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# **RAISING CHILDREN IN THE LIGHT OF ETERNITY**

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**CHARLOTTE HUSKEY**



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*For my Family*



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## I AM THE CHILD

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*I am the child  
All the world waits for my coming.  
And the earth watches with interest  
To see what I shall become.  
Civilization hangs in the balance,  
For what I am:  
The world of tomorrow will be.*

*I am the child.  
I have come into your world,  
About which I knew nothing.  
Why I come I know not.  
How I came I know not.  
I am curious: I am interested.  
I learn quickly.*

*I am the child.  
You hold in your hands my destiny,  
You determine, largely,*

*Whether I shall succeed or fail.  
Give me, I pray you, those things  
That makes for success.  
Train me, I beg you, that I may be  
A blessing to the world.*

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## FOREWORD

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My greatest interest throughout life has been children. I have sometimes cringed listening to parents (who thought they were good parents) pierce their children's little hearts with sharp words. I have been personally involved with children physically abused by angry parents. I have observed good parents starving their children's spirits while providing well for their bodies. All these things have carved deep ravines into my heart. Many a night, I have drenched my pillow with tears for the helpless innocent children being mistreated and for those growing up without proper training.

While I was growing up I was anxious to try my hand as a parent, thinking I could do a better job than some I had observed. However, after I was married I became afraid of the responsibility of an eternal soul in my charge. It was far too serious for me to handle. I feared my children would suffer because of my inabilities as a parent. God thought differently. He challenged me with four precious children within the first six years of marriage. Later He blessed me with another daughter and son.

When I was expecting my first child, I began collecting all the knowledge I could on parenting. When that first son arrived, I thought

I was prepared, but within a few months I realized I had not found what I needed from the books I'd read. That realization increased as more children were added to our family. I realize what I really needed was wisdom from God. I longed for a book that would point me to God's thoughts about parenting. I found none.

In those early years God showed me that I must shepherd my children's hearts. I must take them by the hand and lead them away from the low, earthly things into the high fields of God's eternal values. He showed me that I should be as careful about nurturing their spirit as nourishing their bodies, because the spirit will live after the body turns again into dust. As I went about my daily duties taking care of their bodies, I was also asking God to give me spiritual food for them. God did give me spiritual portions to feed them when opportunities arose during the day and at our nightly family worship. Thanks be to God those spiritual portions He gave were enough to make them thirsty for more of God. One by one, they each chose to surrender to Christ.

From time to time throughout my life I have written memos to parents. This book is a collection of those bits of wisdom God has given through the years. It is written in hopes that it will inspire weary parents, that it will answer a few of the many questions young mothers have, and that it will give courage to parents of strong-willed children. It is given with a prayer that it will be a blessing for your family, and that your godly home will inspire your children to choose the Path to Heaven.

Charlotte Huskey

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## **PREFACE**

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The Christian life is a spiritual growth. Each person grows according to how God reveals understanding of His Word and the way he responds to those revelations. It would be wonderful if each parent were fully prepared spiritually before giving birth to children. However, this seldom happens. We learn and grow spiritually throughout our lives. God teaches us many things about ourselves through our children.

The chapters one through seven are about spiritual growth. A parent's spiritual condition has a great effect on his or her descendants. Sometimes, a problem with a child's behavior can be traced back to the condition of the parent's heart. Every parent needs to keep a close check on his relationship with God.

The second section, chapters eight through sixteen, should help with training during the child's first formative years. These are the most important years for training and should be given intensive attention. Besides the physical growth and skills mastered in those years, a tremendous amount of knowledge is attained, relationship skills are built, emotional strength and attitude resilience are also formed. The training or neglect of those years has a great influence on the quantity and severity of problems the child will have in forthcoming years.

Hopefully these chapters will encourage parents of young children to seriously seek God's guidance for training these pure innocent little souls in their care.

The third section, chapters seventeen through twenty-four, relate to school age children before entering high school. By this age the child should have already learned to obey and is taking responsibility for his behavior. They still need much parental guidance and fortification but should be allowed to practice listening to their conscience. Parents need to be shifting from negative training to more positive teaching. These are the years before children are qualified to have many friends outside the family. It is the time to build a great parent/child relationship.

Chapters twenty-five through thirty-two are dealing with older children. Hopefully readers will find help in those chapters to keep strong and faithful to God through the storms that may arise. These are the years parents must not weaken. I have observed parents crumbling in these years. The result is tragedy in the family. Sad to say, I have watched some Christian families disintegrating into dysfunctional families within a few years. Perhaps, if the parents had held true to their former Christian principles, the family might have been saved. In this section, I hope you will find inspiration to hold steady.

May God bless each parent with divine wisdom.

## Chapter One

# AN ETERNAL BEING IN OUR HANDS

**“..God created man in his own image...” –Genesis 1:27**

Every child is born in the eternal image of God. We are dealing not only with a body and this life; this child’s spirit or inner being will live on after the body no longer lives. Parents must keep in mind they are preparing the child for eternity. Will the child serve God, or gratify the desires of his body? The mind desires to serve God. The emotions cause the child to be self-centered and self-pleasing. However, if the child’s *will* is brought into subjection to his mind, the child can control his emotions and bring them into submission to God. Do we realize how serious it is to train an eternal being?

Every parent’s goal should be to raise a morally responsible child who comes to salvation through Jesus Christ; a child whose life is governed by the precepts of God and whose life reflects the love of Christ. A parent must have self-control and a knowledge of biblical behavior to be able to be an example to his children. Having parental examples and being taught biblical values and self-restraint greatly aid children in becoming morally responsible; however, these are not substitutes for regeneration. Proper training will most certainly help your regenerated child to conform to God’s standards.

Parents are to act as governors in the child’s life until the child is

capable of rightly governing himself. God holds parents responsible for their children's actions. At what age parents are no more responsible will differ according to the situation and dynamics in each family. Eli was held accountable for the actions of his grown sons in the tabernacle of worship. Read 1 Samuel 3:12-14.

The primary goal is to mold the child's *heart*, not just outward behavior. However, by insisting on correct outward behavior, we are teaching the child godly principles. Although the child does not understand the biblical concepts, he or she will know the kind of behavior God approves. Then when he reaches the age of accountability and he wants to be saved, it will be much easier for him to conform to God's standards.

The child's desires for continual and immediate gratification begin at birth; therefore, the need for cultivating self-control in your child also begins at birth. Self-control influences kindness, sharing, gentleness, proper speech, anger, focusing, sitting skills, and many other behaviors.

Humanists believe that the creativity of a child is hindered by disciplining the child but the opposite is true. The child who learns early to control his emotions will be able to produce creative ideas and use them to benefit the world. Without self-control the creative idea often dies in the making when difficulties arise.

External pressure is necessary to bring about acceptable behavior in small children. The first five years parents should concentrate on bringing the child into submission and obedience. If this is done, many children will begin to realize how difficult it is to control themselves and will want to ask Jesus into their hearts to make obeying easier.

A quick fix for today's frustrations may help a parent-and-child relationship temporarily, but what does it do for the child eternally? Close your eyes and ask God to help you project your mind out into eternity. Then ask God, "How will my daily parental guidance affect him or her in eternity?" Make notes of what God shows you and refer to them often. Do this often. We have the responsibility of an eternal being in our hands. God grant us wisdom above and beyond our own

human wisdom to lead our children to have a relationship with Jesus. Our job is to gently lead our children or draw them like a magnet to the Savior. Then their names will be written in the Book of Life.

Revelation 20:12-15 gives a picture of the end of the world. “And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.... And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.” Every soul will give an account to God for the deeds done while living in the body. Jesus said in Matthew 12:36-37, “But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.” Also Revelation 21:8 and 27 and 22:15 list some of the sins that will keep people from entering into heaven.

It is impossible to prepare a child for heaven unless Christ is top priority in the parent’s personal life. Each child is different and must be dealt with according to the leadings of the Lord and a close knowledge of the child’s “love language.” Parents should not only *learn the child’s love language* but should also *stay close to God* and be attentive to impressions from God. Sometimes God will show how to handle a problem through His Word; sometimes by a dream or by counsel from another person. Sometimes it is by an uneasy feeling, but most often it is by the parent’s knowledge of where the offensive action may lead. The only way to be able to successfully deal with child-rearing problems in God’s way is by having God’s presence in your daily activities.

Every child is an eternal being, created in the image of God. Although the parents are in many ways responsible for their children’s actions, every person “shall give account of himself to God” (Romans 14:12). Ezekiel 18:20 says, “The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son....” Let each of us do all we can to prepare our children for the time they will return to God, so that God will say to our

son or daughter, “Come, ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you” (Matthew 25:34).

***MOTHER’S LOVE***

*Blest infant! Whom his mother taught  
Early to seek the Lord,  
And poured upon his dawning thought  
The day-spring of the Word;  
This was the lesson to her son,  
Time is Eternity begun.  
Behold that Mother’s love.*

*Blest Mother! who, in wisdom’s path,  
By her own parent trod,  
Thus taught her son to flee the wrath,  
And know the fear of God:  
Ah! youth, like him enjoy your prime,  
Begin Eternity in time.  
Taught by that Mother’s love.*

*That Mother’s love! —how sweet the name!  
What was that Mother’s love?  
—The noblest, purest, tenderest flame,  
That kindles from above  
Within a heart of earthly mold,  
As much of heaven as heart can hold,  
Nor through eternity grows cold.  
This was that Mother’s love.  
—James Montgomery*

## *Chapter Two*

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# THE FAMILY STRUCTURE

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**“Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation...For...he will command his children...and they shall keep the way of the Lord...” –Genesis 18:18-19**

The family structure is of utmost importance because it must stay strong, generation after generation. Each generation of life, which is about 20 years, is a cycle of dependence on other members of the family. If the structure is faulty the emotional stability may crumble. A broken cycle inflicts pain of different degrees on each member of the family. We have all seen this in abused or neglected children, rebellious teens, deserted spouses, and neglect of the aged. People of every age and all social and economic levels are affected by the many problems caused by an unhealthy family structure.

