

the  
**PLAIN TRUTH**  
a magazine of understanding

COMBINED ISSUE  
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# In Search of a Happy Family

THERAPY FOR AILING MARRIAGES  
IF SOMEONE YOU KNOW DRINKS TOO MUCH  
PAINTING AFRICA RED

weller





Personal from...

## Abundant Living

**W**hy do some religious people feel that their religious life must be one of giving up all the fun and enjoyment of living—that in order to please God, they must endure a life of morbid gloom?

For that matter, why do some nonreligious people feel that to become a Christian would mean a life of living painful penance?

As a boy I was brought up in a respectable Protestant church of traditional Christianity. I never did know very much, as a boy, about what the church believed—but I did know that it regarded sin as violating its many don'ts: Don't smoke, don't dance, don't play cards, don't go to the theater, don't drink a drop of wine, don't do this, don't do that!

A world-famous philosopher, editor, and lecturer whom I knew said he had no desire to live a life of Christian repression. "I desire," he said, "to be radiant, cheerful, friendly—to meet people with a smile." He was a highly educated man—but he was a biblical illiterate!

Where do people get all these distorted ideas about the religion of Jesus Christ? Certainly not out of the Bible.

They know nothing of the Jesus of the Bible, who said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

Somehow a lot of people have received a lot of weird and false ideas about Jesus Christ—I mean the Jesus of your Bible. Actually, I think almost no one knows what the Bible says about Him.

It seems most people think of sin as glamorous, as the thing that is best for us, but which a stern, wrathful God denies us. Some years ago a little book was selling big on Hollywood newsstands. It was titled *How to Sin in Hollywood*.

Why don't people know that God our Creator has never forbidden us a single thing that is good for us—never said "don't" about a single thing except that which is going to harm us? What God does command us not to do are the very things that bring on unhappiness, frustration, pain, suffering, and a life of morbid gloom.

Let's get this matter straight. The real Jesus Christ said

He came to bring us happiness and joy! He came that we might enjoy full, abundant life eternally. God Almighty intended the real Christian life to be happy. Jesus said, "These things have I spoken unto you . . . that your joy might be full" (John 15:11).

There is a way of life that causes peace, happiness, and joy. God the great Creator set that way as an inexorable law—an invisible spiritual law—to produce peace, happiness, joy, abundance! There is a cause for every effect. In this unhappy, confused world we have discontentment, unhappiness, wretchedness, suffering. The world is full of that. It should be full of peace, happiness, and joy. There's a cause. People don't like God's law. That law is the cause of peace and everything desirable and good. People want everything that is good and desirable. They just don't want to obey that which would cause it!

Christ came to call people to repent. Repent of what? Repent of causing unhappiness, strife, war, and pain—and then to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

And what kind of results will the Spirit of God produce in you?

I'll tell you, first, what it won't produce. It won't produce the morbid, unhappy, painful, gloomy life that many think is the Christian life. Let the Bible tell you what "fruit" it will produce in you. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (Gal. 5:22-23).

Look at that more closely: "The fruit of the Spirit"—this is the Spirit of God. This is the Holy Spirit that God imparts only to those who have repented—that is, turned from that which has caused unhappiness, morbid gloom, discouragement, frustration, emptiness. On the contrary, that fruit of the Spirit is first of all love. And the second fruit is joy! Joy is happiness brimful and running over. That doesn't sound like an unhappy, empty, gloomy life, does it? And God's Spirit is not static. It flows. It flows spontaneously from God into and through you, and out from you, making still others happy and joyful.

The very first result produced (Continued on page 44)



# Part 2

## What Do You Mean... SALVATION?

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*Do you realize not one in a hundred knows what it is—how to get it—when you receive it? Don't be too sure you do! Here, once and for all, is the truth made so plain you will really understand it!*

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by Herbert W. Armstrong

**I**n the April issue, we learned that salvation is deliverance from the spiritual consequences of sin—eternal death (Rom. 6:23). And we read in I John 3:4 that sin is the transgression of God's law. So since all human beings have sinned (Rom. 3:23), there is a need for justification before God.

