

Second Edition

God Breathes on
Blended
Families

twelve fundamentals to build your family

12

Moe & Paige Becnel

Table of Contents

Foreword.....	xi
Introduction	xiii
Twelve Fundamentals to Build Your Family	xxi
Definitions.....	xxiii
Chapter 1 Restoration After Death or Divorce.....	1
Chapter 2 God’s Plan for Blended Families	15
Chapter 3 Two Shall Become One	35
Chapter 4 Divisions Within Families	65
Chapter 5 Ingredients for Healthy Blended Families.....	109
Chapter 6 The Children’s Perspective.....	155
Chapter 7 Responsibilities of a New Parent	197
Chapter 8 Interference From Extended Family.....	221
Chapter 9 Purpose for Your Family.....	245
Chapter 10 Prayer—An Awesome Thing	255
Epilogue	269
Appendix A God’s Love and Plan for You.....	273
Appendix B Mirror-Mirror on the Wall.....	279
Appendix C Vows to Your New Children—It’s Never Too Late	287
Appendix D Resolving Conflicts in Families	291
Recommended Resources	297
About Blending A Family Ministry	301
About the Authors	305

Foreword

IT IS WITH A HUMBLE HEART I write this foreword along with my precious wife. When I was approached by the Becnells for this task, it was truly an honor. Moe and Paige have not only been mentors, but an inspiration in our marriage. I remember when Moe gave me the copy of *God Breathes on Blended Families* (first edition), my then fiancé and I went through the book hanging on to each word, every sentence as if it were fine gold. It proved to be more precious than gold, because the treasures we found within those pages were more valuable than gold. Our marriage is not perfect, but the joy we share in our home with our children is now, nevertheless, outstanding.

We were truly blessed while dating to have the Becnells not only as our singles pastors and mentors, but also as our friends. Like many Blended Families, we struggled with challenges such as “You’re not my Dad,” and other similar issues. I remember the night we told our children we were getting married; all three started crying because they did not want their mother to marry me. I was devastated, but Moe pulled me aside and reminded me that children are hurting too during the divorce, and their mother marrying another person ends their previous family, so more times than not, it will be met with great resistance. Patience and love will win out in the end.

I remember having dinner at Ana’s house one evening prior to our marriage when my soon-to-be “new daughter” asked me, “Shouldn’t you go home? Your mother is probably worried about you,” (I was 35 at the time). Now we all laugh about those times, but at the time it was a struggle and heart breaking. All three of our children are from my wife’s previous marriage; I had none, but now, I love these three more than I could ever love my own. You see, they were not born to me, I chose those children, and they are now my children. (At least when they mess up, my wife calls them “my children.”)

During the gold rush, a miner did not just walk into the mountains and start grabbing nuggets off the ground. They had to dig, they had to labor; many times for years with sometimes no fruit of their labor. When many did not see immediate results, they quit, (see where I am going), but those who persisted would start finding a nugget here, a nugget there, sometimes few and far-between. Very few miners made a strike by accident quickly. If you want to find the gold in your Blended Family, it will take a lot of hard work, but persistence is the key.

Tough times, like those before the wedding and especially after, are what increase the divorce rate significantly among Blended Families versus first time marriages. This is why I implore you to not only read this book, but to study it along with the Word of God before blending your family. If you have already blended, it is not too late; read and study this book along with seeking not only godly counsel, but godly mentors to be there when these trials arise, because, they will arise. How well you and your spouse respond to the trials will determine how well your family blends.

Grace and peace,

Patrick and Ana Sharp | Willis, Texas
Blended Family October 13, 2000

Introduction

ON JULY 1, 1997, we celebrated our eighth wedding anniversary. As an anniversary surprise, our five children presented us with a video they had spent more than two months producing.

Titled “The Becnel Bunch,” the video began with a takeoff on The Brady Bunch, complete with our children singing their own version of the familiar TV theme song. The video continued with photographs and clips of each family member, including our Labrador retriever, Chloe, as well as images from family vacations, birthday parties, and other family memories.

The highlight of the video, however, was a series of comments written by our children about each other and about our family. Here are some of their comments:

“Jordan is definitely the person to hang around if you’re in a bad mood. He will make you smile over the stupidest things. He has a love for people and a joy for life that I admire.”

“Jessica looks up to me and makes me feel important.”