A well-structured family cycle begins with a babe totally dependent on adults. Those first five or six years are the training years, when the behavior patterns and moral conscience of the child is built. What happens to the child in these years has lifelong influence. It is the parents' most opportune time for filling up their moral warehouse, which will produce positive results in later years.

*Training* is educating by example in behavior through the use of negative and positive reinforcement. If the parents have done their job, a child of middle-school age has already learned to obey authority and is taking responsibility for his actions and choices. Thereafter, the

parents become his instructors and coaches. They show him how to work and study independently, how to make goals for himself and how to be successful by bringing his body and emotions more under control.

Later in high school and college years, parents continue coaching but also become trustworthy counselors, in whom God has invested both wisdom and authority. If the parent-child relationship is a good one, this will be a precious time for both. Then comes the child's adult years when the parent and child become adult friends. This is the longest period of time, and when the parents reap rewards for their investment years. Later when the parent becomes aged, the roles switch and the child becomes the advisor and authority over the needy parent. That completes the beautiful cycle that God ordained for families.

Two predominant family structures are *interdependent* and *independent*. To illustrate the *interdependent* family, imagine a father, mother and children in their yard playing a game. They are standing in a circle holding hands and facing each other. They are connected through touch and can easily communicate as each one can see the other. The happy children are finding social and emotional fulfillment within the family circle together with their parents. The children will trust these parents to be true to them through those up-and-down teenage years. This *interdependent* family is likely to stay in close contact after the children are adults and have families of their own.

The family with the *independent* structure is likely to fall apart when the children are old enough to choose their own friends. Think of an *independent* family as all standing in a circle with their backs to each other and each looking out a different direction. They may be at a beautiful park, but are not enjoying it together. Mother is admiring the roses. Father is doing business on his phone. One child is playing an electronic game, another playing with a dog, and a very small child is crying and hugging a soft teddy bear. The members of this family are enjoying themselves without considering other family members. Each one is satisfying his own selfish interest. A family with an independent

structure sometimes becomes a “dysfunctional family.” Divorce, child abuse, child neglect, and sorrows of all kinds are the results of families not learning to enjoy each other. Some turn to drugs or alcohol to deal with the emotional pain. Some families fall into such depraved conditions as is described in Joel 3:3.

It isn't hard to identify an independent teen who is finding his social and emotional satisfaction outside of his family. He is adopting a friend's hair style, choice of clothes, music or language, because he has found a valuable connection which he did not find in his family. He is becoming a part of another family (his peers, a gang, a club etc.). This is very sad because he should have found that fulfillment in a happy relationship at home. Some families with an independent dynamic only become fragmented but are good citizens. However, their hearts are void of the rich blessings that God intended for a family. Often persons from these families suffer depression, loneliness, and other emotional disorders which may lead to a need for professional psychotherapy.

There is hope for a family that is fragmentized to again have a strong relationship with each other. They have a promise in Malachi 4:6. “He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers...” Parents who are looking to God for help and are willing to admit that they have made mistakes have already taken a big step toward a better family structure. God promised to help those who turn to Him. In the book of Joel there is another promise for those who have disobeyed God. It says, “Turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping... rend [break or tear] your heart...and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness...” (Joel 2:12-13). In verses 25 and 26 of this same chapter it says, “I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten... and my people shall never be ashamed.” Another promise in the book of Zechariah says, “Turn ye unto me, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will turn unto you.”

Turn to Christ and He will help you know how to train yourself and your children to depend on each other. Then gather your family and

explain the mistakes you have made in the past and ask their forgiveness. Be careful to focus on your mistakes—not those of your family. Remember, you are rebuilding relationships, not excusing yourself. You, the parent, must take the blame for the condition of your family. Kindly and humbly answer any questions they may have, and pray together as a family.

To successfully reconstruct a family to become interdependent, one must be determined, because it is very opposite to the way our society believes a family should be. It is also contrary to human nature, for every person is born with a desire to be independent. Every child needs consistent supervision to become skilled in living interdependently with other members of his family. One or both parents may have to make some difficult lifestyle changes, such as the wife quitting her job. Parents need to put the family's emotional needs above advancement in business, desire for material things, selfish recreation, or any other pursuit that would take a parent away from the children.

The duties of each member of the family are found in Titus 2:2-8. It reads like this: Let “the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. The aged women likewise, that they be in behavior as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed. Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded. In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing incorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.”

Older children will watch to see if the attitudes and values of their parents have changed. They will want to see humility, genuine love, repentant attitudes, and a striving to work together. Teenagers can sense hypocrisy in parents and usually do not want to identify with it. Parents, try hard to make good the chance you have to restore your family structure, because children grow up quickly and will soon be

leaving home to live elsewhere. There may not be a second chance to mend it.

God's power supports the regaining of a good family structure, and He gives us another promise in Deuteronomy 5:29. "O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children forever!" Thank God, each of us can enjoy God's blessings upon our descendants, as Abraham did.

## *Chapter Three*

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### **CREATING A STRONG FAMILY**

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**“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.” –Genesis 2:25**

*Y*ears ago, husbands and wives had to depend on each other for survival. Today, however, it is possible for a single parent to survive alone, so married couples must make a special commitment to not have an independent attitude. The spirit of being independent has caused separation in many families. Divorce or separation, no matter how peaceful, causes intense sorrow for the children involved.

Many think it is a sign of strength or maturity to act independently of others. “Be independent” is the cry of the age. Counselors often advise young people: “Set goals for your life and don’t let anything get in your way.” “Move out on your own. Get away from what is hindering you.” “Do what makes you feel fulfilled.” The way many people are interpreting this advice is, “Neither mom, dad, husband, wife, brother, sister, nor children, are as important as doing what I think *I* need to do.”

Did Christ work independently? No. He said, “I do always those things that please [the father]” (John 8:29). “I can of my own self do nothing...I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me” (John 5:30). Now if Christ, who has all power, could not

do things alone, dare we mortals of the dust think we can go through life independent of those with whom God has connected us?

A strong family must work together underneath the authorities God has placed over them, just as Christ worked underneath His Father's authority. To build a strong family, parents must learn to depend on one another. God made the man to have certain strengths and weaknesses and the woman to have other strengths and weaknesses. God carefully designed male and female to balance each other and meet the other's needs. When put to proper use these diverse strengths will complete each other. The longer they depend on each other the stronger the bond becomes.

According to God's Word, the husband and wife become ONE at marriage. The husband is to leave his parent's family and cleave to his wife; he must accept her to fill that emotional void. The wife must do the same and depend on her husband to fill the emotional void that her parents and siblings once filled. The children are created from this union. The entire family is one body. Divorce is not an option. Considering divorce will weaken the development of an interdependent family structure. Gone must be the thoughts that children do well with only one parent. The masculine and feminine brains have different areas of strengths. A family needs both. Christ said they are "no more [two], but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matthew 19:5 and 6).

God designed the family to work together just like a body. Every member of the family has its important function, just as every part of a physical body has its important function. Every organization has a managing system and God has chosen the parents to direct their family. Ideally, the father is the president, and mother the vice president. Each member of the family has talents. A good manager recognizes each individual's abilities and gives responsibilities accordingly. This gives every member of the family space to develop and makes each feel needed and important, which is a basic need of every person. When these needs are satisfied within the family, the family will enjoy working and playing together.

A minister once said, “Colossians 3:12-21 is a recipe for a successful family.” It reads like this, “Put on ... mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering...If any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye; above all put on charity [love] ... and let the peace of God rule in your hearts, ... and be ye thankful...” It also says for the wives to submit, the husbands to love, the children to obey, and fathers not to provoke their children. Wow! If a family will strive to obey these scriptures it will without doubt be a strong, interdependent, harmonious unit.

The role of the father being the head of the home has been subtly destroyed during the past fifty years. Comic strips, jokes, stories, children’s books and an abundance of reports of abusive fathers have created an attitude that fathers are inadequate, not trustworthy and could even be dangerous. Child psychologist James Dobson says that there is much reason for concern: bad father-child relationships can produce long-lasting physical and spiritual damage in the life of a child. That damage will cause multiple, negative repercussions in other areas of the child’s life for years to come. “We can see this in the attitude of incarcerated persons. Most of them are angry. Many are angry at their parents, especially their fathers. Also, the majority of women who have pushed ahead the liberation of women were deeply offended by their fathers.”

The male nature is less sensitive to feelings, and fathers normally administer harder disciplines than moms do, so they should take special care to stay filled with Christ’s gentle spirit. “Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged” (Colossians 3:21). A father whose spirit is not controlled by the Spirit of Christ will almost certainly provoke his children to anger to the degree of offending them. When children are offended, communication is lost, thus weakening the family. Offenses create many ill effects on the family, just as a malfunctioning heart creates life threatening effects on the body. Serious offenses threaten the very existence of the family unit. The Spirit of Christ will help fathers and mothers to have more patience with unruly children, and to be able to forgive each other,

even in the case of an unfaithful spouse. Let father, mother, and children die daily to the human desires “to do things my way” so that the Spirit of Christ may live in us making us a blessing in our families. Without Christ’s spirit we will not enjoy the marvelous blessing that God has in store for a family.

Family members are of the same flesh and bone, as Adam said of Eve, “This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh.” Remember, neither divorce nor an independent (self-seeking) life is an option. Let us bear with one another’s weaknesses, love and forgive one another and together press on to our eternal reward. “Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it” (1 Corinthians 12:26).