But exactly how is one justified? Through keeping God's law perfectly? Through grace alone? Or is there another answer?

Actually, as we shall see in a moment, you can't keep a spiritual law with a carnal mind and carnal love. But, even if you could, your obedience is only what is required of you now! It does not make up for past law breaking. A man convicted of committing murder last month does not erase his sentence by being law-abiding this month.

That is what your Bible teaches! Get that straight! All the good works in the world—all the law keeping—cannot justify you of your past guilt.

Now where do you find yourself?

You are now submissive—obedient to God's law. At least you try to be. Is this necessary? Most assuredly it is! For if you disobey—break the law—you commit more sin. Christ does not save us *in* our sins, but *from* our sins. Does obedience justify you? A thousand times no!

Where are you now? You still have no access whatever to God.

You are pretty helpless, aren't you?

### How You Gain Contact

And now, if you have made this right start—you have repented—there is a way you may gain contact with God who has eternal life to impart. God so loved this world of sinners, cut off from Him, that He gave His only begotten Son! Remember, God gives eternal life through Christ!

Notice Romans 5:6: "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."

Jesus Christ never transgressed God's law. He said, "I have kept my Father's commandments" (John

15:10). He also said He set us an example that we should do as He did. He never incurred the death penalty. He never cut Himself off from God. When He voluntarily paid the death penalty, He did not pay it for any sins of His own—for there were none. He gave His life in the stead of yours! He paid your penalty for you!

The life He gave was that of the Maker of us all! God created all things by Jesus Christ (Eph. 3:9). All things—including all humans—were made by Him (John 1:1-3). Therefore the life He gave on the cross was greater than the sum total of all other human lives! That is the life that died for you—that paid your penalty for you!

Now, continue in Romans 5:8-9: "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood. . . ."

Notice! "Being *now* justified." How? By the blood of Christ! If you have repented, and accepted Jesus



Christ as personal Savior, you are already now justified!

### Where Most Jump the Track

But right here is where so many go off into error. They simply do not understand biblical terms. "Justified" does not refer to the future—it has to do only with your guilty past! This term "justified" does not mean "saved," as we shall now see. It does not mean the gift of life. It means the gift of acquittal of past guilt! It means the penalty of past sins has been paid in full, by Christ, for you!

The law stood over you. It claimed your life—you were under it. It took Christ's life in payment instead of yours. The penalty stands paid! You are no longer under the law. It no longer has claim over your life! You are now under grace—undeserved pardon. You are pardoned from paying the penalty, since Jesus Christ paid it for you! This is not your works. It is Christ's sacrifice. You are now acquitted—justified—the slate is wiped clean of a guilty past!

In other words, the barrier between you and God has now been removed by the fact that Christ paid your penalty in your stead, and you now accept Him as your personal Savior. You are now, by Christ's sacrifice, given contact with God—reconciled to Him!

### Saved by His Death?

So, continue in Romans 5:9: "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."

Notice it! You are already justified. The past is squared up—the penalty paid—the contact with God made. But are you already saved?

Look at it! It says, "We shall be saved." Not that we already are saved. It says "being now justified" but it does not say "being now saved." It says we shall be—yes, in the future—saved. That is still future!

Now here comes a surprise. Notice verse 10: "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son..." Here, again, we were reconciled—past tense. Not by your works—by

Christ's death. When you have truly repented, forsaken your way, sought God, accepted Christ as Savior and His death as payment for your past sins, you have been, already, reconciled. So the wording here is that we were reconciled—past tense—to God by the death of His Son.

What was accomplished by Jesus' death? It paid the penalty, it wiped out your guilty past, justified you of your guilt, reconciled you to God. But did it save you? Did it? Wait—don't just say yes. See with your own eyes what your Bible says!

It says, continuing in verse 10: "... much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."

Can you believe your own eyes? There it is, in your own Bible!

Already reconciled by Christ's death, "we shall be saved"—that is future tense. Not yet saved—but we shall be—in the future—saved. Now are you going to be saved by Christ's death? Can death impart life?

