



# Perspectives on Christ-Centered Family Discipleship

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In this article I will argue that Jesus has given believers a “key” that promises to help them glorify God in their families. It is a priority that is plainly spoken, but one that is easily missed when well-meaning Christians sinfully put their family above God. Though this “key” may at first seem to be at odds with loving our families in a way that glorifies God, it will be shown that only by loving Christ in a way that looks like hate towards our families can we actually glorify God in loving our families.

From two passages in the Gospels, I will show how Jesus' call to discipleship, “to hate [one's] own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters” is the key to glorifying God in family relations. While the Bible does not guarantee that our discipleship will result in the conversion or improvement of our families—sometimes it promises the opposite (Matt 10:34–35)—God's Word does promise that when Christians abide as true

disciples, God will produce fruit in their lives (John 15:5, 7–8), often with positive effects on their family.<sup>1</sup>

### **THE KEY**

The key to glorifying God in the family is found in two parallel passages.

Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. (Matthew 10:37-38)

If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. (Luke 14:26)

For those who care about the family, these words seem shocking. Since the family was God's idea, we might expect Jesus to say something more like this: "If anyone comes to me and does not love his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters cannot be my disciple." Or, "Whoever loves father, mother, son or daughter is qualified to serve in the church."

After all, why would Jesus want disciples who hate their family? Certainly, the church searching for a family minister would be greatly concerned if they heard an impressive candidate say: "Yes, to answer

your question, I hate my parents, my children, and even my wife."

Context must be taken into consideration, but even then, Jesus' words are shocking! They demand an explanation, but not at the expense of missing the force of his hyperbole. Indeed, if we explain away his words too quickly we neuter their power to produce fruit in our lives and Christ's presence in our homes.

What we need to see is how Jesus esteems family relations, especially with children, and then to see how this call to hate mother and father, child and wife fits into the larger framework of Christian discipleship and family relations. Therefore, in the following section, I will examine Jesus' positive sentiments towards children. Then, I will show how these two statements from the Gospels clarify the way believers glorify God in their earthly families. Last, I will show how this principle can be applied in life through two personal illustrations.

### **THE TREASURE OF CHILDREN**

In the Gospels, it is evident that Jesus placed special importance on receiving children.<sup>2</sup> Matthew, Mark, and Luke all record the way Jesus interacted with them.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, before considering the temptation children can create for doting parents, we must consider how Jesus himself loved children.

### **Matthew 18:1-4**

In a section of Matthew's Gospel that considers "life under kingdom authority," Jesus confronts the arrogance of his disciples.<sup>4</sup> Matthew records,

At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them and said, "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." (18:1-4)

In this encounter, Jesus calls a child to himself. He puts him in the middle of the disciples as an example of the kingdom. He does not ostracize or belittle him.<sup>5</sup> Instead, he warmly commends the child as a model of Christian discipleship, saying "unless you turn and become like this child, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."<sup>6</sup>

It is important to note that Jesus does not mean citizenship in the kingdom depends on being childish or be uninformed (cf. 1 Cor 14:20).<sup>7</sup> Rather, childlikeness is a matter of humility: "Whoever humbles himself like this child in the greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (v. 4). He recognizes the humble, dependent nature of children, and he says that

this is the kind of posture we must adopt to enter God's kingdom. We must forsake self-reliance, self-exaltation, and humbly rest in the arms of our loving father.<sup>8</sup>

Steeped in the traditions of Israel, Jesus' view of children reflects that of the Old Testament, where on numerous occasions God's people describe themselves as children before God. For instance, in 1 Kings 3:7 the regal Solomon says, "I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties." God hears this prayer and blesses him with wisdom, wealth, and power. Clearly, Solomon is not a gullible and needy child. He is a mighty king. But before the Lord, he recognizes his child-like dependence. In fact, it was his failure to retain this posture that cost him and his sons the kingdom.