“Paige is my best friend. She’s a blast to be around and has the true heart of a servant—a clean servant.”

“I’m proud to have Moe as my dad. He stands behind us no matter how crazy our ideas are. He brings our family together.”

“Our family is now one. It’s a big, exciting, funny family.”

“We are one. We have grown together through the years.”

At the end of the video, our children wrote in:

“Thanks for the laughs,
Thanks for the tears,
Thanks for the last eight years.
We love you!”

A Celebration

The video blew us away. After eight long years our children were declaring—and finally feeling—that the seven of us were a family. As we sat back digesting the content and meaning of the video, we realized two important things.

First, we realized that the video was a celebration—not just of our eighth anniversary—but a celebration that our family had experienced a transformation. We were now becoming what we had hoped our new family would be.

Second, our children had seen a change in our family—in how our relationships had grown.

Our children wanted to celebrate the changes they were experiencing. Children need a thriving family atmosphere; anything less will breed instability and insecurity in their lives. The video demonstrated that it was important to our children that we had become a family unit. This realization was, to them, significant enough to justify investing eight weeks of their time into collecting photos, preparing scripts and songs, and locating

the equipment they needed to make a video to honor and celebrate our Blended Family.

A Long Journey

On that eighth anniversary we commemorated not only eight years of matrimony, but also how far we had all come since July 1, 1989, when our marriage united not only the two of us, but also our children [Paige's two daughters and Moe's two daughters and one son]. On our wedding day, we began experiencing the numerous struggles involved in making two separate households a united family.

To our disappointment, moving from a stepfamily to a family did not happen quickly. Instead, the seven of us found ourselves living with the arguments, frustrations, disappointments, disrespect, resentment, and day-to-day turmoil experienced by most young Blended Families. Our new life together included issues of children versus stepchildren, new rules and whose rules, competition for time, attention and affection, new schools, losing old friends and making new friends—again. During the first few years there were isolated moments of closeness, but no sustained unity or harmony. There were many times when we wondered if we would ever overcome functioning as a fragmented unit and move on to becoming a family.

But much to our joy, it did happen. After years of work and prayer, our fractured family was at last made whole. Our children finally came to enjoy being part of our family, and each member began to appreciate and enjoy the others.

Sustained Unity

Do families really blend? We have heard from professionals who say that stepfamilies do not and will not blend. They believe remarriages with children will, at best, only cope with the issues.

When we married in 1989, there were no godly resources for Blended Families. At that time psychologists, most of whom had no personal experience with Blended Families, were only able to offer their clients coping techniques. A common phrase, which we heard all-too-often, was “blenders have blades.”

We believed God for more where our family was concerned and diligently sought Him for His ways. The result is that our gracious Father God did an amazing work in our family.

Our children ranged from age two years to sixteen years when we married, and ages ten to twenty-four when they produced The Becnel Bunch video in 1997. In 2005, a licensed therapist asked us what each of our adult children would say about the family “today.” We thought that was a fair question since we have purposed not to give false hope through Blending A Family Ministry, so we asked them. Following are our children's responses in their own words:

Melanie: “To Mom, Dad, Jordan, Kristin, Nicole, Brad, Kristen, Charles and Jessica—I love our family! Although we don't get to see each other often since we're so spread out over the states, when we do, it seems no time has passed, and we just pick right up where we left off. I love that all my siblings (and parents) are godly inspirations to me. We are so blessed to have a family that loves each other unconditionally despite our imperfections. We are closer than most biological families that I know!”

Nicole: “I could not imagine my life without Dad (Moe), Melanie, Jordan, and Jessica in it.”

Jordan: “I would definitely say that our family is truly what God would say a family is by

His Word. Now, we are not even close to being ‘the Cleavers.’ I am saying that without God we would be like most other blended families. He is the one true reason we are the way we are. I know that if something would ever happen to anyone, no matter if step or half, I know we would all come together and hold each other up.”

Kristen: “My family is everything to me. My family is two dads, two moms, three sisters, one brother, two brothers-in-law, one sister-in-law and three nieces. I love them all equally because in my life they have all played an equal part. I cannot imagine my life without any of them. It wouldn’t be complete.”

Jessica: “I think our family has become a whole. We have grown into each other’s lives...we function as one. The love and support from each and every one of us shines when we are together.”