There is no stronger law in science than the law of biogenesis, which says life comes only from life. Death cannot impart life.

Now how shall we—in the future—be saved? By Christ's death? No! Notice! Read it! "We shall be saved by his life!"

After Christ died, God raised Him back to life. We are saved by His resurrection—by His life—by a living Savior! Read I Corinthians 15:14-23.

### What Do You Mean— "Not Under the Law"?

Now where do you stand? You are making progress. You now have real hope. You have repented, you have sought God, forsaken your way, turned to God's way, as defined in His law and all through His Word. You have accepted Jesus Christ as personal Savior and His shed blood for remission of sins. You are now reconciled to God. You are justified of—forgiven—your guilty past. You are out from under the penalty of broken law.

Now, we read the question: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" (Rom. 6:1.) You are now

under grace—undeserved pardon!

You deserved only death. You didn't earn forgiveness—pardon from the death penalty. You received it by grace through Jesus Christ.

Now, shall you continue in sin—that is, continue transgressing the law? The answer is "God forbid" (Rom. 6:2).

You were under the law when the law stood over you, claiming its penalty. Christ paid the penalty and satisfied the claims of the law, and when you accepted Him as Savior you were no longer under the law, but under grace. Now does that mean you are not under obligation to obey the law—that you have license to sin, to break the law? Remember sin is the transgression of the law.

Now read this in your Bible!

"What then? Shall we sin [that is, according to the Bible definition, "Shall we break the law"], because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin [breaking the law] unto death [penalty for disobedience to God's law], or of obedience unto righteousness?" (Rom. 6:15-16.)

There it is! We must not return to rebellion against God's inexorable law of love—His right way of life. If we do, we are again under the law—again automatically sentenced to death! Jesus Christ did not die to give you license to continue in law breaking. When you accept, by His grace, remission of sins, it is only for sins that are past! You cannot obtain in advance remission of all the lawlessness you might deliberately commit in the future.

Read that in your Bible: "... for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God" (Rom. 3:25).

We have remission of sins that are past—not license to break the law in the future.

But does that mean you must live a perfect life from that moment? You would find that quite impossible. You must never again return

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# SALVATION?

(Continued from page 3)

to a life of willful and continuous disobedience. But future missteps must—and can—be forgiven, so long as you continue in striving with God's help to live a life of obedience to Him.

Why do some religious people today teach that it is all right for Christians to go right on breaking the law? Why do they say that grace means license to disobey God's law? No wonder God found it necessary, through Jude, to warn us to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints by Jesus Christ—for, as you'll read in Jude 3-4, there are certain men crept in unawares—deceiving people, turning grace into license!

Would a governor pardon a man convicted of murder so he could continue murdering more and more people? God's merciful pardon—His grace—is bestowed on us because we have repented, with a sincere desire to turn from our wicked ways of lawlessness.

So, from here on, we must obey—unto righteousness! (Rom. 6:16.)

Yet you cannot, of your own strength, keep the spiritual law spiritually.

Now let's really understand that!

## How You Get Eternal Life

You have now gained contact with God. You are mortal, possessing only a temporary chemical existence. God only has eternal life. Life can come only from life—not from death. Now what?

You now need to receive God's gift of eternal life. But how?

Jesus Christ said it was necessary for us mortal humans that He go to the Father's throne in heaven (John 16:7) in order to send the Holy Spirit of God for us.

This required the resurrected living Christ. So after His resurrection, Jesus ascended to the throne of God that rules the entire universe (Rev. 3:21). Then, some ten days later, on the annual day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came to enter into the very minds of all who had sincerely repented of their rebellion against God and His way, and who had

been reconciled to God and had gained access to Him by faith in Christ's shed blood for the remission of past sins (Acts 2:1-4).

These first disciples received God's Spirit through the work of the resurrected, glorified, living Christ. The Spirit of the Father is also the Spirit of Christ. Thus it actually was the living Christ, Himself, entering into them—not in Person, but in Spirit! Christ is a living Savior who does His saving work from within!

