

Stories from the Focus on the Family | Digital Outreach

Marriage

- A divorced mom reached out for help, worried about an upcoming doctor's appointment for her son at which her ex-husband would be joining her. A Focus specialist followed up with her the next day to see how the appointment went, and she reported it was tough, saying her ex-husband "felt like a complete stranger to me." The specialist was able to encourage her and offer her the link for Focus' online parenting site as a resource in her journey.

"I work with Focus on the Family and they've got some info that might be encouraging right now for you as a momma. You can check it out at FocusontheFamily.com/parenting."

- A woman with two kids and a baby on the way desperately wanted to repair her relationship with her husband. He'd had problems controlling his anger and had recently begun verbally abusing her again. A Focus family help specialist gave her the names of two organizations dedicated to assisting women married to men with anger issues.

"I hope you are able to find some support. It's so important to not go through this alone. So, I'll continue praying that you'll get the help you and your husband need-whatever that may look like. ((Hugs))"

The Focus specialist followed up with this woman a little later. She reported the good news that her husband was willing to get help.

- A twice-divorced man had been cheated on by both of his previous wives and was finding it difficult to trust his current girlfriend. Focus asked if he had thought about counseling to work through the great hurt he's experienced and recommended a book on things to consider before remarriage.

"It's heartwarming to read that you've found someone you're in love with. After 2 previous difficult marriages and the baggage that they've left you with, have you considered getting counseling to help you get healthy enough for a new relationship?"

Parenting

- A single mom looking for advice on a parenting forum had two boys whose fathers were drug addicts, abusive and uninvolved. She was struggling with how to handle her 6-year-old son who was showing signs of resentment against her younger son. A Focus staff member encouraged her to lay down the burden of

guilt she was carrying and gave her a link to an article series on the ministry's website about the struggles single moms face.

"Since you can't change the past, just move forward knowing that you're doing your best every day. This process includes forgiving yourself. You're not always going to do everything right, so try not to have that extra burden always over you. I realize my response so far is all about you, when you were asking about your son, but you need to take care of yourself before you can nurture your children well."

The mother was very appreciative, saying "I need all the help I can get. Thank you for your insight."

- On a well-known Q&A website, one mom asked how to handle her son who habitually lied about his homework. She was also searching for ideas on how to communicate with his teachers, who she felt were unhelpful and rude. Focus' family help specialist suggested she meet with his teachers one-on-one to discuss the situation and sent her a link to some of the group's articles that covered a variety of topics for helping children succeed in school.

"You might want to take a look at these articles from Focus on the Family on helping your child succeed in school, <http://bit.ly/1cacjPp>. There's really good advice in there on a range of things including homework help. Good luck."

Crisis

- A 23-year-old on a depression forum struggled with worthlessness and felt like a "joke of a human being" and a "waste of space." Her living situation was stressful, and she'd been struggling through an extended season of unemployment. She also felt socially inept and didn't know how to make friends. A Focus specialist reached out with love and concern, affirming the young lady's God-given worth.

"Honestly, my heart breaks to read how you feel about hurting yourself. I'm so sorry for all that you have been through and that all that you feel is guilt and shame. Your living situation sounds very difficult but I have to believe there is hope for something better for you. I respect your beliefs and understand why you find it hard to believe in a God. I still believe that God loves you whether you believe in him or not."

The ministry also referred her to 1-800-A-FAMILY, its free counseling helpline, and offered suggestions for taking small, practical steps to begin improving her circumstances.

- A wife had been the sole caregiver for her ill husband, who had been admitted to a nursing home far away from the town they'd lived in for 26 years. While the caregiving burden had eased, she now faced intense loneliness in this new city: "What I have found is how hard it is to find new friends to share a laugh with, go out for coffee, lunch or dinner. I'd settle for anyone to sit IN PERSON and talk to, just for a little bit. I truly hate feeling so lonely that it is eating me alive." A Focus specialist assured her that she'd be praying for her, suggested she look for a support group and referred her to a national caregivers association. The woman deeply appreciated the suggestions.

"I know there's some organizations out there specifically designed to support caregivers. For instance, maybe check out the National Family Caregivers Association?...And, as it relates to finding friends in general, perhaps trying to join some activities or clubs at something like the YMCA or other community group could be helpful? So, just some ideas to consider. In the meantime, I'll be praying that you'll find some great friends to support you during this time!"

Personal & Spiritual Growth

- On a Christian forum, a Focus family help specialist shared God's comfort and hope with a recently divorced mom of two struggling with feelings of deep rejection. Growing up, she lived with her alcoholic mother who would fight constantly with her boyfriend. She'd been molested by her friend's brother when she was 8. Additionally, the woman was battling social anxiety and felt unable to trust men. She wrote, "I have become so accustomed to holding things in because when I try to explain things to others, they don't get it."

The Focus specialist responded with kindness and sensitivity, recommending a well-known recovery group and suggesting she speak with her doctor or pastor for recommendations for coping with her anxiety.

"Oh, I just caught this post and my heart goes out to you friend. I'm so sorry you've faced so many difficulties in your life. And it's totally understandable that you're feeling overwhelmed right now. But, I'm glad you seem ready to reach out for some help and support. It's so important not to go through this alone."

She left the mom with the phone numbers for multiple helplines and shared comforting Bible verses with the hurting woman.

Social Issues

- A lesbian woman shared her frustrations with those who felt homosexuality wasn't God's design for human sexuality.

"I have read and re-read both posts about a dozen times & prayed often before I decided to respond. You have addressed with great respect and passion your beliefs and I would like to take the opportunity to respond to your post in an equally straightforward fashion."

Even though the woman disagreed with Focus, she responded: "This is your opinion and your beliefs. Because you are respectful in the way you express them, I can respect and accept what you say. Does not mean I agree, but I can respect it. Thank you for being respectful."