Likewise, Psalm 131 says:

O LORD, my heart is not lifted up;  
my eyes are not raised too high;  
I do not occupy myself with things  
too great and too marvelous for me.  
But I have calmed and quieted my soul,  
like a weaned child with its mother;  
like a weaned child is my soul within  
me.

O Israel, hope in the LORD  
from this time forth and forevermore.

What a beautiful picture of the Christian. No longer crying, wrestling, and fighting their heavenly

father, but resting, comforted, suckled and secure. The dependence of an infant on his mother pictures our dependence on God the Father.<sup>9</sup>

With Jesus, it is apparent that he delights in this child as a reflection of humble trust. In his dependent humanity, he displays a beautiful reality that can only be sustained and enjoyed at length in God's heavenly kingdom.

### **Matthew 19:13-15**

Something similar transpires in Matthew 19:13-15:

Then children were brought to him that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples rebuked the people, but Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.' And he laid his hands on them and went away.

While Jesus' disciples rebuke the people—presumably parents—who brought their children to Jesus, Jesus rebukes his disciples.<sup>10</sup> He commands his disciples to bring the children to him. Again, he compares the children to those who will inherit the kingdom. To be clear, his comparison does not affirm that all children are saved or citizens of the kingdom. It does indicate that followers of Christ must be absolutely dependent on the Father, just like little children.<sup>11</sup>

More than that, Jesus' words carry the weight of what he had said earlier in Matthew 18:5-6: "Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in

me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea."

Thus, in these two passages (Matt 18:1-6; 19:13-15), Jesus shows the way he treasures children. He models before us how we should treat children. He doesn't neglect them, look beyond them, or get upset by their presence. He neither ignores them nor considers them a nuisance. In fact, "Jesus had a great interest in children," something we should not overlook.<sup>12</sup> Morris highlights the significance of Jesus' love for children:

It is not easy to think of Muhammad as concerned for little children, or Gautama the Buddha. But the Gospels make it clear that there were often children around Jesus. He observed their games (11:16-17), spoke of them in his teaching, and clearly was genuinely interested in them.<sup>13</sup>

Indeed, being informed by the Old Testament, Jesus considers children a blessing from the Lord (cf. Pss 127, 128). At the same time, with eyes fixed on eternity, he sees in them glimpses of his coming kingdom (cf. Zech 8:5). He esteems their humble dependence on their superiors as a typological model of the citizens of his own kingdom. As Christ-followers, we too should love children like Christ did.

## **Loving Children Like Christ Loved Children**

When we behold the next generation, we must let the gospel inform our love. We must see in them two things at once: They are image-bearers created by God for his glory (Isa 43:6–7), and they are sinners whose nature offends God (Eph 2:3) and whose unbelief invites his wrath (John 3:36). Therefore, to love them like Christ, we must do more than simply express kindness; we must share with them the gospel of the kingdom.<sup>14</sup>

Practically, we must ask ourselves: What can I do to introduce this child to the love of God and the gospel of Jesus Christ? How can I walk before her so that she can see a model of God's fatherly love or Christ's sacrificial service? How can I tell him about the Son of God who died for sinners like him? Created by the same maker, we have an onerous privilege to share Christ with the next generation (Ps 78:1–8). In this sense, our love for them must be more than sentimental; it must be Christ-like. While we cannot save them by our actions or even by our faithful disclosure of the gospel, we must believe that God desires that all children would come to a saving knowledge of the truth (1 Tim 2:4). We must share the gospel with them in sincere hope that they will one

day trust Christ.

In contrast to a world of adults who look to improve their image among their peers or increase their status among superiors, the followers of Christ reach down to the little ones, receiving children, adopting children, having children, and looking for ways to lay down their lives for children. As Jesus loved them, so must we. And still, in all our counter-cultural efforts to prize children, we must beware of an insidious temptation that can poison the very love we have for our children, making an idol of them.