Now let's get the connection.

On that annual day of Pentecost at Jerusalem, thousands of people looking on were amazed when the disciples received the Holy Spirit. Peter preached an explanatory sermon (Acts 2:14-36). The multitude was emotionally convicted and cried out, "What shall we do?" Peter gave the answer—for you and me today as much as for them of that day: Repent, be baptized, showing your faith in Christ, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

God imparts eternal life to us by His Spirit. It is the impregnation—the begetting of eternal life.

If the Holy Spirit of God actually dwells within you, then, as God raised Christ from the dead, He shall—at the time of the resurrection—also make immortal ("quicken" means energize—make eternally alive) your mortal body by His Spirit dwelling in you (Romans 8:11). But (verse 9), unless His Spirit is actually in you, you are not a Christian—no matter how many churches you join!

God's Holy Spirit is His life. It imparts His life to you! It imparts more, as we shall now see!

## God Doesn't "Kid Himself"

One thing more: The Holy Spirit is divine, spiritual love—the love of God flowing into you through the living Christ! (Rom. 5:5.) Jesus explained how we should come to Him and drink in of His Spirit, like drinking in living water—and how this same Holy Spirit would flow, like a river of living water, out from us (John 7:37-39) in love to God and to fellowman. Now let's make all that plain and clear.

God's law is a law of love—love to God in reverence, worship and obedience; love to neighbor in service,

kindness, sharing. It takes love to fulfill—to perform—the law. You will read that in Romans 13:10.

But we see in Romans 7:14 that this law is a spiritual law. This spiritual law can be fulfilled, performed, spiritually kept and obeyed only by spiritual love! You were not born with that kind of love. You do not have, naturally, the kind of love required to truly keep this great spiritual law!

You must go to God to obtain that kind of love. That is a love He gives you through the living Christ. That is His own love. It emanates directly from Him.

Now understand! True righteousness is keeping "all thy commandments" (Ps. 119:172). It is performing God's spiritual law with the spiritual love which only God can supply.

You drink it in from Him—once the contact is established. It pours out from you like rivers of living water. Water in a river flows in a certain direction, guided by the riverbed or channel. God's law is that riverbed which guides the flow—the expression—the direction in which the divine love flows! God's law is the way of perfect spiritual character—the very character of God.

So, the very spirit by which God imparts to you His life—His salvation—is also His own love which imparts to you His righteousness! It is no longer just you, in your own power and strength, "keeping the commandments"—it is, spiritually speaking, the living Christ in you keeping His Father's commandments—even as He kept them by this same divine love while He was human here on earth!

Can you brag, or boast, then, about your righteousness? No—it is not your righteousness—it is God's! If Christ, by His grace, erased your guilty past, gave you access to God, and now pours forth into and through you the spiritual love that keeps the law, this is not your righteousness, but God's.

And this is not your "works"! It is nothing you earn!

God does not "kid Himself." Some religious teachers tell you Christ lived a righteous life for you more than 1900 years ago, and since you "can't keep the law," as they



claim, God "imputes" Christ's righteousness of 19 centuries ago to you—by sort of "kidding Himself" that you are righteous. Meanwhile, they say, you are given license to still be a spiritual criminal breaking His law! God does not impute to you something you do not have.

Far from it: The living Christ by His power makes us righteous! He imparts to us power to actually become righteous. It is His doing!

### Why Not to Heaven Now?

Once again, back to you! Now where are we?

There are, first, two things you must do. On that very day of Pentecost after Christ had ascended to heaven, many who had joined the mob crying out "Crucify Him!" during Christ's trial before Pilate were conscience-stricken and afraid when they heard Peter's inspired sermon. They cried out, "What shall we do?" They, too, were helpless.

"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit," was the inspired answer (Acts 2:38).

Note it! Two things you do:

1) Repent—turn from your way by turning to God's way—His law! You repent of sin. Sin is the transgression of the spiritual law.

