

In Other Words...

A RESEARCH SERVICE FOR CHRISTIAN COMMUNICATORS

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DECEPTION: Thomas Lamont was a partner in The House of Morgan (now J.P. Morgan Chase) and a key player in the financial world that roared through the 1920s and crashed in 1929. Extreme wealth lends itself to carry-over confidence where success with money can lead to a false sense of expertise in other subjects. Such was the case when he became enamored with Hitler and asked a senior German official, “Just what sort of fellow is Hitler? Is he the sort you’d go fishing with?” The reply was, “My dear Lamont, he is the nicest fellow in the world—always making jokes. You couldn’t ask for a more delightful companion.” We’re all prone to deception and this slice of history reminds us that even brilliant minds can be led astray. *1929, Andrew Sorkin, 2025, p.418*

EVOLUTION: In 2024, Australian mathematicians tackled the proverbial typing monkeys. Their calculations revealed that if all 200,000 of the planet’s chimpanzees were chained to typewriters and worked until science’s predictive death of the universe in 1.7×10^{106} years, they would never produce any recognizable written work. Creation isn’t a random event. *The Week, 11/15/2024, p.6*

FORGIVENESS: Kenneth Branagh directed the live action *Cinderella* starring Lily James that was released in 2015. During the movie’s pre-release test screenings, Branagh got a glimpse of human nature. The film’s conclusion involved Cinderella looking at her wicked stepmother, Lady Tremaine played by Cate Blanchett, and simply saying, “I forgive you.” The woman had made Cinderella’s life miserable and a sector of the screening audiences thought forgiveness was inappropriate. Branagh was taken aback by the desire for retribution, and screenwriter Chris Weitz added, “Forgiveness doesn’t rank highly as a movie virtue.” The ending wasn’t changed because as Branagh stated, “For Cinderella, the best revenge is to live well.” *USAToday.com, 8/13/2015*

GOSPEL: Dick Foth pictures the Gospel as Jesus saying, “I’ll leave my place...come to your place...take your place...and then we’ll go to My place.” *National Community Church, 3/15/2026*

GRADUATION: As students head off to college, Christian comedian Jeff Allen offers wise counsel a friend gave him years ago. Allen’s life was falling apart and he was working hard to stay sober. While he and his friend were discussing success, the man kept referencing the Bible. Allen told him to stop talking about a book that’s “too archaic. I’m an atheist.” His friend’s response hit like a missile: “You’re not an atheist; you’re a moron. You’re discounting an omniscient God, and you’d have to be omniscient yourself to discount an omniscient God.” He then said, “I say this with love: You’re not smart enough to be an atheist.” It didn’t set well but his friend kept showing up, praying for him, and giving Allen sermon tapes from his pastor. Nearly two years later Allen began following Christ as his Lord at the age of 40. Education is important, but nobody is truly smart enough to be an atheist. *Today’s Christian Living, September 2024, p.5*

LOVE: John Stott (1921-2011) wrote, “Our love grows soft if it is not strengthened by truth, and our truth grows hard if it is not softened by love.” *Today’s Christian Living, November 2021, p.53*

MOTHERHOOD: Margareta Magnusson’s obituary made the *Wall Street Journal* because of a best-selling book she wrote in her 80s. *The Gentle Art of Swedish Death Cleaning* sold more than one million copies and was translated into over 30 languages. Marie Kondo had already captivated the younger generations with the message of simplicity so Magnusson’s 2018 book was a perfect

exhortation for senior adults to start discarding stuff and not leave that task for their kids. The notice about her death at 91 on March 12, 2026 in Sweden included a comment about motherhood from her second book. She raised 5 children with her husband and wrote, “Most of the time I shot from the hip, making it up as I went along.” That may sound a little hap-hazard but it’s laden with reality. There are principles & truths to follow, but a lot is done on the fly and that simple understanding can reduce a lot of guilt about not doing it “just right.” *Wall Street Journal*, 3/21/26, p.C6

MOTHERHOOD: *Through The Looking Glass* by Lewis Carroll (commonly called *Alice In Wonderland*) contains a conversation with Alice and the White Queen. When Alice doesn’t believe the queen is as old as she claims, 101 years...5 months and...1 day, she states, “One can’t believe impossible things.” The queen retorts, “I dare say you haven’t had much practice... Why, sometimes I’ve believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast.” Moms have a lot of practice doing impossible things and frequently they’ve pulled off a half-dozen such miracles before breakfast. *Mature Living*, September 2017, p.28

MOTHERHOOD: *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up* was Marie Kondo’s debut book and it captured worldwide attention after being introduced to Americans in 2014. Her book sold over 14 million copies globally and created a cultural phenomenon of decluttering by only keeping that which “sparks joy.” The KonMari Method also captivated viewers on television where she helped people radically minimize their possessions. But things changed after Ms. Kondo and her husband started having children. “When it was just the two of us, my house was pretty close to that ideal,” she said. Now this mother of 3 says she’s “kind of given up on that” and admits kids have made her ideal an “impossible standard.” “My home is messy, but it’s the right way for me at this stage of my life.” She said, “I tell myself, ‘You have different priorities, and right now what sparks joy is playing with my children.’” Motherhood definitely has seasons and nothing can replace that season of children sparking joy. *The Week*, 11/25/22, p.10; 2/10/23, p.6; 1/24/25, p.6

EVERYDAY HUMOR

FAMILY: Ann had dinner with her boyfriend’s family and felt good about their initial meeting. When the couple was leaving, Jake’s grandmother hugged Ann and said it was wonderful to meet her. Ann thanked her and said, “It’s nice to know I have your approval.” The matriarch replied, “Honey, just because we like you doesn’t mean we approve.” *Reader’s Digest*, March 2020, p.17

GUILT: A Girl Scout explained her strategy for selling 11,200 boxes of cookies: “You have to look them in the eye and make them feel guilty.” *1001 Great Stories*, Kent Hughes, 1998, p.195

INEQUITY: After a Mother’s Day worship service, tension erupted between two siblings. “It’s not fair! She pulled \$1 out of the plate and I only got a quarter.” *Houston Chronicle*, 4/5/26, p.U4

MOTHERHOOD: Humorist Erma Bombeck (1927-1996) wrote, “When my kids become wild & unruly, I use a nice, safe playpen. When they’re finished, I climb out.” *The Week*, 5/30/25, p.17

MOTHERHOOD: Andrea had to work at understanding her son’s compliment. The second-grader brought home a sheet where the kids answered questions about their mom like age and favorite things. On the blank following, “My mom is as pretty as...” he wrote “a horse.” After an awkward pause, he said sweetly, “Mom, horses are pretty!” *Mature Living*, February 2026, p.56

PARENTING: Actor & comedian B.J. Novak got his big break in *The Office* when Greg Daniels was putting the cast together in 2004 and recalled Novak’s famous line from his stand-up comedy routine: “I didn’t do well in college because I double majored in psychology and reverse psychology.” Parenting often feels just as confusing. *Wall Street Journal*, 5/1/2026, p.M5

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