

# PRESSING ON...

"I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." Philippians 3:14



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## In~Laws are A L I E N S

■ By Melvin Jonkman, MDiv, Executive Director

I don't know what you think about my title; my wife doesn't like it.

To her it comes off as negative. I don't mean for it to be negative, but rather, to state a fact. The online version of Merriam-Webster's Dictionary gives this as the 1a definition of Alien: *belonging or relating to another person, place, or thing: strange*. In-laws, and just for clarification, I'm an in-law too, are strangers to each other. Their habits, customs, beliefs, manners, and worldview may be very different.

### Two Become One = In-Laws

Two people, who were strangers meet, are attracted to each other, spend time together, fall in love, and marry. Over the course of time, habits change, customs are adjusted, common ground is found in beliefs, expectations about manners produce change, and worldviews are merged. Two become one.

When this happens many strangers are along for the ride. Grandparents, parents, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, and many others are brought together because two people fell in love



and got married. And just like in the dating relationship, things don't always go smoothly. There are bumps and struggles and sometimes painful experiences as the individuals who make up these groups relate to each other.

### In-Laws Move Slowly

Kathy and I love our son-in-law and daughters-in-law, and I believe that they love us too. We have a relationship with them, but we need to be careful. We need to move slowly. The most important things we can do are love and support our children's spouses. These are adults who have become part of our family because they love our daughter and our sons. We need to respect them, get to know them, value their uniqueness and encourage them to be themselves when with us.

### Loyalty Shifts to Spouse

One of the first things the Bible says about marriage is "...a man shall leave

his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh." Before our children are married there should be a strong connection to the parents. After children are married, their loyalty shifts to their spouse. And as parents we need to respect that shift. The new couple needs the freedom to explore, define and grow their relationship without interference. If we raised our children well, we need to trust their training and allow them to apply it in the marriage relationship.

### Ingredients for Positive In-Law Relationships

As parents we need to give our children space; however, this does not mean that we don't have a place in their lives. The Bible also tells children that they should "honor" their parents (Exodus 20:12). This doesn't stop when they marry, and it applies to their spouse as well. Children are to show patience, kindness, gentleness, and respect. This applies to in-laws too. Equally important

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# Your Secret Weapon: The Armor of God

■ by Kathy Konrath, MA, LCPC, LMHC

**Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes (Ephesians 6:10-11, NIV).**

## Life is not easy.

On any given day, we face unexpected challenges: hurtful words from a loved one, a threatening diagnosis, loss of security, confusion, etc.

These challenges are *not* the face of our enemy. They are, however, areas of life where the *real* enemy seeks to torment and hold us hostage.

The armor of God is our secret weapon. With it securely fashioned, on a daily basis, we can protect and defend ourselves from the real enemy. Let's unwrap this divine gift and put it on. Our very lives may depend on it.

**Belt of Truth:** The soldier's belt supports the core of the body. Personal fitness trainers tell us that in order to be fit, we have to strengthen our core abdominal muscles. With a strong core, we can lift heavy weights, move with greater ease and hold our balance. Our walk is straighter, knees last longer and our back is reinforced – all

from having strong abs! The *TRUTH* is what we need wrapped around the core of our being. What we believe about ourselves, others and the world around us is directly related to how strong our core is. As we take every thought and decision to and through God's word, we put on the belt of truth and reinforce our core.

**Breastplate of Righteousness:** The breastplate protects the most vital organ we have: our heart. Our heart functions to pump blood to every part of our body. The



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however is this instruction from Colossians 3:21, "Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged." As we relate together, we each have a responsibility to build the relationship, to encourage open communication, to honor differences, and to love each other as God loves us.

Positive in-law relationships are a great blessing. Living in harmony, respecting and supporting each other in our uniqueness helps all of us grow as God intends, for the good of the individual and the family. Troublesome in-law relationships can be a source of deep emotional pain, and it is not what God intends.

If you have a good relationship with your in-laws give thanks. If you are struggling don't give up. If you know where you have contributed to the pain, own it, ask for forgiveness and open up the channel of communication. If you are the one who has been wronged, forgive and open up the channel of communication.

Finally, pray that God will help you love each other and build each other up for his sake and the sake of your family.