We are not saying that our family suddenly became, or has since become, perfect. Our family had flaws and continues to have flaws because every human being has flaws. In any family, individual members will have different personalities, different likes, and their own pet peeves. Yet today, as Melanie stated, our family members are closer than many biological families we know.

And although blending a family did require our time, effort, perseverance, and patience, we can take no credit for the transformation that took place within us. Instead, we recognize our united family as God’s supernatural provision. God has done awesome things in our family. We are amazed at the restoration He created in our lives and our children’s lives after divorce. God promises His blessings to those who serve Him and seek His face. The condition of our family is proof of those blessings.

And our family continues to grow. In 2009, four children are married and we have six grandchildren.

After all they have been through as children who experienced divorce, today our children love God and are serving Him in many different ways.

Melanie is a small group leader and leads classes in the children’s ministry at Dulles Community Church (DCC) in South Riding, Virginia. Her husband, Jonathan, leads worship for Echo, DCC’s youth ministry, and performs in the DCC FX Family Experience drama productions.

Nicole and her husband, Brad, are active members of Healing Place Church in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, where Brad is employed as the church’s communications director. Nicole volunteers in the women’s ministry.

Jordan is the Worship & Creative Arts Pastor at Bayside Community Church in Bradenton, Florida, and his wife, Kristin, is the creative director there as well.

Kristen and her husband, Charles, were missionaries in Swaziland, Africa, for one and one-half years serving AIDS orphans, and are currently the youth pastors at Bayside Community Church in Bradenton, Florida.

Jessica is presently in college.

We only boast of our children to give God glory and to show how God has healed their hearts of hurts they did not deserve and has turned their lives around—toward Him. We wrote this book to bring encouragement, hope, and help to other Blended Families who are struggling, and who truly want to become a solid, loving family. We encourage you to take comfort, knowing there is a Light that, when invited in, will pierce any and every darkness. That Light is Jesus, the Light of the World and the Light of Life.

. . . the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on Him, for everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved (Romans 10: 12–13).

The same Lord who united our family wants to help your family. What He has done for the Becnells, He will do for you! —Moe and Paige

Twelve Fundamentals to Build Your Family

AS YOU PROCEED through this book, you will discover twelve truths (fundamentals) that when applied will shape your Blended Family into a loving family.

1. God is all-knowing, even about Blended Families (Chapter 2).
2. A strong marriage becomes the foundation of your strong family (Chapter 3).
3. Understand that you have an adversary who is at work to undermine your family (Chapter 4).
4. It is vital to build relationships with the children (Chapter 4 and throughout book).
5. Establish one set of rules and discipline for everyone in your home (Chapter 4).
6. Learn and apply God's order for your family (Chapters 4 and 5).
7. Achieve individual wholeness, because who you are dictates what you are able to bring into a marriage and family (Chapter 5).
8. Understand and help the children in your family heal and connect (Chapter 6, and throughout book).
9. A stepparent has many responsibilities (Chapter 7).
10. Guard your family from external hurts (Chapter 8).
11. Establish family goals (Chapter 9).
12. Understand and utilize the power of prayer (Chapter 10).

Definitions

THE FOLLOWING WORDS and terms are defined according to their intended use in this publication:

Blended Family Any marriage in which at least one spouse becomes a stepparent (new parent), regardless of the age of the children. (The term is treated as a proper name in this book.)

Blend To mix together, especially in such a way as to form one product: to mix together, so that the things mixed cannot be separated or individually distinguished.

biological parent The maternal or paternal parent.

extended family The parents, brothers, sisters, grandparents, aunts, uncles, former spouses, former in-laws, and friends of both spouses.

former spouse More commonly referred to as "ex-spouse" or "ex."

new child stepchild. A child gained through marriage; your spouse's biological child;

new parent The spouse who gains a child or children through marriage or adoption; stepparent.

Restoration After Death or Divorce

In 1994 our family moved to Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The home we bought had no kitchen pantry, so Moe and I went to an antique auction to find a large piece of furniture to serve that purpose. We found an armoire we liked but could not get to it to inspect it. As the auction went on, the furniture pieces in front of it were auctioned off and then the workers began to stack sold furniture in front of it.

Moe spoke to an employee about the armoire, and he said no one had shown interest in it in the last six weeks. He asked Moe, "Do you want to bid on it?" We did, and we won the bid at \$365.00 without inspecting it.