## **The Temptation of Making Children an Idol**

If it is a ubiquitous fact that Jesus loved children, what follows may seem impossible or at least counter-intuitive. The key to loving our children best is loving Christ so much that by comparison our love for them looks like "hate" (Luke 14:26). This kind of language is, of course, hyperbolic, but overstated as it may be, Jesus knew what he was doing with his words when he compared his disciples' love for him with their love for their loved ones.

As we have seen, Jesus loved children, and yet, in order to stress the importance of our commitment to God as his disciples, Jesus said, "Whoever loves father or mother,

son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me. If you do not hate your own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters . . . you cannot be my disciple.” Why does he say that? Let me suggest two reasons.

**First, Jesus is the most central person in the universe.**

Ephesians 1:10 says that all heaven and earth are united in Christ, and in his hyperbole found in Matthew 10 and Luke 14 Jesus stresses his own centrality.<sup>15</sup> He is not simply any son; he is the Son.<sup>16</sup> He is the archetypal Son, the one through whom every family derives its name (Eph 3:14), the one who perfectly embodies and reveals the Heavenly Father (Matt 10:27). Therefore, he makes no apologies for his Lordship. In speaking of his mission to the earth in Matthew 10:34–36, he clarifies his purposes:

Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a person's enemies will be those of his own household.

These are the words that precede Jesus' insistence that his disciples must love him so much that their allegiance to their families looks

like hate. Only by prioritizing him, can his disciples enter the kingdom. And only by loving him most can his followers actually learn to love their families. As Peter Schemm has noted, “The Christian household, while important, must never become more important to us than the church or the kingdom of Christ. Such a belief would undermine the primacy of the gospel of Christ and oppose the plain teaching of Jesus.”<sup>17</sup>

This is the key to a life that glorifies God: the triune God must be our greatest love. He must be our greatest possession, our greatest thought, our greatest song, our best friend, our wisest counselor. He must be our all in all, such that in our families Christ retains the position of highest authority and greatest value (cf. Matt 13:44–46). While we cannot guarantee the material or emotional “success” of our families, through unswerving faithfulness to God in Christ we can glorify God in our families. By abiding in Christ and being a faithful witness to him, God can always be glorified in our homes—regardless of the present circumstances we experience.

**Second, Jesus tells us not to make family an idol.**

When God made the world, he called it good. When he introduced the first family—Adam and Eve—he

called it very good (Gen 1:31). It is of this goodness that Jesus warns us. In a world without sin, this command—hating your loved ones—would be unnecessary. It is only necessary in a Genesis 3 world. The fall has taken the “very good” gift of family and turned it into an object for idolatry.<sup>18</sup>

This makes great sense. The greatest idols are the gifts that most closely resemble God and his goodness, and few things possess the potential to take our heart away from God like the relationships intertwined in a family. Pressing the point further, after Christ, godly parents, loving wives, and faithful children make some of the best gifts God can give. And accordingly, they become some of the most enslaving idols.<sup>19</sup>

What makes this teaching so hard is that it is honorable to put family first. Many churches are built on how they care for the family. Paul condemns the man who fails to care for his family (1 Tim 5:8). Yet, such a constant pursuit of family, if it is not watched carefully, can quickly turn Jesus into a family’s servant, instead of their Lord.

As much we want to focus on the family, we must focus on the Father and the Son first. Unless we seek them first and above our own families, we will never be the son or daughter, the

mother or father, the brother or sister that God calls us to be.

So here is the counter-intuitive truth Jesus gives to his followers: if you want to love your family, you must hate your family. And by hate, I mean what Jesus means. Your love for and commitment to Christ must be so superlative, that everything else looks like hate.<sup>20</sup>

More importantly, to faithfully shepherd one’s children or bear witness to Christ in the context of the family, a family member (be it a parent, child, sibling, or cousin) must put Christ ahead of their family. As long as a son, a mother, or a brother remains more important—as indicated by one’s schedule, decisions, commitments, and customs—Christ will have no place in the family. But for those who are willing to put Christ ahead of their family, there is great reason to believe that he will impact the family for good.