## *Chapter Four*

### **BALANCE IN A ROYAL FAMILY**

**“Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God.” —Isaiah 62:3**

“*B*ut ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness unto his marvelous light.” (1 Peter 2:9) Revelation 5:10 also tells us we are kings and priests and that we should reign on the earth. We are raising royal children. They are to be kings and priests in the kingdom of God; knights clothed in God’s armor. We want our children to someday wear a crown, so let’s guard our family as royal families do.

The royal family of England trains its children to be polite; to shake hands properly with eye contact and a royal smile. They are taught to stand and walk with back straight, heads high; the girls—in modest dresses—are to sit with knees together. Ankles can be crossed but never the legs. While eating they must use proper utensils at all times, eat quietly, and stop eating when the head of the family is finished, thus teaching respect. Even a coffee cup and a tea-cup have their own particular ways to be held! Once when Prince Andrew was given a Monopoly game, he answered, “We are not allowed to play Monopoly at home because it is too vicious.”

Royal children are also trained to be competitive. They will be

tomorrow's leaders and must lead their country to be victorious over their country's enemy. Our children must also get and keep victory over Satan. This takes a strong, unwavering spirit. Teach your children the proper conduct of Christ and the determination to fight to obtain their crown.

A child who is an heir to the crown must be equipped to take that great responsibility when the time comes. For our sons and daughters to receive their crown they must be able to take responsibility for their actions. If they keep a guilt-free conscience they will not be condemned when they stand before God. They too are of a royal bloodline; an eternal bloodline. Do we treat them as such?

Because they are from an eternal bloodline, they need to understand the character of their father, God. God's character is both good and severe. "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness" (Romans 11:22). These two characteristics are balanced. We hear much about God's love, but hear very little about His severity. We teach our children John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." We should also teach them scriptures about the severity of God. "He that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy" (Proverbs 29:1). "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom" (Psalms. 111:10). "Behold I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God ... And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God" (Deuteronomy 11:26-28).

Children need to experience God's love; they also need to be taught to fear the consequences that will come into their lives if they trample His eternal principles. Christians who have experienced God's protection, love, and blessings for years will serve Him out of a genuine love for Him. Children who have had few or no personal experiences with God are not endeared to him as older Christians. Therefore, they need

to fear His consequences as a reason to obey until they do fall in love with Him.

The family needs balance to portray the balanced character of God. It is easy for mothers to fall into child-centered parenting and downplay the husband/wife relationship. One of the greatest influences parents will have in their children's lives comes through their roles as husband or wife. The marriage relationship is the first social relationship God established. Be careful to not neglect this relationship. When the child's care is placed above the husband/wife relationship, it fosters in the child self-centeredness, self-reliance, and an independent attitude. God promises blessings on those who follow His principles. One of His principles is the family order of authority: first father, then mother, and then children. If this is violated, many good blessings are forfeited. God did not ordain "equal voting" or "the majority rules" in the family. He gives wisdom for the particular role of each parent. When these roles are maintained properly, the family will be balanced and blessed.

There must also be a balance between siblings. Children must be loved and treated equally, although the younger and older children have different privileges. These privileges are always earned as the child demonstrates ability and trustworthiness to handle them. Privileges are never related only to age. Usually, however, an older child has more privileges because he or she has proved worthy of them. A child could be eighteen and have few privileges because he has not proved himself worthy or capable of handling them.

Balance in work and play is also important. There is an old saying, "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. All play and no work makes Jack a lazy boy." While playing, children develop creativity. They dream and imagine what they will be in adult life. Often an adult has become the person he or she pretended to be in play. Many inventions are products of a childhood dream. Let your child dream and soar to great heights in play. The self-confidence he or she gains may help overcome an obstacle in the future. At an early age, also teach children to work so they will have self-confidence.

Whether children are working or playing, they must be supervised carefully. Remember they are princes and princesses; heirs to a crown. We should know with whom and with what our children are playing. Many a conscience has been blackened during unsupervised play. Question your children when they have played with older or questionable playmates. If needed, help them clear their conscience by praying for Christ to forgive any inappropriate behavior. This will help keep that crown shining.

These royal children need balance in their lives so they can understand God's balanced character. Let's teach both the love and respect for God. Keep balance in the family, among siblings, and in work and play. The struggle a parent will have with all these things will be over sooner than you realize. Those adult children will bless you because you have by example and training taught them how to depend on God and lead responsible, sensible lives. It can be done. Don't lose heart.

## *Chapter Five*

### **UNGODLY COUNSEL**

**“Blessed is the man who walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly,  
nor standeth in the way of sinners...” –Psalms 1:1**

**D**o you wonder why, for nearly 200 years, God blessed America above all nations? I believe it was because people feared God, and the Bible was the center of the classroom. During most of those years, the United States of America was the most secure and peaceful place to live in all the world. Then suddenly in the late 1960’s social dissatisfaction turned into discontent, and spawned riots and violent demonstrations in many cities. Political figures were assassinated, and our national flag was burned in several anti-American rallies. One might ask, what brought about these awful upheavals, and what has it to do with child raising? Perhaps Martin Luther in the 1600’s gave the answer when he said, “To educate children without the fear of God is to educate devils.”

Brewing in universities all over our country for more than a hundred years before 1960 were humanist thinkers such as Jean Rousseau, Henry Thoreau, Arnold Gesell, B. F. Skinner, Rudolf Dreikurs and many others who were pushing hard to revolutionize beliefs about children. Rousseau was the first in the eighteenth century to seriously attack the biblical view of a child’s sinful nature. He advocated that “man is in heritably good, but his noble nature is beaten out

of him by society.” It is strange that so many other intellectuals accepted Rousseau’s analysis of children; according to Gary Ezzo, author of *Growing Kids God’s Way*; Rousseau had neither child rearing experience nor a love for children.

In the early 1930’s a chosen few “open-minded” professors from Columbia University were sent overseas to learn new (and supposedly better) ways of teaching. These intellectuals returned and taught this new humanistic philosophy to thousands of school teachers who in turn taught it to the children. In this way the humanist way of thinking crept into the younger generation very quickly. My Aunt Mae Hightower, who was a school teacher, complained of being forced to return to college to learn these new ways in order to keep her teaching certificate. Geneva Ray, another teacher, told of her personal experience. “I was instructed by my university professors to teach this new “open-minded” way of thinking only to the children because the adults in the general public were too *closed-minded* to accept it.”

By the mid-1950s, students who had been taught the new humanistic beliefs were becoming parents, and they readily accepted the new independent ideas for parenting that the humanists were pushing. Since our nation’s beginning, the Judeo-Christian traditions for parenting had been strongly entrenched in American homes. Parents believed that children are born with a self-centered and independent nature, and must be trained to have self-control, to respect authority and the Word of God. The humanists advocated that babies are born good and if left uninhibited would grow into productive adults. However, the children who grew up uninhibited became the leaders of riots, flag burning, and violent demonstrations. This godless generation was birthed after parenting ideas were revolutionized. The peaceful society of yesteryears, when most parents believed and practiced biblical parenting, had been changed into a godless, turbulent society.

The following are a few of the many true characteristics of our human nature:

- 1. “Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him” (Proverbs 22:15).
- 2. Jeremiah 17:9 reads this way, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked....”
- 3. Jesus said, “For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts....” (Matthew 15:19).
- 4. King David said, “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God” (Psalms 14:1). Foolishness is that which causes him or her to believe, “I am not responsible for what I do, because there is no God.” Jesus, however, says that man will give account to God for every sin, even idle words.

Successful parenting can only be done by following biblical principles. It is a grave mistake to follow the counsels of the ungodly.

“Blessed is the man who walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly: (Psalms 1:1).

### ***A MOTHER’S PRAYER***

*I want to teach my children how  
To live their life on earth,  
To face its struggles and its strife  
And to improve its worth.*

*Not just the lesson in a book,  
Or how the rivers flow,  
But how to choose the proper path,  
Where ever they may go.*

*To understand eternal truth  
And know right from wrong,  
And gather beauty from each flower  
And from each song.*

*For if I help a child to grow  
In wisdom and in grace,  
Then I shall know that I've won  
And that I've filled my place.*

*And so, I ask Your guidance, God,  
That I may do my part,  
In forming character, confidence  
And happiness of heart.  
—Author unknown*

## *Chapter Six*

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# **PROVOKE NOT YOUR CHILDREN**

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**“Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.” –Colossians. 3:21**

There are as many parenting styles as there are parents. All of these will fall somewhere in between being authoritative or permissive. An authoritative parent is usually protective and sheltering and strict on obedience. However, they are usually very concerned with outward conformity, which could lead to overlooking the emotional needs of their children. Being satisfied with obedience they may overlook destructive attitudes. The parental goal is for the child to bring himself into obedience, not from fear of receiving punishment, except in the formative years, but because he understands that being obedient is best for him. Authoritative parenting will surely provoke children to anger unless the parent takes time to explain the reasons for obedience and gives the child a chance to willingly obey.

The other end of the spectrum of parenting is permissive parenting. Permissive parents provide well for their children, however, they put more priority on a loving parent-child relationship than on parenting. They avoid confrontation at all costs, ignoring disrespect, selfishness, and even disobedience, shielding the child from consequences in the name of love. Children from permissive parents easily fall into temptation because they have not been forced to control their selfish desires.

They have not developed the strong character, which is necessary to make godly choices when surrounded by evil.

The Holy Spirit-controlled parent will find a balance somewhere between being authoritative and permissive. Training according to the parents' natural temperaments or emotional moods will surely provoke children to anger. The Holy Spirit must control both the temperaments and the emotions of the parents.

Unless we take seriously our task of parenting we will most likely raise our children the way we grew up—trained or untrained, good or not so good. God's grace allows parents to overcome natural temperaments, take control of their emotions and train their children in a way that will not provoke the child to anger.

