

## Overcoming Childhood Imps

What is the only thing you can take to Heaven? People. People matter to God. That is why he made man. He wants relationships with people who know him and love him for who he is. Every verse, every passage, and every story in Scripture is there to teach us how to relate to one another and to God. God made us in such a way that we must learn to relate to others if we are going to achieve any of our goals or fill his plan for our lives, ministry, church, family, and community. Over eighty percent of our success involves relationships with people. Talent, education, and looks will only take one so far. Eventually, we must depend on the good will and favor of others. God gives us a family where we interact and learn such relationship skills as patience, trust, and conflict resolution. We learn about God from our parents. We learn to relate to neighbors from our siblings. Our identity forms as we interact in the nurturing environment of a loving family. Unfortunately, most families fall short when it comes to nurturing. Mine had plenty of love; the problem was that nobody knew how to show it. I had only one intimate conversation with my mother and none with my father in my entire childhood. They provided everything I needed and they loved me very much. They just did not know how important it was to express that love. If we fail to learn these important lessons, we will have trouble in our marriages, families, jobs, churches, and neighborhoods. We will continue to relate to people the way we did in our childhood. Our pastor suddenly reminds us of our obnoxious brother with who drove us crazy. Our wonderful husband eventually turns into a carbon copy of our distant, uncaring father. The little priss with who shares our office is just like our tattletale of a little sister who seemed to be on this planet only to make us miserable. So what do we do? We take it until we have had enough, then we call them the names we have always wanted to call our father, our brother, or sister, but never had the courage. We quit our jobs, walk out on our families, leave our churches, or move into better neighborhoods and start the cycle over with new people. A simple glance at church history teaches us that man has never understood relationships and their affects. Cain's murder of Abel is an excellent example of brothers who did not understand them. Abraham put Sarah in harms way to save his own life. Many of the heroes we use as examples in our teaching made foolish relationship choices. God is preparing men and women to understand relationship principles and then teach these principles to others. He is concerned about our relationships. Above all, he wants us to know and understand him, to appreciate how he thinks and feels, and so that we can work more effectively in service to others. I learned a whole lot about myself several years ago, during a three-month, doctor ordered sabbatical; and it was not pretty. I had lots of troublesome residue left over from my childhood. Although my marriage was great and my teenage kids were not threatening to sell their stories to Oprah or surprise me with an all expense paid trip to meet Jerry Springer, I still had a lot of junk in my belief system. After a happy ten-year marriage, I pretty well had much of the family thing down. The problems we faced and dealt with were from outside our home, finances and professions. That is where food addiction found its way into my life. I found myself turning to food for acceptance and comfort. My response to pressure was to pull back from the pain and retreated into food. The more pressure stirred my emotions the more control food gained over me. I would diet and loose twenty pounds. Six-weeks later, discouragement caused me to give up and within a few weeks, I would have gained thirty. Over a period of eleven-years, I had ballooned up to nearly 300 pounds. One day after losing 80 pounds, I found myself standing in front of the refrigerator with the door open. My head was inside, my eyes scanning every shelf as if my life depended on what I would discover there. Suddenly I came to. I stood up straight, shook my head, and quickly closed the refrigerator door. I walked back into the living room where I had been standing before my eyes glazed over. I wasn't even hungry. Why was I foraging in the refrigerator? What was I thinking about before my mind went into neutral? My mother. I had been thinking about my mother and the fact that I needed to call her. A fleeting thought about her and the old behavior patterns associated with our relationship returned before I was even aware of their existence. I felt stress, I reacted. It didn't matter that it had been over five months since I had experienced this type of behavior. I did not even realize how much influence relationships had over me. The things we accept as truth about who we are often dictates our behavior. When we spend time in prayer, God shows us many erroneous beliefs we have accepted about ourselves hidden in our unconscious minds. Most of these are things either someone has told us, or misperceptions accepted as obvious truth simply because it comes from some authority figure. These veiled imps rarely reach the surface. They hide deep in the part of our minds where we file memories we do not want to face. The moment our guard is down, they pounce. Before we are aware of it, that old, destructive behavior rushes forward, set to take action. These imps stand in position, ready to accuse us in a moment of weakness. It takes a determined effort, but we can uproot many of them. You do this, by keeping a constant vigil and questioning every belief that reaches the surface in your thinking. Where did you come from? What are you doing here? What are your motives? Where have you been hiding? What comment, raised eyebrow, terse remark, shocked expression, or ear-piercing scream did you piggyback into my subconscious mind? You can never find them all. Of course, that would be impossible. Your mind, however, can be your greatest friend or your most deceitful enemy. It is up to you. Only I can choose to live free and take control or I can let these childhood imps push me, cringing into a corner. I choose freedom. Not only does freedom feel better, but it also looks better in a bathing suit.

Source: [Miron Ministries](#)

### About the Author

Dr. Sharon Schuetz is an ordained minister and holds a BA in Religious Education and a Phd in Clinical Counseling Psychology. She and her husband, Michael, have been married for 33 years. They have three children and seven grandchildren. Like most writers, she has loved writing since she was a child.