doing through *COLORS*. On the day of the concert, I was so impacted by those who experienced God—praising, crying, kneeling, and giving their hearts to Jesus. I'm blessed to be His vessel and have found joy in serving Him.

— Hayden Tan, 15

As we sang "Reckless Love," God showed me how much He still loves me even though I have not made Him my priority. That night, I responded to the altar call and rededicated my life to Him. I am glad that I was at *COLORS* to experience God in such a personal way.

— Richard Lai, 17



*Dancing to the beat*



*Having fun during the games*



# Prayer Mountain Retreat 2019: —Refreshed, Renewed, Re-fired!

Participants were drawn into a deeper hunger and intimacy with God during the retreat.

By Azaria Sih, Trinity Christian Centre

Trinity's first-ever 'Prayer Mountain Retreat' took place on October 14 to 17, 2019. About 120 of us, a mixture of Trinitarians and members of other Singapore Assemblies of God churches, came together at the Osanri Choi Jasil Memorial Fasting Prayer Mountain in South Korea for different reasons. Some were seeking direction. Some needed a time of refreshment with the Lord. Our common denominator was a corporate hunger for God's presence and revelation.

Every person was encouraged to go on a full fast for the three days we were on the mountain—a great challenge for many of us first-timers. I dreamed of food delivery on the first night and another participant dreamed he ate a burger. Though many were plagued with headaches at the midway point, we pressed on, confident that God would sustain us.

With extended times of worship, corporate prayer, and messages by Rev Ong Sek Leang, Rev Dominic Yeo, and Rev Gerald Tan, our hearts and minds were prepared for our personal times of prayer. Each night ended with a revival meeting. The four days seemed to fly by, as we soaked in our encounters with the Living God.

Coming away from this mountain top experience made me



*Rev Dominic praying for individuals at the altar*



*Rev Ong ministering to the participants at the altar*

more conscious of God's presence in my life. It also affirmed the importance of tarrying in His presence particularly when life gets busier. Fasting made me appreciate that God is the source of all things and that one can exercise restraint and discipline by His grace.

For those who can't go to the Prayer Mountain, don't let that stop you from creating your own. Create the time and space to hear God's voice and enjoy unhurried moments in His presence. You will never be the same!

It has been my desire to come and experience this prayer mountain since I heard about it 26 years ago. It was a fantastic experience. Thank you for organizing this, Trinity!

— **Esther Loo**

I am inspired by Pastor Ong's sharing on Abel's better sacrifice. Now, I ask myself what better sacrifice I could bring to please God.

— **James Chuang**

The retreat has been a time of personal encounter. He has taught me to abide in Him more and to encounter Him like Elijah through a gentle whisper.

— **Brigid Pang**

This retreat taught me to fast and pray. I thought I couldn't do it, but I did by focusing on developing a hunger for God.

— **Alfred Hui**

I am so moved and inspired by Pastor Ong's sharing on praying all kinds of prayers. I want to deepen and broaden my prayer life, daring to pray prayers that I normally wouldn't pray.

— **Chang Chue Tun**

I got to hear God more clearly and received a new vision for next year. It was a very intimate time that passed so quickly!

— **Lisa Ramadihardja**

I came here purposely seeking for direction. I encountered God and He revealed a new direction and a new season ahead.

— **Wedha Setiawan**

I thank God that I made it to the retreat. It is the first time I went on a full fast for so many days. I did not experience hunger pangs, or gastritis—and bloating of stomach—things that I would normally experience when I miss a meal. It is indeed in God's strength that we can do anything.

— **Agnes Hon**



*Here we are at the retreat for a time to encounter God*



*A place of tranquility to seek God*



# The Secret to Joy and Ministry

*Our ministers were encouraged by Ps Al and Chrissy Toledo's principles of ministry.*

*By Ps Navin Ong, Centre of New Life*

The song 'Great Are You Lord' set a powerful and prophetic tone to the start of session. As our hearts, minds and voices joined together in worship, we declared, "It's your breath in our lungs, so we pour out our praise to you only..."

Right after worship, Chrissy Toledo gave a short exhortation on the secret to joy, challenging us to make joy our identification as ministers of the Gospel. She suggested that the first thing that is recognizable to people when they meet us as ministers, is our joy. And that it's important to pray and seek His joy in the midst of trials. (James 1:2-4)

Referencing scripture verses, Nehemiah 8:10, Galatians 5:22, Luke 2:10-11, John 15:11, John 16:24, 1 Peter 1:8, Romans 12:12, she reminded us how joy is 'non-negotiable' as ministers, how it's the Holy Spirit who gives us the gift of joy, and how Jesus desires for His joy to fill us up.

Finally, she explained that it's the abundant praise in our hearts that makes the connection between 'your breath in our lungs...' and joy. In short, praise is the secret to joy.

## The Ministry of Devotion to Jesus

Ps Al then took over from his wife, Chrissy, and led us in singing, 'Jesus We Love You'. We took a few moments to respond to the



truth of the Word in the worship atmosphere. The Lord responded through Ps Al, declaring, "I know all of your deeds, I know all of your works... how you've lost that first love, I want to restore that first love."

During his segment, Ps Al related how a radical encounter with the Lord changed his whole life's direction, leading him away from professional baseball to full-time ministry. He shared how in his pursuit of baseball he wanted to be the best, but when he became a Christian and got into the ministry, he learned that God wasn't looking for professionalism from him, but for him to be deeply in love with Jesus. This message was also for us.

Ps Al recounted the journey from being on staff at Brooklyn Tabernacle in New York to moving their young family to Chicago and learning obedience as a family. He shared



how God opened one door after another for Chicago Tabernacle to be born, and how its congregation grew from just a handful to a few thousand today.