The most important step we can take to avoid provoking our children is to realize our desperate need of the Holy Spirit to control our emotions and give us God's wisdom. God has a manual of instructions for every child. Children are eternal beings and every parent needs eternal wisdom to protect them from discouragement. Parents living in obedience to God's Word will understand His precepts. Wisdom based on God's precepts is a guiding light. Parents walking in sinful darkness will not have that guiding light. They cannot understand God's wisdom. It will seem like foolishness because they are not in tune with the Holy Spirit.

The second step is that the father, then the mother, be the leaders in the family (I've observed homes in which an older child was the leader). Children feel secure and are not quickly discouraged when the father firmly but lovingly guides his family. When he does this under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, they know that what the father requires of them is for their good. However, when someone else makes the rules for the family, discouragement and insecurity follows.

Here are some other ways which I believe can provoke a child and cause him or her to become discouraged:

- 1. Belittling words and actions that offend. A child's emotions and mind are like fresh soft clay. These will make

impressions that harden and sometimes remain for a lifetime.

- 2. Teasing to the point of anger by parents or siblings.
- 3. Parents doing things they forbid their children to do.
- 4. Making things easier for oneself at the expense of the family.
- 5. Showing partiality.
- 6. Improper ways of correction. After discipline, the child should be humble and respectful to you and know that you disciplined because of your love. If your child is angry and sulking after discipline, your method needs to be changed.
- 7. Improper degree of discipline. The extent of discipline must agree with the extent of the offense. Think about these things to decide the degree of punishment. If it is a moral issue, it needs explanation before discipline. A childish mistake needs less discipline. If the child has been corrected for the same offense many times, perhaps it is time to change the discipline to something he hates. The child's age is very important. Corporal discipline is best only for very young children. Older children should be counseled and disciplined in other ways.
- 8. The way the family worship is conducted. Some are rigid, ritualistic and boring; others are like a school lesson, and some children hate school and whatever resembles it. Some are too hasty; after short, meaningless prayers, the children are rushed off to bed. The child with a heavy heart needs a special blessing, but does not find it in this kind of worship. The worship should include happy songs, inspiring and encouraging words, and good instruction. Send them to bed with a warm blanket of God's love wrapped around them.
- 9. Parents living double lives or changing past-held convictions to gain the approval of a friend or please the

children. Don't provoke your child to discouragement because of your inability to stand for truth.

To keep from provoking the children, parents must first train themselves. Like it or not, we are creatures of habit. Habits such as selfishness or lack of self-control will affect our parenting. The habits we have allowed ourselves to develop will show up when we are under pressure. Out-of-control parents sometimes act like their toddlers when they don't get what they want. They cry, yell, go into silent mode, withhold affection, verbally abuse others or use other tactics. An out-of-control parent will provoke his child while trying to do what is best for the child. When an adult yells at, belittles, or strikes a child in anger, their emotions are out of control. Neither a parent nor a child will be happy unless the parent conquers his or her emotions.

Training yourself and your child to control this self-centered nature will be your main duty as a parent. God will help control us when we are willing to give up our rights and seek to be filled with the Holy Spirit. God's grace allows parents to overcome natural temperaments, take control of their emotions and train their children in such a way that they will not be provoked to anger.

Instead of provoking them to anger, parents must have faith in their children and encourage them even though the children's actions or attitudes are questionable. Parents should not believe that a child does not love the Lord when he or she breaks or tries to break established rules. The child may be testing their parents' strength or their parents' love. He may want to know if their parents care enough to bother to correct their misbehavior. He may be a child who has difficulty adjusting to change; when change is required, the child needs to know that their world is still secure.

Keep checking for discouragement by asking unsuspecting questions. Then encourage them to share their thoughts with you; don't wait for inappropriate actions. Children may be discouraged and departing *in their minds* from the way that we want them to go, years before we see outward change.

Your children are starting on an adventure through life. It must end inside heaven's gate. Parents who have traveled the trail know the many dangers; also, they have learned how to stay on top of life's problems. God's grace allows parents to overcome natural temperaments, take control of their emotions and train their children in a way that will not provoke the child to anger. Whether you are an authoritative or a permissive parent, with your submission to God and faith in His wisdom, you can help your children stay encouraged and win that eternal prize.

## *Chapter Seven*

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# TIME MANAGEMENT

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**“Lord; make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, ...  
that I may know how frail I am.” –Psalms 39:4**

Sometimes I want to yell, “Wake up mother! Wake up dad! Your baby will soon be packing his things and moving away from home.” You will be standing on the porch wiping tears, wondering: Is he equipped for the real world? Have I done my duty? You’ll be wishing you could have another good talk, pick up another sock, serve another meal, or play another game.

Parents, you have but a “handbreadth” of time with your children.

I’ve stood teary eyed on the porch and watched as one by one six children left my home. I had given my life to do the best for my children, yet it was extremely difficult to see them go. I don’t think I could have borne it had I felt the added weight of guilt.

James 4:14 reads, “What is life? It is but a vapor, which appeareth for a little and then vanishes away.” When we were children, life seemed endless. I remember thinking that life would be far, far too long. Later when I was trying to make toddlers obey, I hoped it would end before I lost my mind. Suddenly those toddlers were teens, and I started an emotional roller-coaster ride that lasted seven years. Now I am old and life is screeching to a halt; like a vapor it has quickly vanished.

Time is one commodity we all have. It is the substance of life. We may not have an inherited estate to manage, but we have inherited time. One person may have a long life; another a short one. How we use the time God gives is our responsibility. Paul told us to redeem the time “because the days are evil” (Ephesians 5:16).

I think the only way to use time wisely is to nourish oneself every day from God’s Word. Unless we feed on His word, our priorities will get distorted. We will be running endless circles caring for our family, chauffeuring children, preparing meals, cleaning, attending services, teaching Sunday school, trying to maintain good marriages, friendships, and family relationships. While striving endlessly to be good parents, we will be starving our children of the wisdom they’ll need most in life.

An experiment conducted by the French naturalist Jean-Henri Fabre clearly illustrates this point. The processionary caterpillar tends to just follow in unison. Fabre lined these caterpillars around the inner edge of a flowerpot and then monitored them carefully as they marched one behind another in a circle around the edge of the pot. At the end of the third day, he placed their favorite food, pine needles, in the center of the pot. But they continued habitually marching, head-to-tail, single file, four more days. On the seventh day one died. The others continued marching until one by one they each rolled over and died of starvation while very near food that could have preserved their lives.

Are our families starving for spiritual and emotional nourishment while we exhaust ourselves running in circles? Are we habitually fulfilling the desires of their flesh without realizing their need of spiritual food? Mealtime is one of the best times to nourish our families, physically, emotionally and spiritually. We have a captive audience. During mealtime we train in subtle ways through interesting stories, sharing experiences of the day, giving words of appreciation in front of the whole family, etc. Some have also found it is the best time to have family worship. However, some families are rushing through their meals so they can take their children to the batting cages, to Bass-Pro, to fish at the lake. Do we exchange these great opportunities during

family meals for fast food in order to take the girls shopping; to birthdays, tea parties and music lessons? The list of good places to take children is endless and so is the circle. One mother told me her two-year-old pleaded, “Mommy, can we just stay home today?” We drag our children here and there, trying to be good parents, when the things they need most are right within the home.

I’m sure each one reading this has a desire to use time wisely. We lived on a mission field with extra duties and without normal conveniences for twenty-two years. This experience pressed me into developing some time-saving skills. I believe what helped me the most in time management was getting up thirty minutes before my family. Those few moments feeding with the Lord and organizing my day, (at least in my mind), saved a lot of scattered thoughts and time later in the day.

Second to that was to act as if I were going out of the home to work. I dressed, made my bed and straightened the bedroom before leaving it. A stay-at-home mom’s work day starts when her family wakes up. She should be dressed and in tune with God when they get out of bed. Training children is a great opportunity, take it seriously as if you had a boss who would pay. You do have a boss, Jesus, and he will pay better than any other.

Believers want to be used of God. But using our minutes carelessly hinders our availability for other important opportunities. Every mother has many duties. Organization and maintaining a routine can minimize time taken for these. A lot of those duties can be done habitually leaving your mind clear so you can be solving problems or seeking God for spiritual food for your family.

Clean where you are. Clean your bathroom while you are getting the children bathed. Put a load of laundry in right after you bathe the children in the evening; another load the first thing every morning. Wipe the washer and dryer and clean up the lint and trash from the laundry room while you are there. Soiled clothes never need to pile up with an automatic washer and dryer in your home. Take clothes out of the dryer when a little damp and hang immediately so as to minimize

ironing. Clean the kitchen as you are cooking. Make a sink full of hot, soapy water and wash each utensil immediately after using it. Do the dishes before food dries on them. Teach the whole family to help with after-meal clean up; then it will take only a few minutes. Every mother needs an apron with large pockets across the front and a clip on the side for a cleaning cloth. Organize these pockets for different parts of the house. Then pick up and deposit clutter in the appropriate pocket. When you find yourself in those different areas put the picked-up objects where they belong. Clean the smudges and dust wherever you are. It will save many steps.

There are many books dealing with organizing a home. Some I like best are *Clutter's Last Stand* by Don Aslett, *Sink Reflections* by Marla Silley and books by Emily Barns. Marla Silley also has daily pointers. Find them at [www.flylady.net](http://www.flylady.net).

At the end of each day let us look back over our day and see how we have used our precious moments. Ask yourself, have I used them wisely? Have I nourished my children emotionally and spiritually? Have I pointed them to Jesus? How can I improve? We must have a conviction that this precious gift of time will vanish away like a vapor. We are just stewards of the time and the children God has given us. At the end we must give account to God for what we have done.