Moe picked up the armoire two days later, and it began to fall apart in our trailer on the way home. We were so frustrated. We reassembled it in the house and built shelves in it. A few weeks later when a furniture repairman came to fix a bed, he saw the armoire. We told him the story. He began to educate us, informing us that it was a French traveling armoire designed for college students moving into a dormitory; it was built to come apart and be put back together. He inspected it and found a signature on the bottom. He quickly appraised the armoire at \$10,000.00.

In the life of this armoire, someone had lost sight of its value. When our lives have fallen apart, we often fail to see the value in ourselves that God has never lost sight of. Father God has a heart to redeem, revive and restore us. —Paige

SPOUSES IN BLENDED FAMILIES may have come from a variety of circumstances; some have experienced either the death of a spouse or divorce, others may have been a single parent who was not previously married, while for others the Blended Family may be their first marriage.

Before we begin discussing Blended Family issues, let us first address the issue of divorce and God's forgiveness.

God's Word, the Holy Bible, is quite clear that divorce is to be avoided if at all possible.

I [God] hate divorce (Malachi 2:16).

It is God's plan for relationships to last a lifetime, particularly marriage relationships that are to mirror the relationship God has with His Church—you and I.

Divorce is the death of a marriage relationship. If the marriage produced children, then that family was a small civilization. Just as cancer deteriorates the physical body and ends human life, divorce is the outcome of a combination of various offenses and unforgiveness, which ultimately results in the death of a marriage and the fall of a civilization.

Offenses that lead to relationship failure include selfishness, pride, arrogance, disrespect, adultery and other forms of infidelity, anger, violence, physical abuse, verbal abuse, criticism, sarcasm, neglect of a spouse, neglect of the marriage covenant, lack of commitment to each other, and a quitting mentality. There are others.

We have heard people attempt to validate or justify their divorce by saying, "It is God's will" or "God allowed it." In very rare instances is divorce the will of God. Divorce is

ultimately man's decision and man's choice, not God's choice.

The negative impact of divorce creates a ripple effect reaching far beyond the husband and wife. Many other people are emotionally wounded by each and every divorce—especially the children involved and close extended family members. Even close friends disappear because they do not want to be “caught in the middle” or forced to take sides.

As two people who have both experienced divorce, we can certainly understand why God hates divorce; it is painful for all involved. It rips people apart and causes deep hurts that take a long time—with the help of God—to heal. Divorce dramatically changes people's lives, including those of the extended family members, and alters plans for many years into the future. Most children continue to reprocess the pain of loss every three to five years—and for years to come. Many adult children continue to struggle with biological parents who do not get along, ending up playing referee between bitter parents and planning their holidays among multiple families.

God's Forgiveness

There are some people and organizations who believe all past divorce is sin, and continues to be a sin in one's present life. They think people are permanently “stained” by divorce, that God does not forgive divorce, that neither God nor the Christian Church have use for divorced people, and that God will not bless remarriages or Blended Families.

Such belief pre-judges the wife who was being physically beaten by her husband, or the woman who ended the marriage because the father was sexually abusing the children in the home. This belief system does not take into consideration repeated infidelity in the marriage or other unacceptable behavior, and it discounts God's mercy and grace, which have been freely given to all.

These ideas imply that divorced people are not as good as those who have never experienced divorce, and that divorced people are neither worthy of, nor entitled to, the forgiveness and abundant life Jesus came to give us. This attitude by society, acquaintances, and family causes some divorced people to walk with low levels of hope that result in low expectations for their future and the future of their children.

We have met remarried men and women who still carry a sense of failure and guilt because of their divorce, and who are hesitant to “admit” they are now in a Blended Family. They lack faith in the grace offered by Jesus Christ, or struggle to believe that the full life Jesus offers in John 10:10 is for them.

True Repentance

Nowhere in the Bible do we find that God wants His children (those who accept Christ as their Savior and Lord) to live unforgiven and defeated. Instead, the Bible teaches that God is a God of restoration. When there is true repentance from our sins (stopping our offensive behavior and unforgiveness toward God and others), God is gracious to redeem us and bring forth complete restoration in our lives.

Scripture has much to say concerning the forgiveness of all sin, which is available to each person through Christ Jesus. This forgiveness includes forgiveness of those sins leading to divorce.

