

Monday  
February  
26

Genesis  
1:26—2:3

So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them (Gen. 1:27).

## MIRROR IMAGE

KAROLYN PARSONS

Mirrors can be hard to miss. Even when we try not to look, it's hard not to notice when our image is caught in one. When we stop to inspect that image, we might like what we see, or we might get discouraged and start picking ourselves apart.

Just like a carnival maze of mirrors, our perception of who we are can be affected by the kind of mirror we use. The images are meant to be distorted and unclear, amusing or unsettling. Mirrors that affect our self-image and our emotions play with our sense of self-worth. Entire industries capitalize on this insecurity and convince us that we need their help to be perfect.

When we read that we are created in God's image, it speaks to an amazing awareness that we were created intentionally and purposefully by God and that, as men and women, we can look into the mirror and see important attributes of God within us. Our hearts, spirit, emotions, and desires in life come as a reflection of Him. In this understanding we find peace, not in what the world says about us, but in the One who we aim to reflect.

*I have found a deep peace that I never had known, and a joy this world could not afford.*

“My Wonderful Lord” by  
Haldor Lillenas

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**My salvation and my honor depend on God; he is my mighty rock, my refuge (Psalm 67:2).**

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**Please pray:**

That many people in American Samoa will come to know Christ and receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

Tuesday  
February  
27

Genesis 2:15-25

That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh (Gen. 2:24).

## PARTNERS

KAROLYN PARSONS

The mystery and intrigue surrounding the story of the creation of man and woman never ceases to cause wonder. We wonder at the act of creating one being, only to realize that one is alone and without companionship. It is amazing to take one body and carefully make another.

God created male and female in the image of God, each intentionally designed to be of equal worth. Both male and female are intended to help and encourage, unite and accomplish many things together. God created them to be partners, helpers to one another and to be so closely bonded that they are called one flesh.

The unity that comes between a man and woman as husband and wife is a unique relationship. When a couple joins together, they develop intimacy and partnership. They know more about each other than others know. It is a sacred relationship to be held in honor and respect, to be unhindered by those outside that covenant relationship. One is not over another, one is not more powerful than the other, rather both contain attributes and qualities of God intended to match the needs of the other. When a couple keeps their eyes on God, they can accomplish many great things together.

*God, our Makers, doth  
provide*

*For our wants to be  
supplied.*

*Come to God's own  
temple, come;*

*Raise the one of  
harvest home.*

“Come, Ye Thankful People,  
Come” by Henry Alford

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**The king rejoices in  
your strength, LORD.  
How great is his joy  
in the victories you  
give! (Psalm 21:1).**

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**Please pray:**

For the development  
of Christian leaders in  
American Samoa.

Wednesday  
February  
28

Exodus 1:11-22

So God was kind to the midwives and the people increased and became even more numerous (Exod. 1:20).

## CHOOSING GOD'S WAY

KAROLYN PARSONS

World War II brought us stories of those who defied the Nazi orders to imprison and kill Jews by helping hide and rescue lives that were in danger. These people faced a daunting choice: obey orders or defy them. The risk was high—their own death was possible—but to those individuals it was worth that possibility.

The Hebrew midwives Shiphrah and Puah faced one of these times. They had to choose between the edict of the King of Egypt and the lives of the Hebrew male babies Pharaoh had ordered them to kill. Disobedience to the Pharaoh could mean their own death, but what Pharaoh was asking them to do went against God.

The midwives feared God more than Pharaoh and helped the babies live. Pharaoh questioned them; he did not punish them. Their decision to obey God spared many babies and in turn, God honored their faithfulness with families of their own, and a growing community of people.

What impossible situation are you facing today? You may not be making a decision of life and death, but we each have times of testing. Our obedience to God is not by chance, but rather a intentional choice we make each day. Choose the narrow way.

*Help me to walk  
aright—  
More by faith, less by  
sight.  
Lead me with  
heav'nly light;  
Teach me Thy way.*  
“Teach Me Thy Way”  
by B. Mansell Ramsey

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**But Samuel replied:  
“Does the LORD  
delight in burnt  
offerings and  
sacrifices as much  
as in obeying the  
LORD? To obey  
is better than  
sacrifice, and to  
heed is better than  
the fat of rams  
(1 Samuel 15:22).**

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**Please pray:**  
That many people in  
Australia will come to  
know Christ and receive the  
fullness of the Holy Spirit.

Thursday

March

1

Exodus 2:1-10

When the child grew older, she took him to Pharaoh's daughter and he became her son. . . . saying, "I drew him out of the water" (Exod. 2:10).

## UNSEEN PLAN

KAROLYN PARSONS

Today's reading is one of my favorite stories to share, and yet, the names of the women involved are not shared. A mother is under pressure because her infant son faces death. A sister watches over her brother hidden in a basket. The Pharaoh's daughter sees the baby's basket in the water, and has her slave girl retrieve the baby's basket from the water. All of these women came together to save the life of one child. Each one had the courage to try to do the right thing under less than ideal circumstances.