Now one last word of encouragement to hurried parents: Slow down and love those children while you can. They will be gone too soon! Then you will get rid of those expensive toys you sacrificed to buy. And those stylish clothes will be given to Goodwill or sold at a garage sale for a tiny fraction of what you paid for them. Remember: this life is like a vapor that appears for a little time and then it's gone; but the souls will live forever.

## *Chapter Eight*

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# **EVERY CHILD IS A BLESSING**

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**“Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: ...Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them....” –Psalms 127:3, 5**

**D**o we accept every child as an inheritance from God? Or consider having another baby—a reward? Many couples will happily accept a boy and a girl or maybe several. But how are we feeling when the sixth boy is on its way, or the eleventh girl? Can we still thank God for another blessing? Jesus said in Matthew 18:5, “And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.” This includes receiving new babies into our family. Always remember, Jesus said in Matthew 10:42 that we shall not lose our reward!

“...God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul” (Genesis 2:7). We might say it this way: God has placed a living bit of Himself in your care, and He will be waiting to receive His inheritance. In the day the child’s body returns to the earth, “the spirit shall return unto God who gave it” (Ecclesiastes 12:7). Parents must prepare the child so his spirit can stand unashamed before God when his body is laying in the ground. To be able to do this, parents must believe that every child is an inheritance sent from God. Training our children is a most awesome God-given task, because each child is a living soul.

Hilda Waitley had three girls. When she knew a fourth child was on

the way, she hoped for a son. Months later, however, she realized she would give birth not to one son, but to four tiny girls. If that happened to you, would you be asking, “Why seven girls and no son?” Or would you think four at the same time would absolutely be too much? God will help us to say as Jacob did, “these are ‘the children that God hath graciously given thy servant’” (Genesis 33:5).

At which number (fourth, fifth, or sixth) do children stop being a blessing and become a burden? The story is told of a tourist who bought a necklace from a trinket shop in Paris. After returning home he decided to have the necklace appraised by a jeweler. The man was shocked when the jeweler offered him \$25,000 for the necklace! Curious as to why the jeweler thought the necklace was of such great value, he took it to an expert jeweler for another appraisal. That jeweler offered him \$35,000 for it! “Why does this simple necklace have such value?” asked the astonished owner. The jeweler handed him a powerful magnifying glass through which he saw a small inscription that read, “From Napoleon Bonaparte to Josephine.” The necklace had belonged to Napoleon. With the jeweler’s help he realized he had a magnificent treasure in his hands. Our children are jewels given to us personally by the King of the universe. Like the owner of the necklace, some do not realize what a treasure their children might be to themselves and to the world.

Mrs. Luther, the wife of a poor miner in Germany, accepted the challenge of another son to feed and clothe when there was hardly enough food to feed the family they already had. God chose this son to bring spiritual light and reformation to a world that had been in dark bondage for over 1,000 years. The world has never been the same since Martin Luther.

Susana Wesley was another poor mother, with many children, who realized her children were treasures. Treasures of great potential. Susana’s extreme poverty and poor health did not dampen her dream that God would enable her to inspire her children to surrender to God so He could use them to help change the world. Every evening as she stooped to kiss each one goodnight, she prayed that God would guide

that child. She prayed in faith and confidence that He would do it. Her tenth son, John Wesley, became one of the world's greatest evangelists. He and his brother Charles were used of God to bring revival, spiritual light and great change, not only into a depraved darkened England, but also to the world. Charles wrote many hymns; some we sing today. More than 200 years later the lives and works of John and Charles Wesley are studied in almost every Christian church and school.

Mrs. Carver, a farmer's wife from Diamond, Missouri, took for her own a little black baby whose enslaved mother had been abducted. He grew to become a botanist and one of the most prominent scientists and inventors of his time, as well as a professor at the Tuskegee Institute. This mastermind trusted God to show him in what ways he could help the poor farmers grow better crops and how to make useful products from the crops they grew. We know him today as George Washington Carver. We would not be enjoying many useful things today if Mrs. Carver had not cared for this child! Are we committed to taking any child God would place in our hands?

How many Martin Luthers, John or Charles Wesleys or George Washington Carvers have been rejected by self-centered parents? Those men and countless other men and women, have been as arrows "in the hand of a mighty man," flying out into the world and blessing many people. Arrows were very important and so is every child. Parents who think children are a burden do not realize the potential of a child. If you have a "surprise" son or daughter, dedicate him or her to the Lord and see what God will do with them. God has a special plan for every child in the world. Every child is a blessing, although we may not understand how it could be, when the world is so wicked, finances are low, or when parents have health issues. God still needs more Luthers, Wesleys and Carvers.

To successfully raise godly children, parents must believe that each child is a blessing sent from God. That every child is created in God's eternal image and is a SPECIAL gift.

## *Chapter Nine*

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# PROTECTING YOUR CHILD'S MIND

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**“I will set no wicked thing before my eyes.” –Psalms 101:3**

The human brain is much like a video camera. It is taking pictures and recording audio messages. All these messages and pictures are stored and many, even those recorded at a very young age, can later be retrieved. Almost everything your child is exposed to is recorded. Each time we yell, argue, or say hurtful words in the presence of our children, it is filed away in their minds. The times we are hypocritical, complaining, or disrespectful—those are also stashed away. When our child sees obscene pictures or hears inappropriate words, its innocent mind stores them.

What kinds of images are being stored in your tiny child's mind each day? Mobile phones, the Internet, television, CDs, books and games are easily available to all children. Your innocent child is exposed to much immorality. What he or she sees and hears is being stored. The seeds of violence, immodesty, illicit sex, and anti-Christian philosophies and conduct are being planted. There are many, many subtle messages planted by assumed innocent entertainment that will germinate and grow. When they become teens, they may want to experiment with some of the immoral ideas that were planted in their minds years before. Unless children are brought under the cleansing

power of Christ, these seeds will mature and produce fruit of its kind. What kind of seeds are you allowing to be planted in your child's mind?

Thirty years ago, a distinguished social scientist said, "I am sick and tired of being shocked. We are showing our children exactly the opposite of what we want them to imitate. We are showing them people who brutally attack others when angry. We show people murdering because of hatred or expediency. We show that love is expressed only by hunger for another's body and we show them little else! The unrestrained sex and sadism of today's Internet, movies, videos, books and TV threaten our children and our culture." The seeds of those former years have ripened and many of those children are now living the life style of the images that were implanted in their impressionable young minds.

Matthew 12:34 says, "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." What we allow to enter the child's mind (heart) will come out. A parent should be teaching children to work and at the same time filling their minds with good principles instead of allowing them to entertain themselves. Instead of allowing our children's minds to be recording foolishness, filth, violence and subtle ungodly messages, let them be recording hymns. Most mothers can sing, although it may not sound like a professional. Children love to hear their mother's voice. Sing while you go about your daily work. Grasp every opportunity to let them hear clear godly messages. When you aren't singing or talking, keep soft inspiring gospel music or Bible tapes and stories within hearing distance of the children. Keep Scripture portions posted on your walls, refrigerator, your note boards, etc. Deuteronomy 6:8 instructs us, "And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates." Let's do all we can to instill God's valuable Word in the minds of our precious children.

To keep children close, let them wash dishes, pick up toys, dust furniture, help with the cooking, etc. Teach your children how to sew,

paint, grow a garden, build wooden objects, repair motors, or do other activities in which they show creative interest.

A two-year old can begin bringing unbreakable dishes and flatware from the table, throwing paper napkins in the trash, taking scraps to the pets and scrubbing the bottoms of pans until they are shining. (I cooked using propane gas or wood. Sometimes I had to cook over open-flame smoky-fires which left the pans black. Those stainless-steel pans are sixty-two years old and still shining.) Children love to help because they love to be near their mother. Helping also gives children the illusion that they are an adult, which is a great boost toward a healthy self-image.

Most children love to do the things they see their parents doing. My fourth child was born when my oldest was five years and one month. I was very, very busy. I found it easier to keep them busy and close by me than to be chasing around and getting them out of the things in which they should not be. At the same time, they were learning to do things their peers did not know. They were also learning songs, Bible verses, and Christian principles as we worked together.

In those years when I had so very much to do, I imagined it would be easier to let my children be entertained by television, movies, or friends so I could do my work faster. I am thankful God did not allow that. From years of observation and study I have learned that children who do not learn to work at an early age tend to be self-centered, thoughtless of others and irresponsible; some even down-right lazy. Another truth: if children are taught how to clean, cook, etc., when they are very young, they will relieve their mother of many home duties when they are a little older. If the children are accustomed to being entertained, they will want to be entertained whenever they are at an age to be taking responsibilities. At that age, they may also seek entertainment outside the home in undesirable ways.

God has given parents the responsibility of filling, training and protecting their child's mind. The mind is the door to his or her spirit. Christian families are confronted with more adverse influences than ever before. It is the parent's duty to provide a home that is a refuge

from evil; a home where the mind can stay clean and the children can be happy while they grow into responsible adults. It is better to let them mess up the house doing projects or playing, so you can keep them protected. Creative playtimes or family projects also build self-discipline and self-esteem, make memories, and develop creativity. They also teach sharing and many other important lessons needed for successful adult living.

Parents cannot be too careful. Keep your small children in eye or ear range or under exceptionally dependable caregivers. Listen to your children's conversations with friends even if the friends are very young. Politely dismiss your child's friends whom you believe to be evil influences. This will take wisdom. First, decide if your child's friend is moving toward Christian ideals or if your child is being led away from godly principles. Act with care after this decision is settled, for you do not want to offend one of God's little ones while trying to protect your own.