In John Chapter 4, Jesus met the woman at the well who had been divorced five times and was now with another man. Jesus did not call her a sinner or verbally beat her up about her life of sin; He always met people where they were in life. Jesus directed her

to the Living Waters available through Him so she would never thirst again. She believed in Jesus and immediately became an evangelist for Him by telling all the people of her town to come meet the Christ. Many believed in Jesus and were added to the Kingdom of God that day.

Did she deserve this favorable treatment? No. None of us deserve God's grace and God's forgiveness for any of our sin, yet Jesus laid His life down to forgive our sins; yours, mine . . . everyone's.

The following Bible verses speak of God's love, mercy, grace, and forgiveness:

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases; He redeems my life from the pit and crowns me with love and compassion (Psalm 103:4).

. . . as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us (Psalm 103:12).

. . . it [love] keeps no record of wrongs (1 Corinthians 13:5).

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I [Jesus] have come that they may have life, and have it to the full (John 10:10).

Repentance Defined

Repent is defined as "such sorrow for past life as produces a new life."

The story of the adulteress in John 8:1–11 is a powerful display of God's love and grace on our lives. Jewish leaders brought a woman who had been caught in the act of adultery to Jesus. In Mosaic Law, people who committed adultery were to be stoned to death. That is what this woman expected as the men who brought her to Jesus came with stones in their hands. It was a dark day for that woman . . . until Jesus came to her aid.

When Jesus forgave the adulteress, He commanded her to "go and sin no more." Jesus forgave her completely, and gave her a second chance to live a new life.

When people divorce because of sins of selfishness, pride, immorality, arrogance, unforgiveness and such, God expects repentance before He forgives and dispenses His grace. If there is no repentance, there is no change in the person's heart, and so God's grace becomes trampled upon. For an individual who has not remarried after divorce, repentance may include asking God if the former marriage should be given another chance to reconcile.

Repentance for remarried couples might include:

- making the commitment to remain faithful to their vows,
- making God the center of their home,
- learning to love and value each other enough to forgive *all* future offenses,
- devoting themselves to the remarriage as "the marriage that will last a lifetime," and
- never considering divorce as an option for solving new marriage and family issues.

Remember, God hates divorce (see Malachi 2:16).

When there is true repentance (such sorrow for past life as produces a new life), God forgives completely. The slate is clean. There is no stain. We are as “white as snow” (see Psalm 51:7; Isaiah 1:18).

If you have experienced divorce, know that God wants to restore you. He loves and cherishes you. In your prayer time, ask the Holy Spirit to show you what you did wrong that caused your previous relationships to fail. Ask God to forgive you for the part you played in your previously failed marriage and other relationships. Learn from those mistakes, and vow to God to not repeat them.

Forgiving Yourself

You must now forgive yourself. It is not God’s plan for you to walk in guilt; doing so will prevent you from providing the godly and effective parental leadership your children need in order to grow into healthy and successful adults.

Over the twelve years that we led a single parent ministry at our church, we saw first-hand the effect that walking in guilt had on some single parents. They failed to provide structure, rules and discipline in their children’s lives, allowing them to “run wild.” We watched some of these children grow up with behavioral problems, and a few became juvenile delinquents. Some of these children had no direction in life when they got older. Some parents continued to financially support their children into their late twenties and thirties . . . well past higher-education years.

Often times, the reason parents behaved this way was because they were walking in guilt. The parent felt guilty that their child was put through divorce, or the other parent died, or the other parent mistreated the child or abandoned them, or the child had to grow up in a single-parent home. So they compensated by giving “bad” gifts such as displays of favoritism, no boundaries, no discipline when rules are not followed, and being the kind of support that hindered the children from growing and maturing to support themselves—gifts that would hurt the children for the rest of their lives.

We see the same guilt behavior carried into Blended Families. Examples of such behavior include:

- not applying rules and discipline,
- not expecting the child/children to become part of the new family,
- allowing the child/children to disrespect the new people in their lives,
- not giving the child/children any responsibility in the new family,
- not requiring minor children to participate in family activities,
- giving gifts to one’s own children but not to the spouse’s children, and
- allowing children to decide if they “want” to go to church.

Since guilt is so destructive to self, to children, and to the future of a new Blended Family, we must learn to walk in the freedom of self-forgiveness and receive the abundant life that Jesus Christ came to give us.

Forgiving yourself is a critical step in completing the forgiveness in your life.