### **PUTTING CHRIST FIRST: WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?**

By itself this teaching is difficult. Even if we can understand it cognitively, the emotional ties we have with family can make it seem unbearable to choose Christ at the expense of family. Moreover, in the matrix of faith and family, it may be difficult to see what it looks like to keep Christ at the center. For that

reason we are helped when we can imitate the faith of those who have gone before us (cf. Heb 13:7).

### **A Son Choosing to Suffer for Christ's Sake**

First, Richard Wurmbbrand tells of the terrible and wonderful account of a father and son who suffered together for the sake of Christ. He writes,

A pastor by the name of Florescu was tortured with red-hot iron pokers and with knives. He was beaten very badly. Then starving rats were driven into his cell through a large pipe. He could not sleep because he had to defend himself all the time. If he rested a moment, the rats would attack him.

He was forced to stand for two weeks, day and night. The Communists wished to compel him to betray his brethren, but he resisted steadfastly. Eventually, they brought his fourteen-year-old son to the prison and began to whip the boy in front of his father, saying that they would continue to beat him until the pastor said what they wished him to say. The poor man was half mad. He bore it as long as he could, then he cried to his son, "Alexander, I must say what they want! I can't bear your beating anymore!" The son answered, "Father, don't do me the injustice of having a traitor as a parent. Withstand! If they kill me, I will die with the words, "Jesus and my fatherland." The Communists, enraged, fell upon the child and beat him to death, with blood spattered over the walls of the cell. He died praising God. Our dear brother Florescu was never the

same after seeing this.<sup>21</sup>

When I read that in 2001, years before I had sons of my own, tears collected in my eyes. But now with three small children, it takes on greater weight. I can only imagine the father's horror to see his son beaten for his faith in Jesus. And yet, what tearful joy to know that the son he had raised to know Christ would spend eternity with their Lord.

Wurmbbrand's story reminds us of the murderous activity of the evil one. It should make us pause to pray for Christian parents and their children in places like Syria, Sudan, Iraq, and North Korea. In those countries, violence is done to Christian families that we in the West may never know. But just the same, in experiencing such familial loss in this world, they teach us what real gain is—life in Christ in the family of God.

Father, I pray for our brothers and sisters in the persecuted church and for their leaders. At times it seems as though evil is winning the day. Strengthen these believers, encourage them, and grant miracles of provision and deliverance. Cause the gospel to spread like wildfire. In their homes strengthen fathers and mothers, and grant repentance and faith to their children. Give them so much joy, peace, and love that their persecutors will be convicted and fall down and worship you. In these hard places, let your fatherly love be seen in the parents who tenderly

raise their children to love Christ more than life itself. Amen.<sup>22</sup>

When we consider the source Florescu's son's courage, we have great reason to believe that he witnessed parents who loved the Lord more than life itself (Ps 63:3). In Communist Romania where the whole civilization was trained to deny God and hate the Bible, this boy had seen his father love Christ first and foremost. Therefore in his father's moment of weakness, his son stood strong in his faith—faith that was empowered by God's grace but faith that had also been modeled by his father (cf. 2 Tim 3:14–15).

To most Western Christians such a vision of family seems remote and unwelcome. But in light of eternal glory, this story speaks volumes about genuine faith. To see a child choose Christ in the face of death is to be deeply challenged by this fact: the sufferings of this age are light and momentary compared to the eternal weight of glory. Oh, that more fathers, under God's gracious hand, would instill in their children such a singular passion for Christ.

### **A Parent's Choice to Love the Savior More Than Her Child's Salvation**

Closer to home the command to love Jesus more than one's own

family was reiterated to me earlier this year. A mother and father came to my office broken-hearted about their adult child. They yearned for the salvation of their child and his family, and were grieved by the lifestyle choices they had seen them make. Like any parent who worried about and prayed for the salvation of their children, this couple expressed a deep belief in God, the gospel, heaven and hell.