Mel Jonkman, M.Div.  
Executive Director

righteousness granted to us through the blood of Jesus gives us eternal life. When we walk with the righteousness of Christ in place, and step in line with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we guard our heart against that which seeks to infiltrate and destroy real life.

**Shoes of Peace:** Nike and Jimmy Choo are no match when it comes to supernatural shoes! The shoes of peace enable us to hike through rough terrain. They ground us, holding us steady under all conditions. The good news of peace is that God is with us, and he remains our constant, come what may.

**Shield of Faith:** Faith is the shield that protects our entire body as we engage in battle with fear and doubt. With faith in place, we set our eye on the goal and walk forward, one step at a time. It is the shield of faith that extinguishes the unexpected fiery darts which intend to harm and distract our attention away from God's promises. We may not know what lies ahead for us, but the shield of faith allows us to advance, believing that God will keep his word.

**Helmet of Salvation:** The soldier's helmet is made of a hard surface that covers the entire head and protects the mind. Salvation gives us a new identity in Christ. With this new identity comes a new way of thinking. Our thoughts directly impact the way we live and the level of freedom we experience. When we align our thinking with what the word of God says, we can tear down beliefs based on lies and forever change how we see ourselves and the world around us.

**Sword of the Spirit:** The sword is the offensive piece of our weaponry. Scripture defines the sword as the word of God. Victory is found when we attack lies, fears, and accusations with God's word. This involves reading the scriptures and searching for promises and truths

that will specifically pierce the attacks against your mind, soul, and spirit. When we know the truth, we will know freedom (John 8:32).

## Prayer Activates the Armor

Without this spiritual armor in place, we risk defeat. Each piece has a purpose and it will serve its function when you put it on. Pray now, to be secure in the truth of who God says you are, covered in the righteousness of Christ, walking according to his ways, steadfast in all conditions, established with your mind set on the things of God and skilled at fighting lies with the truth of God's word.

**Game on.**  
**Are you ready to fight?**

For a deeper study of the armor, see *The Armor of God*, by Priscilla Shirer.



Kathy Konrath, MA, is a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor (IL) and Licensed Mental Health Counselor (IN). She sees clients in our Evergreen Park, IL and Schererville, IN locations.

# So, What is Therapy Anyway?



■ by Josephine Martinez, MSW, LCSW

Therapy, short for psychotherapy, can seem like a mystery if you have never experienced it.

The word *psychotherapy* can be intimidating.

What does the word “psycho” mean? Pop culture unfortunately uses that word to describe a person who is dangerous, deranged, or homicidal. Because no one wants to think of themselves as “psycho,” it’s understandable that making an appointment to talk with a psychotherapist can be daunting. The word *psych* simply refers to the mind, soul, or spirit. Psychotherapy is the healing or treatment of the mind, soul or spirit. The words *therapy* and *counseling* are used interchangeably in practice.

## What Really Happens Behind the Closed Door?

The unknown can result in feelings of anxiety and second thoughts about going to see a therapist. It takes courage to make the decision to call and set up a first therapy appointment. It takes courage, determination, and follow-through to actually walk through the front door and tell a stranger your feelings. Your therapist will be aware and sensitive to the nervousness you may feel coming into your first session.

The first therapy session is a brief introduction. In addition to meeting the therapist for the first time, the first session provides new clients with an overview of what to expect. You can expect to have the opportunity to describe the reason(s) which brought you to therapy. The therapist will ask questions to clarify understanding of what you are experiencing. Also, during the first session, basic office policies including scheduling, billing, confidentiality, and a brief packet of paperwork will be reviewed. By the time you leave your first session, you will feel more at ease about the process and have a better understanding of what to expect going forward.

The first few sessions will be used to further describe your experiences and reasons for attending therapy and to develop goals. Ongoing therapy sessions are uniquely based on you. It is important for clients to feel comfortable and that there is a good fit with the therapist. Therapists are able to use a broad set of skills and therapy approaches. These skills help people to develop awareness and understanding of how thoughts, feelings, and behavior patterns impact responses to life situations. Integrative treatment approaches include several types of therapy, such as psychodynamic therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, client/person centered therapy, and many more. Sessions can include talking, art, music, mindfulness, written therapeutic exercises, and more. Therapists are able to adapt sessions to best fit your unique personality and circumstances. From time to time, you will have the opportunity to review your goals with the therapist and talk about progress.