Caution: Don't be deceived that all is well because the friend will attend church. Be very cautious about allowing your children to spend the night with friends. If your child spends the night away from home, be sure you know that friend and his or her family very well. Be careful about what children are doing when other children spend the night in your home. I never spent the night away from some member of my immediate family until I was married. My siblings and I were not even allowed to stay overnight with our cousins. I will be forever thankful to my father for this protection. Many children have been marred for life because of unsuspected activity while parents were asleep in the same house.

Your child is young only once. Please, parents, make the best of that short time. Protect that precious mind and body. Don't allow the child's demands to weaken you. Remember the mind of your child is always recording what he or she sees, hears, and feels.

## Chapter Ten

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# THOSE FORMATIVE YEARS

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**“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” –1 Corinthians 10:31**

How often have we exclaimed in exasperation, “I know I should not do this!” Yet, as if propelled by some unseen force, we continue to do whatever we are doing. It might be when we are buying something we don’t need; when we are speeding; maybe watching a hilarious video; or wasting time on the computer. We think nothing of it. However, the phrase, *I know I shouldn’t do this*, is being recorded in the very impressionable minds of little children who hear it.

The Apostle Paul asks us in 1 Corinthians 6:19, “What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you...and ye are not your own?” It seems logical that a temple containing the Holy Spirit would do only that *which it should do*. Since we have been born into the family of God, we belong to Him. We are the caretakers of our life and body which are now the property of God. We are also caretakers of the children He has put in our life. However, because Jesus said, “Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man,” we tend to excuse bad eating habits. We eat junk food, scrumptious desserts high in fat and carbohydrates, drink sugar and caffeine-laden

drinks, and other great-tasting, but unhealthy foods, while we verbally admit, “*I know I shouldn’t be eating this.*” Is that the proper way to be an example to others?

We say we do only what Jesus would do, but do we? Jesus said, “I do always those things that please him [my Father]” (John 8:29). “...He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Philippians 2:8). The Apostle Paul said he gave up all things for Christ (Philippians 3:8). Jesus and Paul brought their bodies into submission in every area of their lives. Let’s ask ourselves, “Is every area of my life in submission to God? Am I doing what Jesus would do when I do things that I admit I should not be doing? What influence on children am I giving by the way I am living and speaking?”

According to marketers of *World Book Encyclopedia*, at birth a baby’s brain is about 25% of its adult size; at eighteen months it is already 50% its adult size. By age six it has grown to 90%. This is the physical growth, of which we have little control. But we must be careful what goes into this quickly developing center that will control our child’s decisions for the remainder of his life—maybe sixty or eighty years. Another research by a University of Chicago professor shows that by age four, half of a child’s adult ability to acquire and apply knowledge and skills has been formed.

Dr. Dobson, a longtime child psychologist, explains that there is a window of opportunity for parents to teach their children to be led by and to trust in the parents’ leadership; moreover, this window will close sometime during the preschool years—after which point the task will become markedly more difficult. When it comes to brain development, there are no do-overs. If these years are misused or wasted, it is doubtful that the loss can be completely recovered, because as much development takes place during the first four years as in the next decade of their life. It is obvious that our influence on our children decreases rapidly after these early years so we should be very careful about the example we are setting.

In later years, when these children are tempted with evil, will they

ignore the warnings of their conscience and say to themselves, *I know I should not do this, but Mom, Dad, Grandma and Grandpa often did what they knew they shouldn't do?* Following those examples, the children may say to themselves, *I know I shouldn't do this, but I will do it just this one time.* We all know what happens when a person ignores the caution of his conscience. A special protection called *inhibition* is broken. After the inhibition is broken, a portion of its protective power is lost. Submitting to a temptation is much easier the second time, and the third time is even easier. Do we want that to happen to an innocent child?

Let us ask ourselves: Are we, by example, teaching our children that it is not always necessary to do *what we know we should do?* Is something so trivial as what we eat or the way we drive becoming a stumbling block to the precious, innocent children in our families? Let whatsoever we do be “for the glory of God” and in this way become good examples for those coming behind.

It is impossible for us to know just how much a child learns in those formative years. However, we know they are constantly learning from what they see, hear, feel and experience, both good and evil. Anyone who has watched a child develop knows the rapid physical development from a helpless new-born to running, catching balls, skating, etc., is mind boggling. The list is almost endless of what a child learns in a few years.

“As the twig is bent” is an old, wise saying about forming good character in children. A tree will seldom grow straight without protection. In forests, the surrounding trees protect the young ones from strong wind. In fields and yards, men drive stakes in the ground and connect the young tree to these stakes so the twig will grow straight. Since good character cannot be developed by being tied to a straight stake, the family’s constant vigilance is needed to protect the child from developing uncontrolled habits and a depraved character molded by evil influences.

Let’s make straight paths that lead the children to Jesus. Let’s be creative and see how we can improve our example. Remember, a new-

born child's mind is clean and almost empty when it comes into our home; but, it is developing and forming thought patterns that will determine many of its decisions through life. In every area of our lives, let's do all to the glory of God, so our children do not record in their memory-camera an image of us saying or doing what "*I know I should not be doing.*"

***A CHILD FOLLOWS ME***

*A careful guy I want to be;  
A little child is following me.  
I do not dare to go astray,  
For fear he'll go the self-same way.*

*I cannot once escape his eyes;  
What e'er he sees me do, he tries.  
Like me he says he's going to be—  
That little child who follows me.*

*He thinks that I am good and fine;  
Believes in every word of mine.  
The bad in me he must not see—  
That little child who follows me.*

*I must remember as I go,  
Through summer's sun and winter's snow,  
I'm building, for the years to be,  
That little child who follows me.  
From "A Little Brother Follows Me"  
—Author unknown*

## Chapter Eleven

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# CREATING A CLEAN HEART

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**“Create in me a clean heart, O God...” –Psalms 51:10**

Every child comes into this world with an innocent and empty heart. Parents cannot be too careful about protecting this little heart. When a mother stays at home, almost all of what fills her child’s heart in those first years is what she has taught or, sadly, what the child has learned while she neglected him, because the child’s memory is like a camera, recording and storing what he or she feels, hears, and sees.

*Communication* is receiving and giving messages by intellectual processes using our senses and through our spirit. The words spoken and the tone of the voice give only part of the message. Expressions of the face, the look in the eyes, body posture, and touch are also part of a message. Communication can be without words. A soft touch, hug, a pat, a smile, a frown, or a clap communicate. People who do not understand our language know if we are happy, hurt, or angry. God’s Spirit within a person also sends out a message. One daughter said, “It seems my mother has a halo of heaven surrounding her.”

A research by a University of Chicago professor shows that by age four, half of a child’s adult ability to acquire and apply knowledge and skills has been formed. What an awesome opportunity a mother has!

She can help her child understand God's ways by filling his or her mind with God's Word, thus molding the heart with biblical principles! A great amount of Scripture can be memorized in these early years. The mother should keep introducing the children to God's love and commandments as they work and play together. This is done through the normal activities of the day—not only when they sit down and have special Bible studies or family worship. While the children help wash dishes, mother can say she is thankful for water, for the food and for such good helpers. She could tell a Bible story, or perhaps make up a story that has a teaching lesson. Deuteronomy 6:7 says, "Thou shalt teach [God's commandments] diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." In the morning, in the evening and throughout the entire day, the child's mind can be learning about God.

Singing or talking about God while you feed or dress your newborn is another way to mold its heart. Don't think for a minute that your baby doesn't record your words. Use positive words as much as possible to begin building self-esteem. Tell your babies how precious, how sweet, how important they are. Babies within the first year understand a great deal of our commands, although they cannot verbalize an answer to us. Mothers and babies are even able to communicate using simple sign language, long before the child can talk.

Parents should be extremely careful that their children are not being introduced to evil ideas during these early years. Their clean, empty minds are recording what they hear, see and feel. All ideas, good or evil, that stay in the mind enter into the heart. When evil comes into the mind, it can be rejected and does not enter the heart. Young children who have not as yet developed a moral conscience do not know which should be rejected. It is the parent's responsibility to protect their minds from evil so it doesn't enter the heart. Proverbs 4:23 says, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." Now, consider: if parents have for several years been filling the child's mind with godly morals, those ideas will enter the heart and

become a part of that child's life. On the other hand, if this awesome opportunity has been neglected, the child's heart will automatically be filled with other ideas and those will become part of his life. If the child has been allowed to watch movies which portray disrespect for parents; where characters steal, lie, and murder; or where the agnostic guy is the hero, the child will be absorbing those ideas. Some might seem attractive to your child. The heart will be affected and then what Jesus said might be true of your once innocent child: "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies" (Matthew 15:18-19). Because a child might pattern his life after an evil character is why it is not recommended to allow movies and television to entertain children.

A scientific study showed that eighty percent of a child's ability to acquire and apply knowledge and skills is acquired by age eight. Those are the years he or she should be under a loving mother's care. By that age she should be able to reason about salvation. God said, "Come now, and let us reason together... though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow" (Isaiah 1:18). If the child has been taught all through those first eight years the eternal love and the eternal commandments of God, he will very likely submit his life to Christ. If his training has been neglected, frustrated by inconsistency or poor parental example, he may not be able to make that good decision. Naturally his heart will grow harder as the years go by.

Neglectful, inconsistent parenting in the formative years is often the cause of parents not being able to reason with teen-age children. Reasoning with another person takes self-control. One must listen, think, sift through his or her feelings and then express thoughts. Being trained to sit in a chair or be isolated for inappropriate behavior while a child is young will develop these skills needed for the teen-age years when reasoning is so important. Sitting still and listening should be mastered the first few years of a child's life. It will be a great benefit in school and on the job and is a safe guard throughout life.

God grant us wisdom to fill our children's minds with good positive training during their childhood, and that those memories will give

them confidence and strength. May we stay under the shadow of the Almighty and receive from Him the wisdom and graces that are necessary.