However, as we talked, it became apparent that in the midst of pleading for God to work in their family, they had put their children's salvation and their well-being ahead of God himself. Functionally, their children had consumed their thoughts, and even as they prayed for their salvation, their love for God had languished. Bitterness had poisoned their hearts making generous love to their children almost impossible. While doing so much good for their children, they had come to a place where they could do no more because their sole focus had been on their family.

As strange as it sounds, liberation came for them when they realized that they needed to repent of their focus on their children's salvation and to return to the Savior. Why? Because as Jesus' words in Matthew 10 and Luke 14 tell us, as long as a man or woman loves their mother

and father, husband or wife, sons and daughters more than Jesus, they are not worthy of his companionship. Even more, those who put their families first will be unable to love and serve and witness to their families for Christ. In a word, idolatry becomes impotence when love for family displaces love for God.

### **THE KEY TO GLORIFYING GOD IN THE FAMILY**

The key to glorifying God in our families is loving Christ so much that by comparison everything else is of little importance. Our love for Christ should be in full color, while our love for the world is in black and white. Christ's love for us should overwhelm us so much that when we are hurt by others, we have resources to love in return. Our amazement with his forgiveness is what enables us to forgive others. And God's unconditional acceptance of us in Christ is what empowers us to continue to love others, by not abandoning them and continuing to point them to the center of the universe, Jesus Christ.

In summary, the family is not ultimate. God is. Jesus did not come to save your family. He can save your family and we should pray that he would, but he might not. This is the sobering but necessary effect of believing Jesus' words in Matthew 10:34–39: He did not come to

bring peace but a sword. Part of the Christian's surrender is the liberating process of giving children, spouse, siblings, and parents to the Lord, and trusting him with them.

In loving God and our families, we must come to know and embrace the fact that just as the universe is centered around the Sun, so all life is centered around Jesus Christ. History exists for him. Families exist for him. Therefore, when Jesus came to earth, he came to save his family, not ours. As he says in Mark 3:35, his brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers are any and all who do the will of God. In this sense, Jesus is a family man, but ultimately the gravitational pull of his family aligns itself with the eternal purposes of the triune God.

Sometimes this means he will redeem and restore an entire family. Other times, he will draw his sword down the middle, splitting it wide open. Why? It is hard to know. He has his good and perfect reasons, but this side of glory they are hidden. As with earthly families, children are not always privy to the decisions of their fathers. But that does not mean that the Father cannot be trusted. Just the opposite: God offers to all the chance to be a part of his family—if you are willing to put him first (Matt 6:33) and stop racing around to all your families needs at the ex-

pense of Jesus (Luke 10:38–42).

As strange as it may sound: The key to a family that glorifies God is not getting God's help to prioritize your family; the key is living out your life in the family of God. If you prioritize that family relationship, God will become your trusted Father and Jesus Christ will become your elder brother who will enable you with his Spirit to live and love in a way that resembles the triune God. God will move in your heart and your home to do all he wants to do in your family. This is the good news of the gospel, and it is the key to being a disciple who glorifies God in your family.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> On the relationship between putting Christ first and its impact on familial strife, see Timothy S. Lane, *Family Feuds: How to Respond* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth, 2008).

<sup>2</sup> Although not centering his ministry on children (“children *per se* were not at the heart of Jesus’ priorities”), “Jesus placed special importance on receiving with kindness and hospitality the least important members of society: children” (S. C. Barton, “Child, Children,” in *The Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, ed. Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight, and I. Howard Marshall [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992], 101–02).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 100–04.

<sup>4</sup> D. A. Carson, *Matthew*, in vol. 8 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 395.