"There's trauma walking through the door every moment," said Ps Al as he described his city, which leads the US in the number of murders, has over 100,000 young people engaged in gang violence and suffers from a broken educational system. Yet where sin abounds, grace abounds even more. He is excited to see the transforming power of Christ at work all the time, through the messy and complicated lives that come through His doors.

"The power of ministry is sincerity" was one of the things that we caught as Ps Al reminded us of the unschooled fishermen who had been with Jesus. Ministry, he explains, is spirit to

spirit and heart to heart, and this is what heals the broken. This is also why the best thing we can do for our staff is to be really in love with Jesus. This challenged our own understanding and priorities of ministry.

Through Jeremiah 2:1-2, we are reminded that God remembers when we love Him deeply. He wants us to be in love with Him and thinks about our devotion to Him. While our praises express our affection to God, our personal trust in Him is revealed when we follow Him through the wilderness. When we are in love with Jesus, we are willing to get out of our comfort zones. We are compelled to go to uncomfortable places because we love Him.

Also, it's in "a land not sown"—new places, where there is potential for God to grow us. Perhaps that "new place" for some of us is where we learn to love others deeply, work on our relationships, or even develop a new leadership skill. Are we open to change? How deeply are we in love with Jesus?

In closing, Ps Al summed things up by saying, "When we change from the heart, we are willing to change everything. And when we change, the people closest to us will know it first."

May we always come back to our first love for Jesus and abound in joy as we fall in love with Jesus over and over again!



1 Our Guest Speaker, Ps Al, exhorting our ministers to serve with joy

2 Ps Chrissy ministering with a song

3 Our Guest Speakers joined us in worship as we gave our praise to the Lord

4 Reponding to the Word in worship



SINCE 1977

# EMPOWERING LEADERS TO SUCCEED

自1977 培训成功领袖

“

Iron sharpens iron.  
I enjoy exchanging  
ideas and gaining  
knowledge with  
fellow leaders of  
faith.



Ps Aggie Chan  
Mission Pastor  
Faith Assembly of God  
2017 Alumna

”



Mr Silas Tan  
Lay Leader, Church Board Member  
Shekinah Assembly of God  
2016 Alumnus

“

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me for  
ministry, no  
matter where  
I go or who I  
meet.

”

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110 Lorong 23 Geylang  
Victory Centre, #07-06  
Singapore 388410  
68411770





# ACTS College 41<sup>st</sup> Graduation Exercises

*On November 17, 2019, ACTS College celebrated another milestone—her 41<sup>st</sup> graduation exercises.*

*By ACTS College*

Held at Elim Church, the graduation exercises honored 14 graduates who received their respective academic certificates, diplomas, bachelor's and master's degrees. 17 participants of ACTS-School of Supernatural Ministry (A-SSM) also received their certificates of attendance.

The atmosphere was charged with energy and enthusiasm as family and friends turned up in throngs to support and witness this momentous event. Joy and laughter filled the hall as pastors, teachers, graduates, and guests celebrated the achievements of the graduates.

We were honored to have the Senior Pastor of Hope Singapore, Rev Jeffrey Chong addressed the graduates. He exhorted them to boldly follow God in fulfilling the Great Commission, as they have already been empowered by the Holy Spirit.

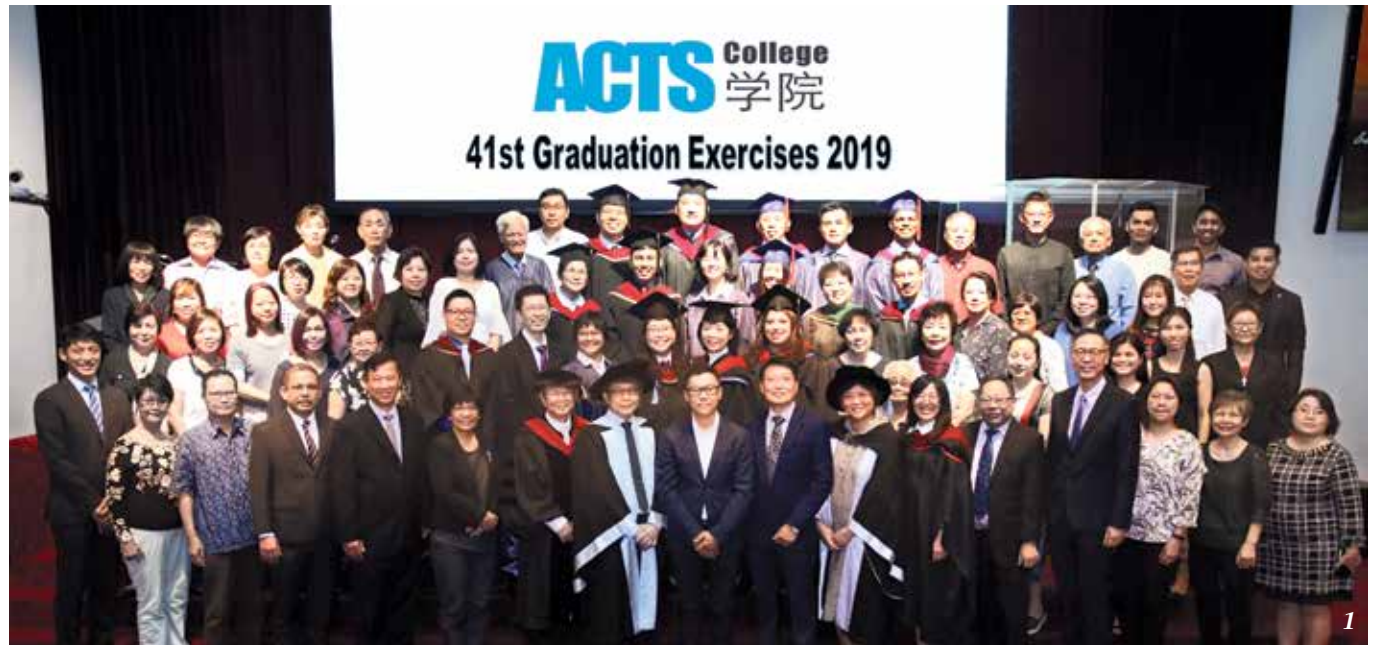
A special highlight of this year's event was a heartwarming performance by the graduating cohort. The graduates sang a medley of songs that traced the ups and downs of their journey in ACTS College and bore testimony to the divine hope that had sustained them throughout their learning journey. Indeed, their performance was a testament to the tremendous sense of camaraderie among the graduating students and to the college's commitment toward communal learning.