***MOLDING CLAY***

*I took a piece of plastic clay  
And idly fashioned it one day.  
And as my fingers pressed it still,  
It moved and yielded at my will.  
I came again when days were passed,  
The bit of clay was hard at last.  
The form I gave it still it bore,  
But I could change that form no more.*

*I took a piece of living clay  
And gently fashioned it day by day,  
And molded with my power and art,  
A young child's soft and yielding heart.  
I came again when years were gone,  
It was a man I looked upon.  
The form I gave him still he bore,  
But I could change that form no more.*

*God grant me wisdom that I may,  
Wisely fashion my child each day.  
From early morn till late at night,  
Help me to guide each in Thy light.  
To stamp God's love upon each heart,  
That they will never from it part.  
And then when I am old and gray,  
I will thank God for them each day.  
—Author unknown*

## *Chapter Twelve*

# **OBEDIENCE**

**“Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.” –Colossians 3:20**

The first commandment with promise is “Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honor thy father and mother ... that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth” (Ephesians. 6:1-3). If a child learns to submit to his parents, it will be easier to submit to God and other authorities. The goal of every Christian parent is to train each child to let Christ be the authority of his or her life.

Tender care, love, prayers, training, and biblical devotions are important but only a small portion of this training will be practiced by the child unless he sees his parents living in obedience to all the authorities that Christ has placed in their lives.

Even parents who are in obedience to God will find it hard to bring some children into submission because some children are not people-pleasers. They may be self-centered or just freedom lovers. Sometimes, however, children are not obedient because parents are actually strengthening insubordination while trying to get the child to obey. Here are three principles that if followed consistently will increase obedience:

Principle 1: When a child is spoken to in a way that requires an

answer or action, always, always, *always*, expect an immediate and respectful response. Require eye contact if possible when making a command. Then require a verbal response.

When parents consistently require first-time positive responses, the child knows when he should respond and that he will be disciplined for not responding. When parents repeat, bargain and threaten to get obedience, the child is kept in continual confusion. Consequences are no longer connected to his obedience or disobedience, but to the mood of the parent. This can also undermine the child's concept of God's character because children often believe God has the same characteristics as their parents, especially the father. Who wants his child to believe God has good or bad moods and rewards accordingly? They may, if we require attention the first time we speak on Monday, and the fourth time we speak on Thursday; or if we insist on an immediate response for a month or so and then relax and go back to old habits of bargaining, coaxing, or threatening to get obedience. Having inconsistent expectations, threatening, bargaining or bribing will hinder obedience.

Bribing is different from goal incentives. Goal incentives help children take responsibility for their actions. Children should be rewarded for obedience, but should not be obedient only to gain a reward. There is a difference. Children who have been bribed to obey tend to grow up self-centered and manipulative. They seek rewards and serve others only when there is something in it for themselves. A child should be obedient because it is pleasing to God, not for personal gain—although there is personal gain in being obedient.

Why will a child respond the third time but not the first? Your actions have taught him or her that you don't expect a prompt response. Keep in mind principle number one: *Always expect an immediate, respectful response.*

Principle 2: Be sure your command is clearly understood.

Give detailed explanations for younger children. A child may need to be shown how to do what you requested. Some children also need to be touched while listening to instructions. It is also good to have the

child repeat the instructions. Older children do well with written instructions. Routine requirements also make obedience easier for any child.

Children often disobey because they have conveniently not heard or have habitually ignored a parent's voice. Sometimes however, they may have not understood what is expected. Nonetheless, every child should respond politely when spoken to by any authority. Afterwards clearer instructions may be given.

Children want parental approval. A child's feeling of acceptance and approval is directly related to the standard of behavior required by his parents. This is especially true for without-challenge obedience. A child who meets these high standards of obedience receives approval not only from his or her parents but from society. This approval helps to make being obedient more attractive to the child.

God commands children to obey; therefore, we must believe all children will obey. I have heard parents say, "I cannot get my child to obey." That is a faithless attitude, although some children are more compliant than others. When the child is very small take his or her hand and force his hands to do whatever you have commanded. This isn't hard when the child is one or two years old, but after years of not obeying, a parent will have problems.

Try different ways to motivate your children to obey. Some respond well to praise, others to free time for play, others seem to be more responsive to the light touch of a switch. The child will respond to whatever their love language is. Try to discover the love language of each child and deal with them accordingly. But don't expect a child to do a job if he does not know *what* to do. Remember principle number two: *Be sure your instructions are clearly understood.*

Principle 3: Never give a command unless *you intend for it to be obeyed.* The perfect way to train a child to be disobedient is to give an instruction that you do not have the determination to enforce. Before speaking consider carefully what you are requiring. Is it possible? Is it appropriate? Is it pertinent for the situation? Do you have the fortitude to enforce this command? After considering all these, ask politely for

your child to do a given task and check to see that it is completed properly. When the child is concentrating on other things, give a time-related warning. Sometimes allow a little discussion for good understanding, but don't allow yourself to weaken if conflict arises.

Children love negotiating to keep from obeying. Choose your commands well, then hold to them. Complete obedience produces joy. If we negotiate the standard when the child objects, the child has not truly surrendered, but has only agreed upon a compromise, which leaves both child and parent frustrated. Without a complete surrender, there will always be some reason to wage war. Never negotiate in a conflict.

A child's willingness to accept total submission to authority is the first step to freedom. Being independent is the desire of almost every child. Independence is always earned. It is never merited simply because the child is 18 years old. The child must first surrender his will to his parent's desires; then he can surrender his will to God's will as directed by the parent. When the will is mastered, he or she is able to be more independent because he has learned how to rule himself. "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty: and he that ruleth his own spirit than he that taketh a city" (Proverbs 16:32).

"Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" (Ecclesiastes 8:11). The mother or father who first coaxes, then threatens, bargains, and finally punishes a little to get obedience, is fostering stubbornness and inciting disobedience because the child is hoping he can bargain himself out of obeying. The parents may be hoping for compliance, but the will to enforce compliant behavior is weak. Could some parents think they are being merciful? Mercy could not be so cruel as to encourage habits of rebellion that will cause the child trouble all his life.

Be watchful and alert to little deeds that seem innocent. Correct them even in very small children. Inappropriate behavior should be stopped when it first appears, before it takes root in the heart. Tolerance of behavior such as repeated disobedience, deceit, disrespect for

authority, stealing in the home, shirking responsibility, etc., should be stopped immediately. All these foster criminal characteristics. Read Proverbs 23:14. Principle number three: *Always enforce your commands.*

May God help each reader to practice these three principles which will help your child to obey.

- 1. Always expect a respectful response.
- 2. Always be sure you are clearly understood.
- 3. Always enforce your commands.

## *Chapter Thirteen*

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### **GAINING RESPECT**

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**“Honor thy father and thy mother...” –Exodus 20:12**

To have God’s blessings, your sons and daughters must obey the fifth commandment, “Honor thy father and thy mother...” (Exodus 20:12). The child’s spirit desires God’s approval, but his body desires to please itself, so inside every child there is a war raging between the spirit and his natural desires. Parents must help the child discipline his selfish body so his spirit can have control.

It is of utmost importance that parents earn their children’s respect so the children can honor them. Children will not respect parents naturally. At birth every child is innocent but self-centered. A wise parent will not allow a child to nurture this self-centeredness. Who enjoys a selfish child? His friends? No. His teacher? No. His siblings? No. The naturally selfish child is unable to control himself. He will yell when angry or fight when afraid. Parents must curb these natural reactions consistently by soft rebukes and a firm hand. “A soft answer turns away wrath” (Proverbs 15:1). As you curb these natural reactions you are training the child to control his emotions and at the same time respect you and honor authority.

Making your child respect others is training him or her to be unselfish. While they are toddler age, teach them to share. As soon as

they can talk, teach them polite words—thank you, please, I love you. Constantly reprove disrespectful words or actions. A person has very few friends unless he respects others. When you train your children to respect others, they will have friends and appreciate you for it although they may not tell you until they are training their own children.

Never allow mockery of you or others. “The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it” (Proverbs 30:17). You must insist upon respect. If a child disregards authority, he will be blinded to dangers and to many of the secrets to a successful life. Manners and respect open doors to many opportunities.

Children do not respect parents who don’t take the time or have the strength to make them behave properly. A properly trained child will be quiet at public gatherings, while others are resting, during worship, or while adults are conversing. Then the child will hear people comment, “What a nice child.” Or, “Your son is exceptionally well behaved.” When he hears these comments a few times, he will feel good toward mama and daddy. This will also make being respectful more appealing. Without realizing it, he is respecting you because you made him be that adorable child. “Correct thy son and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight to thy soul” (Proverbs 29:17).

After many years of counseling with parents about child relationships, psychologist Dr. James Dobson gave these recommendations about the importance of respect:

- 1. The child’s relationship with his parents provides the basis for his attitude toward every other form of authority he will encounter, including God.
- 2. If your child is to accept your values when he or she reaches teen years, then you must have earned his or her respect during younger years. When a child can successfully defy your authority during his formative years, he develops a natural contempt for you and your desires. If

the child can manipulate his father or mother, he will believe he is wiser than that parent.

- 3. Unless a parent gains his child's respect, he cannot transmit his standards to the child. A child thinks that if Mom and Dad are not worthy of respect, neither is their God, their morals, or their convictions.

A great amount of respect is learned by the child seeing parents respect others, especially their spouse. A child will mentally and sometimes physically fight a parent who mistreats the other parent. Fathers should be willing to work hard to provide for and protect the family just as Christ laid down his life for the church (Ephesians 5:25). Wives should greet their husbands with a smile and words of appreciation when he comes in weary at the end of the day. Mothers, are you quietly allowing the father to be the leader? (Ephesians 5:22). You can make your husband a hero in your children's eyes. Teach them to serve him kindly by taking off his shoes or bringing him a drink. When you do these things, you will be fostering respect, and you too will be respected.