I have often wondered how the conversation about the baby boy went between the Pharaoh and his daughter. How fast did the girl run home to tell her mother that her son's life was spared and he would continue to live at home with them a while longer. We do not get to see those sides of the story, but we do see how God's hand brought these women together for a purpose and a plan for the child we know as Moses. How different the story of God could have been without the decisions and courage to save him!

*Take my hands and  
let them move, At the  
impulse of thy Love.*

"Take My Life, and Let It Be  
Consecrated" by Frances R.  
Havergal

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**And now, Israel,  
what does the LORD  
your God ask of  
you but to fear the  
LORD your God, to  
walk in obedience  
to him, to love him,  
to serve the LORD  
your God with all  
your heart and  
with all your soul  
(Deuteronomy  
10:12).**

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**Please pray:**

For the development  
of Christian leaders in  
Australia.

Friday  
March  
2

1 Samuel 1:1-11

And she made a vow, saying, “LORD Almighty, if you will only look on your servant’s misery and remember me” (1 Sam. 1:11a).

## SHARING OUR BURDEN

KAROLYN PARSONS

Hannah endured much ridicule for her childless state. Her husband loved her, his heart ached for her, but the cruel actions of others were almost too much to bear for her. Year after year, Hannah not only carried her heartache, but suffered the relentless provoking of her rival for it. Her grief hit the tipping point and she could no longer hold it in, so she began to pray and pour her heart out to God. As all her emotions spilled out in prayer, she asked God for one thing: a son. She asked for a son whom she would be willing to hold for a time, but give back to the Lord to be a special servant of God.

Many times, our hearts carry our silent burdens, our griefs, things that seem too heavy to carry. Much like Hannah, we can face the scorn and ridicule from others whose comments only add to our heartaches. We can also choose to remain faithful and ask God to somehow bring joy to our sorrow, and bless our lives in some way. We can always trust that the Lord hears our prayers and knows our heart’s cry.

*Are we weak  
and heavy laden,  
cumbered with a load  
of care? Precious  
Savior still our  
Refuge, Take it to the  
Lord in prayer.*

“What a Friend We Have in  
Jesus” by Joseph M. Scriven

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**In you, LORD my  
God, I put my trust  
(Psalm 25:1).**

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**Please pray:**

For the faculty and students  
as they prepare for Christian  
ministry in Australia.

Saturday

March

3

1 Samuel 1:12-19

Early the next morning they arose and worshiped before the LORD and then went back to their home . . . , and the LORD remembered her (1 Sam. 1:19).

## HEAR OUR PRAYERS

KAROLYN PARSONS

I remember the first time I was in a church service where the people did not pray quietly during the pastoral prayer. The voices were loud and seemed to be jumbled up together, getting collectively louder, sounding like shouts. This was new for me because the churches I grew up in prayed silently while the pastor led the prayers. It's not that one way was right and the other was wrong. It was simply different from my prior experience.

We do not know why Eli thought Hannah was drunk while she was praying, but perhaps what he was seeing was just so different than what he was used to that he didn't know what else to think. He saw a woman praying so passionately that it was misunderstood. We can be thankful, however, that God does not misunderstand our prayers. He hears and knows the cries of our hearts. For Hannah, being able to unload the burden of her heart to the Lord was enough to give her peace and hope. She left with a renewed spirit.

May you carry your burden to the Lord and find peace and blessings.

*Pass me not, O gentle Savior; hear my humble cry.*

"Pass Me Not" by Fanny J. Crosby

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**I call on you, my God, for you will answer me; turn your ear to me and hear my prayer (Psalm 17:6).**

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**Please pray:**

That many people in Tonga will come to know Christ and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Sunday  
March  
4

Esther  
9:20-23, 28-32

So Queen Esther, . . . along with Mordecai the Jew, wrote with full authority to confirm this second letter concerning Purim (Esth. 9:29).

## CELEBRATING DELIVERANCE

KAROLYN PARSONS

People have always had the need to remember significant moments in history. We hold memorials, days of remembrance, and celebrations to commemorate events that touched many lives. We do not want to forget what happened. We want the future generations to remember those moments that so deeply shape who we are and where we have been, especially when we can see the hand of God at work.

Esther and Mordecai had been through a lot together in their journey to save the Jewish people from Haman's plan to have them killed. They were guided by God in ways that saved the lives of countless Jews. Today's passage reveals that God continued to give Mordecai and Esther the authority to speak and move on His behalf, as they worked to create a time to celebrate the lives that were spared from massacre. This holiday, called Purim, is still celebrated today. The rituals and commands that were set forth became the standard for the celebration to be held, so that no generation could forget what God had done to save them from destruction.

*It is truly wonderful  
what the Lord has  
done! Glory to His  
name!*

"It Is Truly Wonderful" by  
Barney E. Warren

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**For sin shall no  
longer be your  
master, because you  
are not under the  
law, but under grace  
(Romans 6:14).**

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**Please pray:**

For the development of  
Christian leaders in Tonga.