All in all, the graduation exercises celebrated the closure of a special chapter in the lives of these graduates with exhilarating joy. In their next chapter, may God's grace and peace be with them as they embrace the people, places, and purposes God will place before them!

To God be all the glory and honor.



Scan this QR Code for special item video.



- 1 ACTS College Family
- 2-3 Sharing the joy with family and friends
- 4 Prayer of consecration by pastors and leaders



# Ministers' Institute & Retreat 2019

*Our ministers gathered for an empowering and fruitful retreat, where they received impartation from our guest speakers.*

*By Rev Winnie Ong, Lifeline Family Church*

Over 170 Assemblies of God ministers and lay leaders gathered from November 18 to 21 for the Ministers' Institute & Retreat (MIR) at Double Tree by Hilton Melaka in Malacca, Malaysia. Participants were privileged to be ministered to by Rev Alan Hewitt, Rev Chern Hock Chye, and our Assistant General Superintendent, Rev Simon Ang. The theme of this MIR is 'Sounds of Heaven'. Rev Daphne Lau composed a special theme song for the event. Each session was Spirit-charged and filled with heightened sounds of praise and worship. Rev Lindsey Lui and pastors from Faith Assembly led a game, where different sections of the participants made sounds with their voices and hands in a rhythmic fashion.

At the opening session, Rev Hewitt spoke on 'Picking Up the Mantle'. When God's people are clothed (anointed by the Holy Spirit), impossibility becomes possibility. The anointing is not for show, but to perpetuate the power from heaven to change the world. Elisha's ministry was a good example of this, and so was the church in the Book of Acts. Rev Hewitt pointed out that the problem today is not because the world is sinful but that the church is functioning in its own ordinary clothing and dimension. Over the next five sessions with Rev Hewitt for the English-speaking ministers and Rev Chern for the

Mandarin-speaking brethren, ministers heard how they could be world-changers by living and operating in the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

Rev Hewitt pointed out that when the church loses its roar, it begins to bark, lose its identity, and becomes irrelevant. Just as a shadow reflects what something is, the church cannot thrive on what it was years ago. A church that is negative, disunited, and prayerless cannot have a powerful, positive and healing shadow (ministry). When God's people are connected to the Holy Spirit and carry His power, they can present the answer to the world. Citing Abraham who was tested by God in 10 to 12 areas of his life, Rev Hewitt highlighted that God tests for soundness because there are big plans and purposes ahead. A plane cannot lift off until its parts have been tested and approved for flight safety. We will never live in conquest and victory until God puts the "Passed Test" stamp on us in our times of testing.

Not only are world-changers tested, they also pay a price. Jesus, the apostles and every world-changer after them have focused not on the cost, but on the opportunity to do good and help everyone beaten down by the devil. Some are invited, others are selected, but most people are presented with the

opportunity to do something for the good of mankind.

Rev Hewitt urged ministers to look for new horizons and move people toward them. Just as God's people have left both good camping grounds as well as challenging sites to move toward the Promised Land, today's church must not settle for comfort. God has more new experiences and revelations waiting for this generation than their fathers ever saw.

At the final session, Rev Simon Ang urged the ministers not to lose the sense of awe and wonder about their calling, but be drawn into God's divine presence, be a faithful worshiper and a gatekeeper who keeps weird voices out.

Overall, we thank God for the fruitful retreat and may God continue to grow us as ministers, who will raise world-changers for His Kingdom!

## 退修营 2019 姚福运传道, 新天际教会

在这几天的退修营, 大家都带着期待的心情出席这个营会, 这不但提供了一个在属灵上的休息, 也让大家暂时放下手

上的工作亲近神。“休息”也是为了要走更长的路, 和重新得力 (赛40:29-31), 同时也是在等待得着“天上的声音”, 这也是今年标题。

在整个的营会中, 我们都有非常愉快的旅途和得着。整体上不论是聚会, 敬拜、祷告, 都充满了属灵上的气氛和神的荣耀降临, 圣灵也大大的运行在我们其中。除此之外, 在属灵的家庭里也加强彼此的认识与关系。

特别在敬拜的时候, 圣灵带领我们沉浸在属灵的领域当中, 使人完全的降服在神的跟前, 享受神的同在。其次神透过郑福财牧师所讲的信息, 可以说是一次又一次的看见, 就如鹰展翅上腾, 顺着圣灵的风, 翱翔在天空。尤其是其中的一篇信息“如何在碎片的世代牧养会众”? 虽然现今的科技发达, 但是这个世代需要神的话语, 教会的领袖与牧者, 更要得着“天上的声音”, 以致神的荣耀充满神的家。

对我个人而言, 灵里的更新, 安息在于归回, 是我这次有所获得。因此我相信, 总会所安排的牧者退修营, 是让教会能够听到和明白神的旨意和方向, 并在灵里的更新, 力上加力, 神的荣耀充满大地。愿神所使用的仆人与使女, 神赐福我们手上的一切工作。







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1 MIR 2019—Sounds of Heaven 退修营2019 — 天上的声音