Faith of a Child

The Bible tells us,

Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, and said, “Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children,

you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:2–4).

How do little children behave? They believe their parents, simply trusting what their parents tell them without analysis. Our own children leap into our arms, knowing we will catch them. They cuddle next to us knowing we will cuddle back and not harm them. Jesus is telling adults to have the faith of a child and believe Him—to trust Father God.

As adults, we sometimes have difficulty believing in what we cannot see. Some of us may continue to doubt until we have proof, wanting to see, feel, touch, smell or taste before we believe. Many have discounted God’s blessings by calling them “luck” or claiming personal achievement. When circumstances overwhelm us, we often begin to doubt that God even hears our prayers, and doubt even more that prayers will be answered.

The movie *Polar Express* is the story of a boy who doubts there is a real Santa. He is awakened in the night by the arrival of a mystical train that takes him on a ride of discovery. He is skeptical about what is happening, believing he is dreaming, and he doubts the other children who do believe. As the train continues on its journey to the North Pole, the children discover that one of its cars is filled with broken toys, including an Ebenezer Scrooge puppet that tells the boy, “You are a doubter; you don’t believe! You are a doubter; you don’t believe!”

When the train arrives at the North Pole and the children first see Santa’s reindeer leaping with anticipation as they are hitched to the sleigh, the boy cannot hear the bells on the reindeer harnesses because of his doubt. Just as doubt kept the boy in the *Polar Express* story from hearing the sound of bells, our doubt can prevent us from hearing God’s voice and receiving all that He has provided for us.

How do we destroy doubt and increase our faith? How do we become believers—true, complete, uncompromised believers?

1. Realize that Jesus is the source of your faith, which is given by God.

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith (Hebrews 12:2).

Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you (Romans 12:3).

2. Read and study God’s Word. What you meditate on, you multiply.

Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ (Romans 10:17).

3. Surround yourself with believers in God’s power. You will become like the company you keep. In 2 Timothy 3:1–5, the Apostle Paul instructs Timothy to beware of unbelievers. Paul said there will be those who have a form of godliness but deny its power. He encouraged Timothy to have nothing to do with them. Disconnect from doubters who deny God’s power, saying He cannot, or will not, work supernaturally in your life and family.

4. Pray—ask Father God to increase your faith.

Lord I believe. Help my unbelief! (Mark 9:24).

At the end of Polar Express the boy could hear the reindeer bell ring because he became a believer. So, the question is not, “What are you believing for?” Rather, the question is, “Who do you believe in?”

The content of this book and the success of our family and yours is based on these three primary biblical truths:

- God’s Word is a manual of life filled with God’s principles for successful, abundant life. The application of His truth sets us free.
- There is supernatural help available to us. God loves us, and is for us. Once we have applied these principles in our life, God’s power shows up to create the life that we cannot attain by ourselves.
- As illustrated throughout the Bible, man has to first follow God’s instruction, and then God does His part. Do your part, and God will breathe His breath of life on your marriage and family.

What Blending A Family Ministry Promotes

No one reading this material should conclude that the authors or the content of this book advocate divorce. Divorce is not acceptable to God, to this ministry, or to us. God’s plan is for every marriage to last a lifetime.

Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice with the wife of your youth (Proverbs 5:18).

We both wish we had never experienced divorce. It would have spared us, and many others—including our children, friends and extended family members—a great deal of pain, loss and turmoil. Yet, we know that people make mistakes, and the premise of God’s grace is that God meets people where they are in life. Consider the Bible examples of Moses who escaped to the desert after committing murder, the woman at the well who had been married five times, the adulteress who was brought before Jesus to be condemned and stoned, or Paul (Saul) who was defaming Christ and persecuting Christians.

Today the list of people who need to experience God’s grace is endless. It includes everyone who needs a savior as well as those who have made mistakes because they did not obey God, and now wish they would have done things differently. God’s goal for those mentioned in the Bible was to show His unconditional love to each of them, extend His grace, and change their hearts. Today, God’s goal is the same for each of us.

Our Prayer for You

Father, we pray for every person that reads this book. Help them to find restoration in You as they repent and receive Your forgiveness and grace. Increase their trust in You. Give them the eyes of the Holy Spirit to see what You want them to see, the mind of the Holy Spirit to understand, and a heart of compassion to see their new family as You see them. In Jesus’ awesome name. Amen.