<sup>5</sup> Leon Morris (*The Gospel According to Matthew* [PNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992], 460) distinguishes the difference

between modern feelings about children and society's sentiments in Jesus' day: “In modern Western societies children are often seen as very important, but in first-century Judaism they were not . . . In the affairs of men children were unimportant. They could not fight, they could not lead, they had not had time to acquire wisdom, they could not pile up riches, they counted for very little.” Certainly, Jesus' illustration with the child does not make Jesus the equivalent of a braggadocious suburban father. From first to last, Jesus was kingdom-centered. Nevertheless, by using the child's humble and dependent nature as a model for heavenly citizenship, he endows the child with inherent worth, something out of step with his ancient culture.

<sup>6</sup> Carson rightly observes, “The child is held up as an ideal, not of innocence, purity, or faith, but of humility and unconcern for social status” (*Matthew*, 397).

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> Michael Green, *The Message of Matthew*, *The Bible Speaks Today* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 190–91.

<sup>9</sup> On the use of feminine imagery for God, see John Frame's helpful discussion, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Christian Belief* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2013), 107–115.

<sup>10</sup> In Jesus' day Hebrew parents would often bring children to rabbis for blessing (Carson, *Matthew*, 420).

<sup>11</sup> David L. Turner rightly observes, “Jesus does not choose a child out of a sentimental notion of the innocence or subjective humility of children, since children may already exhibit in seed form the traits Jesus speaks against here. The childlike character trait that is foremost in the simile of becoming like a child is [objective] humility.” He then elaborates, “Children are not innocent or selfless, nor do they consistently model humility. Rather, children have no status in society; they are at the mercy of adults. Similarly,

repentant disciples admit that they have no status before God and they depend solely on the love of the heavenly Father” (*Matthew* [BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008], 435–36).

<sup>12</sup>Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 486.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>A tremendous example of how to share the gospel with children can be found in J. C. Ryle’s sermons to children (*Boys and Girls Playing and Other Addresses to Children*, ed. Don Kistler [New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1881; reprint, Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria, 1996]).

<sup>15</sup>Jesus does something similar when he speaks about the poor in John 12:8: “For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me.”

<sup>16</sup>“No mere man has the right to claim a love higher than that for parents or children; it is only because he is who he is that Jesus can look for such love” (Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 268).

<sup>17</sup>Peter R. Schemm, Jr., “Habits of a Gospel-Centered Household,” in *Trained in the Fear of God: Family Ministry in Theological, Historical, and Practical Perspective*, ed. Randy Stinson and Timothy Paul Jones (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2011), 191–92.

<sup>18</sup>Timothy Keller (*Counterfeit Gods: The Empty Promises of Money, Sex, and Power, and the Only Hope That Matters* [New York: Riverhead, 2009], 204) gives a representative list of ten possible idols. One category he lists is “relational idols,” which he defines as “dysfunctional family systems of codependency; ‘fatal attractions’; living your life through

your children.” Although importing terminology and concepts from the realm of psychology, this category well-describes the kind of family idolatry outlined here. To change only one of his prepositions, as a pastor I see a great deal of Christian parents idolizing their children by living their lives *for* their children. Without denying any Christian doctrines or affirming any heresies, parents dedicate years (if not decades) prioritizing their children over God. While such praxis is normal among many parents, it is a sinful form of idolatry.

<sup>19</sup>“We think that idols are bad things, but that is almost never the case. The greater the good, the more likely we are to expect that it can satisfy our deepest needs and hopes. Anything can serve as a counterfeit god [i.e., an idol], especially the very best things in life” (ibid., xix).

<sup>20</sup>“Loves [in Matthew 10:37] is a significant word; it points to the warmest affection. Jesus does not bid his followers love their parents or their children (nor, on the other hand, does he forbid warm affection in the family). He simply assumes that family members will love one another. But he is concerned that they must not value their attachment to the members of their families so highly that he is pushed into the background” (Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 267–68).

<sup>21</sup>Richard Wurmbrand, *Tortured for Christ* (Bartlesville, OK: Living Sacrifice, 1998), 34.

<sup>22</sup>An adaptation of “A Prayer about God Overriding Our Unbelief,” in Scotty Smith, *Everyday Prayers: 365 Days to a Gospel-Centered Faith* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 138.