2 Our guest speaker, Rev Chern Hock Chye addressing our ministers 客座讲员郑福财牧师众牧师们

3 Rev Alan Hewitt, our guest speaker, ready to share the Word 客座讲员艾伦·翰威特牧师将分享神的话语

4 The Chinese ministries pastors with our guest speaker 华文部牧师们陪同客座讲员合照

5 Our Chinese ministries pastors praising God 华文部牧师们在赞美荣耀神

6 Our English-speaking ministers worshiping as they invited the wind of the Spirit to fill the hall 英文语言牧师们在敬拜祈求圣灵充满整个敬拜堂

7 All ears peeled for the Word 所有的会众都专注聆听神的话语

8 The worship team praying to usher in the presence of God 敬拜团队祈祷神的同在神的引领

9 This group's idea was sounding really excellent 团队的点子非常棒

10 Getting our ministers to sit and stand at the right positions for the group picture 拍照的位置安排不论坐的站的都安排得好正确

11 Our diligent MIR Committee 退修营委员团非常勤勉



# Mentoring through Project Humility

*Young children learn about humility through the Royal Rangers leadership merit.*

*By Harborlight Church (Outpost #5), Royal Rangers Singapore*

It was a surreal moment. Deep within a simply decked cemented brick house and under the sweltering heat, I stood quietly at the end of the classroom witnessing our young Royal Rangers (RR), as young as 8 years old, giving away stationery sets to the village children of Batam. The leadership merit, an enhancement to the RR 2.0 curriculum, had led us to that.

The leadership merits are earned periodically. It's typically earned over a period of 10 weeks through participating in team-building activities and personal leadership development. Part of this year's leadership merit requires the 8 to 10-year-old Discovery Rangers to plan a service project that teaches them about humility.

During the last leg of the leadership merit, the Discovery Rangers gathered to brainstorm ideas on the type of service projects they could carry out. With facilitation from the commanders around them, they decided to embark on Project Humility, where they would pack 70 sets of stationery for the less fortunate children in Batam. Very quickly, they formed the project team and set about deciding what type of coloring pencils, pens, pencils, rulers, erasers and tubes of glue were to go into the packs. They also went on to make arrangements with the pastors to present their project plans and obtain approval for their proposals. The excited rangers even had flyers prepared and posted around church to raise awareness of the project. During service announcements, two Discovery Rangers went up to the pulpit to give a call for participation. They invited the congregation to give to Project Humility, a cause that they believed in and worked hard for. Over the following weekend, all 70 sets of stationery were sold and every child on the receiving end would also be receiving a handwritten note of encouragement from each of the sponsors.

For Phase 2 of the project, we wanted to close the loop of experience in order for the children to fully appreciate the project. The commanders arranged for each Discovery Ranger, along with one of their parents, to head to Batam for a day. They would conduct a full children's program for the children there and then give away the stationery sets. As each ranger and his/her parent stood side by side, I felt the Lord's prompting, and I knew



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that these rangers were set up to do great things for Him who sent them.

The RR ministry is about mentoring children into young leaders who will impact the world through the Great Commission. The leadership merit facilitates exactly that.

At Harborlight Church, we thank God for the pastors, leaders and parents who are supportive of the program and of what we do. To God be the glory!

- 1 The Discovery Rangers packing stationery sets to give to underprivileged children in Batam
- 2 The Rangers inviting the congregation to support Project Humility
- 3 Every stationery set was sold for \$10 to raise funds for Project Humility
- 4 The Discovery Rangers going to Batam to give away the stationery sets and conducting a children's program for the local church
- 5 The Royal Rangers having fun learning about humility through the leadership merit



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# God is Doing Wonderful Things in Nagaland

*Witnessing God setting people free, healing the sick and rekindling hungry hearts.*

*By Ev Philip Ming, Itinerant Minister*

Having arrived early at New Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport for my flight home, I found myself with almost two hours to spare before boarding. I thought this would be a good time to find somewhere quiet where I could sit and write an article for the AG Times. I have been through this airport many times before and should have realized this was near impossible. There is hardly any place in bustling, colorful Delhi that I know of that's quiet, whether in or out of the airport. The city never sleeps. I decided to find a place that was least noisy and try writing at least a few draft paragraphs, which, thankfully, I managed to do.

Before arriving at Delhi Airport I was in Nagaland to speak at a Mission Conference in Dimapur organized by the Mission Department of the West Chakhesang Baptist Church Council (WCBCC) for about 800 of their leaders and mission personnel. Chakhesang is one of the major Naga tribes.

The conference was well organized and well attended and I was as blessed speaking to them as they said they were listening to me. In addition, I also ministered in churches and several Bible colleges in Dimapur and I am thankful to the Lord for those who made recommitments to their mission call and for those who responded to the salvation call in the Evangelistic and Revival meetings.

Dimapur, the gateway into Nagaland, is a city situated in a lowland region surrounded by mountains and hills. Even though it was mid-autumn, the weather in Dimapur was extremely hot. It was also intensely dusty, due to ongoing road repairs and the upgrading of major roads. Moreover, the non-stop stream of vehicles made conditions worse by stirring up the dust as they went by. While traveling along the dusty road, my mind drifted back to my previous trip to Dimapur not too long ago, and I wondered whether it was dustier then or now. From my recollections, it was also dusty then, but much worse now. Also, there

were less roadworks going on previously. Road repairs and upgrading had now begun in earnest and expectations are high that bad road conditions and slow, bumpy rides will soon be a thing of the past.