2) Be baptized. The Ethiopian eunuch, coming to a lake, asked Philip what hindered him to be baptized. "If thou believest with all thine heart" was Philip's condition (Acts 8:36-37). Repentance is toward God, for the law comes from God, but faith is toward Jesus Christ (Acts 20:21). God commands that faith in Christ's atonement for sin should be expressed through the act of baptism. (Write for our free booklet *All About Water Baptism*.)

This, then, gains contact with God. That is as far as you can go on your own. You have reached your extremity! So now God completes the third step outlined in Acts 2:38:

3) You shall receive the Holy Spirit.

This is God's gift. It is the presence, conditionally, of eternal life.

And now if you faithfully follow God's way—the way the Holy Spirit leads—you are already a begotten

son of God! "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom. 8:14).

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth *not yet* appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he [Christ] shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (I John 3:2).

Get it straight! You are now converted—a changed person—for God's Spirit (Eph. 4:23) produces a renewing of your mind. Your whole concept and direction of life are changed! God's Spirit is His very *life* imparted to you! You are now a begotten son of God.

But it does not yet appear what you shall be. I John 3:2 does not say "where you shall go" or "where you shall be." It is talking about a condition, not a place: "what we shall be"! Salvation is a matter of what you become—not where you shall go! God's purpose is to change you from your vile character to His glorious character—not to change the place where you are!

But, you are now already a begotten son of God; you may now call Him Father as long as you are led by His Spirit (Rom. 8:14-15).

And there are still more "ifs." You must grow spiritually (II Peter 3:18). It is "to him that overcometh" that Christ will grant to sit with Him on His throne, when He returns to earth (Rev. 3:21). If you overcome—overcome your own carnal nature, the world and the devil—and keep Christ's works (not your own works, but Christ's—by His Spirit in you), then you shall reign and rule all nations with Him in the happy world tomorrow!

### The Christian Life

The very fact that the Christian life is one of overcoming, growing spiritually, means that none is perfect on repentance, faith in Christ, and receiving God's Holy Spirit.

I have said previously that at the time of conversion you are forgiven sins that are past. That is correct. You are not given license to commit sins in the future. But a false accuser represented falsely that this is a teaching that you can never be forgiven any future sins.

That, of course, is not true. The newly converted Christian is still

mortal—still flesh and blood—still human. God's Holy Spirit has entered his mind, and that is the divine nature. But this new divine nature does not drive out the old human nature. That is still there, too.

The newly converted Christian has come to a change of mind. Before, he actually loved sin—now he hates it! But he is the victim of many habits. He will be caught off guard, and as a matter of habit, before he fully realizes it, he may do something that is a sin. Or, through human weakness, and because he has not yet attained constant contact with God through prayer, he may succumb to some temptation, and sin. Then he repents—he is remorseful. Can he be forgiven? Of course! Read I John, chapters 1 and 2.

As long as the Christian really wants, in his heart, to obey God and to live God's way, God looks on the heart, and forgives on repentance.

But what I want to emphasize is that we are not given license to return to a desire for sin and to deliberately live a life of continuous sin, and then say we were forgiven in advance. You are never forgiven sin in advance. Always you are forgiven sins that are past. But when Jesus said we must forgive until seventy times seven, will He do less?

So, finally, back again to you! Where are we now? You have been converted—changed in mind, concept, attitude, direction and way of life; you are begotten as a child of God; you have now eternal life abiding in you—as long as you are led by God's Spirit in God's way, as long as you continue in contact and fellowship with God (I John 1:3). This comes all by God's grace as His gift, and is not anything you have earned by your works. Now if you continue overcoming, growing spiritually—and all this actually through God's power—you shall inherit the Kingdom of God, and be made immortal to live forever in happiness and joy! □

A copy of this series of articles is available in booklet form. The booklet is titled *Just What Do You Mean... Salvation?* Address your request to our office nearest you. (See inside front cover for addresses).