## Does Therapy Really Work?

Therapy is a practice. Like working out at the gym, you get results based on what you put in. It can seem like you are working hard and not seeing immediate results. With consistency and time, you will start to see positive growth in understanding yourself and your situation better. Being ready, willing, and committed will positively impact the benefits of therapy. It might seem easier to avoid or stuff negative feelings, but putting in the hard work allows you to become stronger. No pain, no gain!

## Why Not Just Talk to My Friends?

Working with a therapist provides an objective perspective from someone who is professionally trained in problem solving, supporting, and empowering clients to gain control over their emotions, decisions, and responses to life circumstances. Talking with a therapist gives clients the freedom to express their thoughts, and feelings, and to explore ideas that might not be safe or acceptable to do in their own relationships. When we talk with our friends and family, we must always be aware of the consequences and how our words can hurt feelings. During a therapy session, clients are able to process feelings and practice how to respond them without fear of hurting loved ones’ feelings or damaging relationships. In addition to addressing problems, therapy is a useful tool to set new goals or improve in specific areas, such as leadership, communication, and relationship skills.

## Why a Christian Therapist?

Christian counseling or therapy is no different than regular counseling in regards to professional aspects and overall procedure when done by a licensed professional. However, Christian counseling has the added component of combining the client’s spiritual beliefs into the therapy session itself. Spiritual guidance and nurturing is present in Christian counseling through discussion of how faith and prayer provide hope, build coping skills, and transform people. A Christian counselor is able to help clients strengthen their faith and to provide spiritual support through praying with clients when requested.

Sometimes clients feel guilt or anxiety about seeking therapy. It can seem contradictory to struggle with anxiety and have faith in God, especially when we read verses that instruct us to be anxious for nothing and to cast our cares on him. Imagine that you have a broken arm and seek medical care to treat your injury. God provides healing and can use doctors as a tool to assist the healing. In a similar way, we all have areas that we struggle to handle emotionally and mentally. Therapy is a tool that God can use to provide support and healing of our spirit. A Christian therapist can be the method that God provides for clients to release worry and anxiety.

It is expected to feel some anxiety about attending therapy, especially if it’s the first time. Therapists are caring, willing to listen, and non-judgmental. Psychotherapists are resources that can provide great support and guidance through life’s ups and downs. Each therapist, client and situation is unique. Diverse people and integrative treatment approaches create a special opportunity to have a personalized experience in receiving treatment and healing of the mind, soul, and spirit. ■



*Josi Martinez is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and sees clients in our Chicago South Loop location.*





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### Our Mission Statement

Promoting health and wholeness through professional counseling, consultation and education from a Christian perspective.

## New Staff



**Katie DeYoung, MA, LCPC, LMHC**  
Evergreen Park & Orland Park, IL Locations

Katie is a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor in the state of Illinois and a Licensed Mental Health Counselor in the state of Indiana.

She has experience working with a variety of ages, ranging from children to adults in the context of individual, family or couples counseling. She believes in the power of change and has a passion to share God's love with those who are hurting. Katie's interests include helping clients overcome life problems, such as: anxiety, depression, grief, relationship issues, stress, low self-esteem, and life transitions.

Katie earned both her MA in Clinical Mental Health Counseling and her BA in Counseling/Sociology from Grace College in Winona Lake, IN.



**Heather Mulcahy, MSW, LSW**  
Schererville, IN & South Holland, IL Locations

Heather is a Licensed Social Worker who has a passion for restoring hope, facilitating healing and offering support to her clients. She believes in developing a strong therapeutic relationship built on trust, empathy and respect in a safe and supportive environment. She approaches therapy from a Christ-centered perspective that includes mind, body and spirit to promote health and wholeness. Areas of interest include depression, anxiety, anger management, relationship concerns, women's issues, spiritual issues, grief and loss, life transitions, trauma and abuse.

Heather earned her MSW from Governors State University, University Park, IL with an emphasis in children and family services and her BA in Criminal Justice from Governors State University.