It was exactly six months ago that I was here. It was springtime then and the weather was comfortably cool in Dimapur. After ministering in Dimapur for several days, including one at an Assemblies of God church where many came forward weeping in repentance, I traveled by road to Wokha, a scenic town northeast of Dimapur. The driving distance is about 136 km as the roads skirt around miles of mountainous terrain outside of Dimapur. Because of bad road conditions it took about 5.5 hours to cover the 136 km. Wokha is about 4,000 ft above sea level and the weather in April was perfect for taking long walks through the villages and along the mountain trails, which I did for my morning walks. Colorful plants and flowers lined the country paths and almost every home along the way has a garden replete with a vast array of plants, all in full bloom.

I was in Wokha for a week of Evangelistic and Revival services. One of the places I was ministering in was a Baptist church in Wokha Town. There were around 300 youths present for the combined youth meeting and when the salvation call was given, more than 50 gave their hearts to the Lord.

At another place called the *Prayer-cum-Healing Centre* where I ministered at a two-night Evangelistic and Revival meeting, the Holy Spirit moved mightily. Many responded to the salvation call and many more were touched by the Holy Spirit. After the meeting, several came forward testifying of physical healings and of being filled with the Holy Spirit.

I praise the Lord and give Him the glory for what He has done and for His Holy Spirit who moved powerfully during the many meetings.



- 1 Mission conference in Dimapur
- 2 Addressing the crowd at the conference
- 3 Ministering at the prayer center
- 4 People coming up to the altar to be prayed for
- 5 Praying for Wokha Town as we walk the ground





## Navigating Today's Parenting Challenges

Parenting is challenging, even more so in this day and age. With so many factors affecting our children, how do we Christian parents navigate some of these issues, and yet still be able to inculcate the right values in our children? This issue, AG Times looks into three areas that often worry parents—managing screen time, discipline and sexuality.

### Navigating Today's Parenting Challenges

# Developing Healthy Media Usage Habits

*What are some boundaries we as parents can draw for our children? Ps Benjamin Wong shares his advice as a parent.*

In looking for answers to boundaries of digital usage, every family is different. What works for one child or parent may not work for another. Tricia and I thank God for His grace that our sons turned out well despite our imperfections in parenting. We can share God's principles in Deuteronomy 6:4-9.

You can improvise our suggestions to suit your children.

#### Boundaries by Modeling

I've witnessed how electronic devices have robbed us of what matters most—time and relationships. We often see families engrossed in their gadgets—parents on Facebook, teens on other social media and even toddlers watching YouTube. Conversations seemed to have disappeared.

In Deuteronomy 6:4-6, it says that parents must be an example by putting God first in their lives before impressing His teachings on their children. Children need parents with boundaries.

We have a house-rule of not using electronic devices during meals. As parents, there'll be times when we cannot resist the temptation of checking our phones. We've broken the rule before and apologized to our children for having double standards.

A parent cannot remove the speck in his child's eye unless he first removes the plank in his own eye. This references Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 7:1-5). Boundaries are not set just for our children, but for ourselves too. Parents, you must walk the talk. Our children are watching us!

#### Boundaries for building values

In Deuteronomy 6:7, God instructs parents to teach His Word at home. This means parents are to teach godly principles behind the boundaries, not just focus on the application alone. Home is where children form concepts of reality, love, responsibility, choices, and freedom. Through boundary setting, parents build a conducive home environment for nurturing values in their children.

While our children were in secondary school, we allowed them to use their mobile phones after completing their schoolwork and for a limited time. They learned to finish what's important before they could use their phones. They also learned patience, control, and delayed gratification. These are important lessons for children to develop their attitudes through our parenting style. Parents must bear in mind that their children will mature to the level they structure boundaries, and not beyond.

#### Boundaries spelt out and internalized

Deuteronomy 6:8 talks about internalizing godly principles in our hearts and minds. Just as God has instructed parents in Deuteronomy 6:9 to write His Word on door frames and gates, it's important to be explicit in stating the consequences when they fail to abide by them. Paul said in Romans 4:15, "When there is no law, there is no transgression." So the 'Do's and Don'ts'

are crucial in dealing with teens. They need to know where the line is so that they know if they've crossed it. They need to know the consequences of their actions to learn the fundamental laws of life. This also gives them the freedom to choose, to respect or reject these boundaries. This is part of the growth process.

When our sons were younger, they failed to obey the boundaries we set. We meted out the consequences by confiscating their phones despite us suffering the inconvenience. Recently, we had a concern for one of my sons getting distracted from his studies because of his hobby on gadgets. We had a discussion with him and reached an agreement on boundaries, penned down, signed it and put it on our fridge for accountability. Sometimes, these 'Do's and Don'ts' seem harsh, but it's important to tell them that you're on their side and explain the difference these boundaries can make in their lives. They'll learn to appreciate them in the long run. It's part of the internalizing process.

#### Boundaries for relevance and appropriateness

Parents usually respond in two ways when they find their children addicted to electronic gadgets: 1) Enforcing a total ban out of a fear or 2) Letting go completely and turning a blind eye to the damaging consequences. Either extreme doesn't work. To avoid such responses, parents must be constantly updated of the latest trends in the digital age and stay relevant to our children. They are born into a digitalized world with electronic devices. This is the reality.

We can use the 'SWOT (Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats) Analysis' tool to help us better manage the use of electronic devices.

#### A faith journey

These are just some godly principles my wife and I have applied. However, parenting is still a faith journey with the Lord; it's a journey to understand our Father's heart and discover His Grace in our role as parents.