## Personal from...

(Continued from page 1)

in your life by God's Spirit is love. Love is a righteous love of and for others. It will mean your face is beaming. It's an outgoing concern for the good and welfare of others. It will mean that you are really giving out—that you are radiant and happy. And love results in joy—that's the second of these fruits. The third is peace. Instead of an attitude of hostility, instead of going around quarreling, being resentful and bitter, angry and arguing, you'll be in an attitude of peace—peace in your mind and with your neighbor and with your God.

Next comes "longsuffering." That means patience. How much has impatience made you unhappy? Probably impatience makes more people unhappy than almost anything else! If you can really come to have patience, you'll be acquiring one of the things that makes life worth living and that will allow you to be happy.

Then next is gentleness. That makes others happy and automatically adds to your happiness. And then goodness and faith! Faith is confidence—not self-confidence, but reliance on the Supreme Power. It means the supreme power of God is working for you.

If you could evaluate in dollars what all these tremendous benefits mean in your life, you'd have to put on them a value of millions and millions of dollars. But these are benefits you can't buy. God simply wants to give them to you. What they cost you is repenting of that which has been producing unhappiness, pain and suffering, discouragement and frustration. It's a tremendous bargain! That is the fruit of God's Spirit that will spontaneously spring forth from you, radiate from you and cause you to be a joy to others, as well as to yourself.

Now this is not to say that there are never troubles in the Christian life. Far from it. There will be persecutions. Jesus Christ was persecuted. He said, "If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you" (John 15:20). That comes from without. But unhappi-

ness is something that springs from within. Happiness is a state of mind; happiness is within. And the person who does have this inward peace—this joy, this patience and love, and absence of resentment and bitterness—isn't going to be anywhere near as disturbed and unhappy as when he didn't have them. You'll always face problems—but you'll have faith and God's help in solving them. But problems and tests of faith are good for us—the very building blocks of perfect spiritual character.

It's true Jesus was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." It's true He suffered—He knew what suffering is. But His suffering and grief was not caused by pain others inflicted on Him—not from resentment, or being hurt by others—but by His love for others. He suffered because men were bringing so much suffering on themselves. But He also was a man of boundless joy, and He said, "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." □

## HAPPY FAMILY

(Continued from page 10)

that serveth him" (Mal. 3:16-17, KJV).

Jesus preached the good news about His coming family government—the ruling, governing family of God (God is called the Father; Christ, the Son and the "firstborn among many brethren").

He likened the true Church to a "mother," speaking of "Jerusalem above, the mother of us all. . . ." He inspired Paul to write about the close, loving, deep relationship between Christ and the Church as the pattern for love and tender concern between husband and wife.

When Jesus said: "Repent ye, and believe my good news," He meant, "Be sorry you have messed up your lives; *be sorry* you have acted like selfish, petulant, spiteful, carnal-minded children; *be sorry* you have failed in your marriages, failed your children, failed yourselves!"

The wages of sin (and failing in marriage is a sin) is *death* (Rom. 6:23).

Today, society reaps the whirlwind, for it has sown the wind of immorality, separations, desertions, divorce, wife and child beating, pornography, homosexuality, transvestism, and every assorted form of attack against the family, which is the very picture of God's own Kingdom!

We reap the whirlwind of senseless killings, rapes, muggings, robbery, arson, burglary—violence of every sort—and it can all be traced directly to the home.

Is *your* family in a mess? Then it's your mess—not someone else's!

God Almighty is calling on you to clean it up! If you don't, then you will suffer the hideous consequences now, and for years to come. Your parents will suffer—if they're still living—your wife or husband will suffer, your children, and all the other more distant members of the whole family will suffer, too! Your community, and by extension, your nation, will also suffer!

But if you repent of the mass of collective mistakes, faults, misunderstandings, lack of communication—all of it—that has caused the mess in your family, then God can and will heal your family for you!

God can straighten out the mess for you, even if you think you can't do it alone!

All you have to do is ask! By the way, if you want personal help from someone who is not only very well trained to aid you with family difficulties, but someone who really cares, dial 800-423-4444, and ask to be put in touch with one of our representatives in your area. It could save a marriage—and lives! □

### ADDITIONAL READING

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