Here're books that have helped me grow as a parent:

- Boundaries with Kids: How Healthy Choices Grow Healthy Children by Dr Henry Cloud
- Boundaries with Teens: When to Say Yes, How to Say No by Dr John Townsend
- Logged On and Tuned Out by Vicki Courtney

Websites that offer guidelines for children of different ages:

- Healthy Digital Media Use Habits for Babies, Toddlers & Preschoolers (<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/Media/Pages/Healthy-Digital-Media-Use-Habits-for-Babies-Toddlers-Preschoolers.aspx>)
- Kids & Tech: Tips for Parents in the Digital Age (<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/Media/Pages/Tips-for-Parents-Digital-Age.aspx>)
- How to Make a Family Media Use Plan (<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/Media/Pages/How-to-Make-a-Family-Media-Use-Plan.aspx>)



**Ps Benjamin Wong** is a pastor overseeing the Family Life and Restorative Ministries in Grace Assembly of God. He also serves as an associate counselor with Reach Counselling Centre and a member of the executive committee in Association of Christian Counsellors of Singapore (ACCS). He is married and has two young adult sons.



Navigating Today's Parenting Challenges

# Disciplining Our Children in Godly Ways (Part 1)

*Disciplining our children is a minefield that we need to tread wisely. Three parents share their thoughts.*

## IS THERE A BIBLICAL PRINCIPLE THAT YOU ABIDE BY WHEN DISCIPLINING YOUR CHILDREN?

**RO** Both of my daughters went to a Catholic school since young, but I only became a believer of Jesus Christ when they were young adults. However, in retrospect, my approach to disciplinary action did have some biblical resemblance to Proverbs 22:6—to impress upon them the meaning of love, care, moral values, the ‘Do’s and Don’ts’ while they’re still young. Our family has zero tolerance for profanity. So in their early years, they’ve already been told that it’s a taboo to utter any offensive word at home or outdoors.

**KC** I subscribe to the notion that there’ll be a harvest of righteousness and peace for those trained up by discipline (Hebrews 12:11). I believe in blessing the children by loving them enough to discipline them. As parents, we cannot be with our children all the time. Life will still get hard for them no matter how much we prepare them. Children need to be taught what is right just as much as they need to be corrected. Our children are constantly reminded to seek God’s ways regarding the blessings of obedience and the consequences of disobedience.

**UC** Proverbs 22:6 (NKJV) says: “*Train up a child in the way he should go and even when he is old he will not depart from it.*” Discipline means more than just correcting our children. It also means:

1. Parents are called to be our children’s life coaches. It’s about teaching, coaching and seeing your children through to the victory God has prepared for them.
2. “... in the way he should go...” means in the ways of the Bible. As parents, we need to be grounded in God’s Word. Despite the world’s ever-changing views, we must teach our children to honor and live out God’s Word as the ultimate rule of life.

## WHAT IS YOUR DISCIPLINE STYLE?

**RO** Though I was a recipient of the rod system when I was younger because of my rebellious traits, I was blessed that I didn’t have to use it on my two daughters when they were my age. Instead, I corrected them by firmly warning them not to overstep their boundaries. Though I do believe that sometimes we’ve no choice but to use the rod as a painful reminder, I thank God that I didn’t have to use it on my children.

**KC** When the kids were young, the discipline began with a stern rebuke and reminder of the consequences. If the behavior persisted, a time out followed until they calmed down. For acute misbehavior, I’d find a consequence that suited the situation. It was often a suspension of privileges. At the end of the discipline time, I’d get down on their level to explain my actions and firmly tell them that the behavior is not acceptable. So far, the children have been spared from the rod.

**UC** In our family we do not hit our children. We believe it’s God’s kindness that leads to repentance. But we do not spare discipline either. And we discipline our children using the following steps:

1. We tell them what they did wrong clearly and how their actions have affected others. Then, we use a Bible verse to teach them what God says about their sin.
2. We ask them to make it right, then pray and ask God for forgiveness and grace to live right for Him. In situations where they need to make it right, they have to pay the price whatever the cost. For example, if they broke something, they need to find a way to replace it; if they hurt someone they need to talk to the person and do an act of kindness, if they skipped studying and decided to play with their devices instead, they get their privileges taken away for a day.
3. Once they’ve done 1 and 2, we remind them that they’re children of God. We tell them we love them and are very proud of them. It’s not their mistakes that define them but their courage to set the wrong right in honor of God.

## COMPLETE THE SENTENCE: I WILL NOT DISCIPLINE MY CHILDREN WHEN...

**RO** I will not discipline my children when I’m provoked as I may be releasing my anger more than teaching and correcting them. In Proverbs 12:18 God has reminded me not to speak reckless words that can pierce like swords. Instead, give me a tongue that brings healing.

**KC** I will not discipline my children when they are in adolescence. I’d like to proactively educate the children to fully understand the course of actions and face the natural consequences that follow. Just as Christ accepted us, I want to affirm them for acknowledging their mistakes so as to encourage them to express their true feelings instead of hiding them. I hope this helps them to know what is right, and at the same time communicates my care about them.

**UC** I will not discipline my children when I’m angry. I want my discipline to be out of love, not an outcome of my bad temper. I walk away, count backward from 10 and ask the Holy Spirit what to do in the situation I’m in.

*Continued on pg 19...*



**RO** Reni Ooi is a working mother and happily married to Veng Seng, her strong pillar of support for the past 29 years. Blessed with two lovely daughters, Nicole, 26 and Amber, 22. Her eldest, Nicole is currently working with a Christian online media company, Thir.st, while Amber is into her third year in NTU.



and this has taught him to see how positive discipline can contribute to achieving a person’s goals in all aspects of life.

**KC** Sim Kang Chong and his wife, Jane, celebrate 19 years of marriage this year. They have two children, Joell and Joann. He has worked as an educator



Daniel, 11 and Sarah, 9. She contributes monthly to the New Grace Newsletter with the ‘Prayer of a Desperate Parent’ series.

**UC** Uma Rudd Chia is a keynote speaker and creative director. She and her husband Colin serve actively in Grace Assembly of God and have two children



Navigating Today's Parenting Challenges

# Disciplining Our Children in Godly Ways (Part 2)

*Danny Ho draws out three practical handles on disciplining our children.*

*"My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, <sup>6</sup> because the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son."*

*<sup>7</sup>Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father? <sup>8</sup>If you are not disciplined—and everyone undergoes discipline—then you are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters at all. <sup>9</sup>Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of spirits and live!*

*<sup>10</sup>They disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness. <sup>11</sup>No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. (Hebrews 12:5b-11)*

Biblical disciplining involves two parts: discipline and punishment. Discipline involves training to build the positive behavior. Punishment involves the effort to reduce negative behavior.

Here are three principles that we can apply biblical discipline to our children.

## The principle of sowing and reaping (v11)

Permissive parents leave their children to do whatever they like. A farmer would never leave their farms to chance, but tend to it consistently with care, having the faith that it will produce a harvest.

Similarly, we need to train our child to do the things that they can do and let them do it for themselves. For example, if they are old enough to make the bed, they need to do it everyday and not leave it to their parents or the helpers. When they change their clothes, they need to bring them to the laundry basket. It's no use dressing well to impress people outside but leaving your room still messy.

Parents say that these things are small and unimportant. But it's the faithfulness in doing the small things consistently that builds character and grooms us to have what it takes to do the bigger things in life.

The underlying principle is that children need to be encouraged to take ownership of their tasks and responsibilities and not be "rescued" by others. When they are rescued, they are robbed of the opportunity to learn the value of responsibility, and of sowing faithfully and reaping what they sow. In the long run, they become incapacitated and over-reliant on others.

## The principle of punishment (v5b)

Basically, the purpose of punishment is to reduce negative behavior. To some parents, punishment means using the cane. Parents are conflicted about the opinion of this method of punishment. When using the cane as a form of punishment, parents need to remember that you cannot be angry during the process. Otherwise, the message that the children receive would just be that when you are angry and have more power, you can use violence against anyone. Next time when you want to use the cane, it's important to check your emotions first.

Studies have shown that negative punishment is more effective than positive punishment. Positive punishment is adding a consequence to that behavior, such as caning. Negative punishment is taking away something as a result of that behavior. One example could be a contractual agreement for a child to do his or her homework before having screen time for 30 minutes. When the child does not fulfill his or her side of the contract, then the consequence would be carried out.

Negative punishment only works when it is carried through. If the parent becomes soft-hearted and relent, then that negative punishment will not work. Remember, there is no need for a child's behavior to change when that behavior is inconsequential.

## The principle of love (v6)

The Bible says that a parent can rebuke or correct their children in Hebrews 12:5b, but in Ephesians 6:4, it states that parents should not provoke their children. To provoke means to stir up intense emotions in anger.

That is why parents should not discipline their children in anger. A child will know when a parent disciplines them in love or in anger. A parent may provoke a child through harsh punishment or words. Statements such as, "You are stupid!", "Why can't you be like your sister?" and "Why are you so careless and lazy?" can be very hurtful. Whatever a parent says or does to a child, the child does not yet have the cognitive ability to process it. The child will internalize what the parent says.

For example, when a parent says that a child is stupid, the child would literally think so and would feel that he is worthless and stupid. The effect will last a lifetime because no matter what he or she does, the child will never be good enough. When a parent rejects a child, the child will stop loving himself or herself but will continue to yearn for his or her parent's approval.

When you love your child, you want to show love. When you show anger and frustration, the child will not see your love. Love always empowers and it always believes. Let your motivation behind disciplining your child be love and not fear because love expands and fear constricts!



**Mr Danny Ho** is the Principal Counseling Consultant in One Place Consultancy Pte Ltd. His passion is to equip parents to empower their children through biblical principles of parenting. He also provides private counseling and the 'Employee Assistance Programme' to companies. Danny is married and is a father of two children.



Navigating Today's Parenting Challenges

# How to Talk to Youths About Sex

*Four tips to make talking to youths about sexuality more natural. By Raphael Zhang, Focus on the Family Singapore*

Broaching the topic of sex with youths can be a delicate matter, requiring thoughtful navigation. While it's important to have faith-filled and informed conversations with our young people about sex, the challenges of the task may trip even the best of us up or discourage us from giving it a shot at all.

Here are some ways to view this conversation about sexuality so you can continue to guide your youths.

## Be holistic

An essential part to understanding and explaining sexuality is to ground it in the Christian worldview of personhood. One profound implication of us being created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27) is this—God is a spiritual and relational Being with thoughts and emotions, so we're meant to be spiritual, relational, intellectual and emotional too. We live out these aspects in our bodies, so we have a physical dimension as well.

A discussion about sexuality is not just about private parts and sexual acts, but it must also involve a holistic perspective of what it means to be human.

**Spiritual:** What we do with our sexuality has deep spiritual effects and is part of our spiritual worship to God. ([Romans 12:1](#))

**Intellectual:** What we think about ourselves and others has a significant influence on our sexuality. ([Romans 12:2](#))

**Emotional:** How we steward our desires and feelings about ourselves and others greatly affects how we live out our sexuality. ([Galatians 5:16-25](#); [Proverbs 4:23](#))

**Social:** We're made for and shaped by our relationships. The way we and others live out our sexuality impacts one another deeply. ([Proverbs 13:20](#); [1 Corinthians 12:26](#))

**Physical:** How we act upon our sexuality in our bodies has physical consequences and involves all the above dimensions of our being. ([1 Corinthians 6:19-20](#))

Don't just talk to youths about the physical components of sexuality. Engage them in a broader conversation and debate about all the wonderful dimensions of being human, and inspire them to worship God with their sexuality in all these aspects.

## Be role-models

Youths have a very sharp radar for who's consistent in their lives and authentic with them. They can quickly spot who doesn't walk the talk, and who isn't being honest with them.

It's crucial that we must practise what we preach, so that we'll have the credibility to speak to them about living out their sexuality in a godly manner. If we aren't striving to be sexually whole, the gaps between our actions and our words will make our message sound hollow to them.

After all, godly values are not just taught, but caught when they see how we live. This doesn't mean we have to be perfect. It means that in the midst of our struggles, we must want to honour God in our sexuality and other areas of our lives, so that we are convicted to engage with our youths to do the same.

Godly values are not just taught in words, but more so caught when they see the way we live.

## Be real

Youths often enjoy hearing about how we've lived out the lessons we're conveying to them, because it fleshes out what abstract principles can look like in reality.

Don't just share stories of success. It's also helpful for them to hear about our struggles and mistakes, the lessons and how we tried to overcome them. In fact, they may find the stories of our ongoing journey in a certain area of sexuality to be even more encouraging and authentic. They may find comfort in the fact that adults also grapple with the messiness of life. They may be heartened that there are restorative ways forward even after mistakes have been made.

It's helpful for youths to hear about our struggles and mistakes, the lessons and how we tried to overcome them.

When we share our own journeys in sexuality, we show them that we desire to be genuine with them. This invites them to trust us with their experiences as well. However, as much as we want to be authentic with our youths, we also want to be mindful to share wisely, lest we expose them to unnecessary and inappropriate details.

## Be patient

Finally, engaging youths on sexuality is a long journey that may involve lots of going back and forth, repetitions and rebukes. Let's be patient with them in their growth journeys, as God is patient with us in ours.

Be a safe person for them to confide their thoughts, questions and struggles. This assures them that they can approach you with their concerns about sexuality, without fear of judgment.

If you don't know the answer to a certain question, tell them honestly that it's something you want to research on to continue the conversation. Alternatively, it's a great idea to invite them to look for answers with you. Ask questions for them to think deeper and reflect more, empowering them to process their concerns more thoroughly.

There are many other ways to engage youths more effectively on issues of sexuality. But we hope that these tips can help you to get started on the essential task of [teaching our youths to worship the Lord](#) with their sexuality.

Get equipped on how to deepen your parent-child relationship and engage your children on the topic of sexuality at [www.family.org.sg/subscribe](http://www.family.org.sg/subscribe).



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# God is the Light and Compass

*Finding God and trusting Him for all my ways is the greatest decision I've made.*

By Ly Y Phinh, The Harvest Force

I'm 16 years old and currently studying at an International School in Singapore. I grew up in a city in Cambodia. Being raised as the eldest of three children in a traditional Chinese family, ancestral worship and customary practices were a constant part of my life. Consequently, fulfilling my elders' wishes became my purpose and seemed imminent to take over what I desired to do with my life.

Despite what was going on then, God revealed a bigger plan. Even before I knew it, God was already leading me like a compass. Back in Cambodia, I was placed in a Christian school when I turned 8. This school was the first and only Christian school in my province! The teachers imparted Christian values to me and I found my way to Jesus. The joy of knowing and receiving Jesus into my life was truly a light that shone for me in the darkness.

God continued to make the way for me to draw closer to Him. When I was 13, I received a scholarship to study in Singapore. I went to Singapore alone without the companionship of family or friends. At that time, feelings of loneliness were often discouraging and overwhelming. I had difficulty adapting to life in Singapore. But again, God had already provided me with more help beyond my own imagination. God led two teachers who used to teach me back in Cambodia to connect with me in Singapore. They invited me to their church, The Harvest Force.

Within a short time, I moved from being lonely and isolated to meeting and making friends who treated me like family. I could sense God's love and kindness through the church



Y Phinh (second left, standing) with friends in a game of Laser Tag

family. I was touched by genuine kindness—the way Jesus would teach us to love and accept others. Before long, I started to learn how to love and care for others and how to love God in a deeper way. As I grew closer to God, I began to appreciate the assurance of His Word that He has a plan for His children, not to harm us but to give us hope and a future. (Jeremiah 29:11)

I'm now confident that wherever I go, whatever I do, God is working His plan out for me. He is the light for me when

the path seems dark, and the compass for me when I don't know where to head. God never takes His eyes off me. I'm grateful that He has provided me with a large family here in Singapore, a spiritual family that cares for me.

If you're experiencing hard times, do not think it is your bad luck that you are facing difficulties. God is faithful and in control. As you stay close to Christ, He will be the light and compass to guide you out of the rough times. Remain in Christ and He can lift you up!

...Continued from pg 16

## HOW DO OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS SUPPORT YOU WHEN DISCIPLINING YOUR CHILDREN?

**RO** Where there was a need for either one of us to discipline, the one not disciplining usually did not intervene with the other to avoid any contradictory behavior that our children may use to divide us. Besides, it was also a form of respect given to the one doing the disciplining. Sometimes the children would share their grievances with our domestic helper when they felt unjustified, and she, in turn, would provide feedback on this for our reflection.

**KC** When I'm in charge of the discipline situation, it's normally harder for me to show affection to the children after. My wife would complement me by setting the context and express affection through loving words and touch at the end of the discipline time. There is no perfect-parenting and we partner God for His guidance and wisdom during these times. We share God's Word with the children and ask Him to be at work in our children's hearts. If the children can feel

God's love and grace in their own journeys, they are likely to see obedience in response to the love they received. We also hope they will maintain a deep and loving relationship with Him when parenting their own children in future.

**UC** My husband and I do our best to stand united in our discipline. Honestly, we sometimes disagree on how the other disciplines because we were raised by parents who were so different—one pretty chill, modern and hands-on; the other more traditional and aloof. We've learned over the years to pause, go into a room, discuss and then walk out and discipline our kids in a way we both agree is best. Sometimes we play good cop and bad cop. We take turns to do this. I don't always want to be the bad cop. My extended family is very close to my children and is a great sounding board for them. They pray for our family and gently guide and nudge the children toward God.





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