Praising children has great consequence. Your children will respect you if you show respect for them. Look carefully at what they show you or into their eyes when they are speaking. It seems that strength, love, and encouragement are transmitted through eye contact. Sacrifice some of your desires for theirs. Put aside your other duties for a few minutes and listen to them talk, play with them, or let them help you clean when it would be easier to do the job alone. If mothers could bundle all the minutes spent in giving individual attention, they would seem to be so few, however the good they do cannot be measured. By your everyday actions, your children will know if you love them more than yourself, and will respect you accordingly.

Parents will earn the respect of their children if they train them to do their best. When parents criticize the demands of teachers or caregivers or accept a half-done job, they are hindering, not helping, their child.

Appreciate the crude drawings, messy jobs, and barely legible letters when they are small. But don't lavish praise when you know the child could have done better. His third-grade teacher will not accept first grade work. "Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right" (Proverbs 20:11). The child will respect the parent more if the parent requires him to do his very best.

Gaining your children's respect is not climbing a mountain with a well-marked path; it is a daily experience of listening and following God's voice. There are few immediate rewards but thousands of long-range recompenses. Be encouraged and keep going, one step at a time. Years pass swiftly and before you realize it, your once-selfish child will be loading you with honor.

## Chapter Fourteen

### THAT MESSY ROOM

**“And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.” –Galatians 6:9**

Do you have a *messy syndrome* child? I had one. He delighted in kneading vegetables, cereal, or desserts through his fingers, then propelling them to his mouth with both hands. Spoons were not tools for eating; they were objects for splashing in liquids. When he finished eating what he wanted, he would put his half-empty oatmeal bowl on for a hat and squeal delightfully while slimy oatmeal ran down his face and over his clothes and chair.

I had a friend at the time, who taught me many things about keeping a tidy home and teaching my children to help keep it tidy. She had a three-year-old and a new baby a few months older than my first son. Her house always looked as if she was expecting guests. Besides keeping her home and yard in tip-top condition and caring for two small children, she sewed the clothes she and her two daughters wore.

One day the three-year-old was excitedly showing me her toys. One by one, she brought me a toy. After we played with it for a while, she carried it back and put it in place in her room. Then she quickly returned with another. I remarked to my friend, “Does she always put her toys away like she is doing today?”

“Oh, yes, her daddy insists that she not scatter her toys. He taught

me how to keep an orderly home. It was really embarrassing.” We talked no more about this, but each time I was in her home, I watched what she did and tried copying it.

Now five years and three children later, I was wondering if my *messy syndrome* child was going to disrupt all the disciplines I had learned and was struggling to keep in my life. My after-breakfast routine included bathing the child and washing the high chair (with the water hose outside when weather permitted). That kind of routine didn’t last long, I soon realized it was much less work for me to leave other jobs aside and sit beside this child and not allow him to make such a mess. Today that child loves order and cleanliness.

Daily behavioral habits seem to carry over into a person’s spiritual life. A person who is self-controlled about material things seems to be able to also accept the disciplines needed for spiritual growth. The areas of one’s heart must be kept clean by the washing of God’s word. By training a child to be orderly, the parents are not only eliminating many problems in the child’s future but also helping him to be more useful in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Watching animals perform at Old MacDonald’s Farm in Anaheim, California, also gave me some insights on training children. I am not suggesting that children are animals; nor should they be treated as such. However, I reasoned that if animals can be taught to perform correctly by giving approval and limiting food, maybe *messy syndrome* children could be taught the same way. Like the animals, children have a desire for approval and rewards. Like the animals, they also develop habits. Whether the habits are good or bad depends on their instructor.

If one day I visited an animal trainer and the animals were not performing as expected, do you think I would blame the animals? No. I’d think the trainer hadn’t done his homework. Could you imagine the trainer in a circus saying to his audience? “I’ve been fussing with these animals all day but they won’t do their tricks.” No. He knows getting the animals to perform properly is his responsibility. The next time you start blaming the children for their messy rooms, maybe it would be better to apologize for not being responsible and training them to keep

their room clean. Who is responsible for the animals performing properly?

I didn't think the trainer taught the animals by getting mad and fussing, shouting or hitting them as I had seen parents do. Nor did I think he used threats or scare tactics as parents sometimes do. I had seen parents lose control and give their children a lashing with their tongue while the child stood bewildered, rolling his eyes in mockery. By observation I saw that the animals did what the trainer desired for the reward they received. So, I reasoned I should give rewards for good behavior, withhold rewards for inappropriate behavior, and if that didn't change behavior, then I would add other consequences to make good behavior more attractive.

The animal trainer makes things convenient and conducive for the animals to perform the way he desires. Parents must also make it convenient for their child to be able to accomplish the required behavior. It is not possible for the child to have homework done before supper if he is allowed to play, visit friends, shop, etc., until mealtime. It is the parent's responsibility to see that the child stops playing and has a quiet time and place to study; also, that he or she bathes and tidies the room before going to bed. The child must also be awakened in time to put away sleeping clothes, straighten the bed and do other chores before leaving for school. If the parents do their duty, they and the child will be happier.

Keeping their room tidy is much easier if they are allowed to take out only coordinating toys for play. These must be put away before another group is brought out (as my friend taught her three-year-old). A five-year-old child is capable of keeping a reasonably tidy room, straightening her bed and putting toys and clothes in their proper places daily, with only an occasional reminder.

2 Thessalonians 3:8-12 instructs us that everyone who eats must also work. If parents would consistently enforce rules such as, "No work, no food," "Room cleaned before breakfast," "Homework and chores done, or no supper," they might get more cooperation out of their children. Parents should regularly make the reward for coopera-

tion desirable and the consequences for being messy totally not worth it!

Another consideration in training a *messy syndrome* child is his or her future. What effect will being chaotic have on the child's adult life? He will be developing habits that his peers learned in childhood. Also, his self-esteem suffers if his spouse or co-worker has to teach him how to keep his home or work space in respectable order.

How about the marriage? A spouse not taking his or her share of household responsibilities has caused many divorces. Every reader probably knows of the stress inflicted on the marriage by a disorderly spouse. Have mercy on that *messy syndrome child* and train him or her, now! Your child *and* your future in-laws will bless you for it.

This idea may not work, you say; there are those children who love to skip meals. Don't say so until you try. When food is denied, they seem to desire it more. (Watch closely if your child doesn't get hungry; a sibling may be sneaking him food. That is what happened in my family.) Rewards can be anything the child loves. Find out his love language; then reward or withhold rewards to improve behavior.

A few families have a child that is structured without being trained. Thank God if you have one and please pray for the parents of the *messy syndrome child*. They need a lot of prayer.

## *Chapter Fifteen*

### **THOSE WATCHFUL EYES**

**“The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself  
bringeth his mother to shame.” –Proverbs 29:15**

*M*y mother’s watchful eye kept me safe, convinced me of her love, and taught me that I was responsible for my actions. When I was about six years old, we were playing hide-and-seek with the neighborhood children. I dashed into an abandoned “outhouse” to hide, but before I got the door closed a teenage boy jumped in beside me and quickly locked the door. He ordered me to take down my clothes. I refused, but he insisted. I said, “No,” but he wasn’t taking “no” for an answer. Right when I felt sure he was going to strip me, my big brother Jim banged on the door and shouted loudly, “Open up! Now!”

My mother, watching from our house a good distance away, had seen what had happened. She was heavy and couldn’t move quickly, but she yelled to my brother to run and rescue me. A similar incident happened when I was either ten or eleven years old. Again, those watchful eyes saved me from permanent physical and emotional damage. How grateful I am for Mother’s watchful eyes! These experiences, along with many others, built faith and trust into my life. I knew someone loved me enough to be watching out for my protection. I

knew I was special to her. It caused me to feel secure. Therefore, I believed her when she warned me of danger.

As we children grew older and were away at school all day, my mother often reminded us that she could not always know what we were doing, but God's eyes were watching us. It was easy for me to believe that God was watching, because I grew up thinking my mother had another pair of eyes in the back of her head. It seemed she always knew what I was doing. I had been experiencing this care for as long as I could remember, so it was natural for me to believe that I would reap the consequences of my behavior (both good and bad). This knowledge caused me to be cautious about my behavior. I knew I couldn't do wrong and get by. In family worship we sometimes sang Lethal A. Ellis' hymn:

“You can't do wrong and get by,  
No matter how hard you may try.  
Nothing hidden can be,  
Everything He does see.  
You can't do wrong and get by.”

Why did I feel the truth in that song? Mother had often caught me when I thought she wouldn't. What a difference between my life and that of other children's lives whose mothers are not watching them! Many children don't believe that anyone knows or cares about what they are doing. They have seldom been caught or had to “face up” to wrongs that they have committed; therefore, they have little fear of the consequences for sin. I often ponder the void that must be in the hearts of children whose mothers are not with them during their waking hours. I would think they feel insecure—maybe a little afraid—and wonder if they are loved.

Some mothers who are with their children seem to not notice what the children are doing. Others ignore their children's actions so they won't have to deal with them. I will confess, it is easier, at the moment, to ignore unacceptable behavior. I'll admit to having yielded to such

temptations myself, and have reaped the sad result of this lethargy. Reaping is embarrassing and painful. It is better to consistently watch your children's actions and deal with those times of inappropriate behavior, knowing that each one of us will give account to God.

Is it easy for a mother to keep an eye on a family of children? No, a thousand times, no. However, if mothers could look down the road into their children's lives to see the pain they could save themselves and their children, it would help. It's better to be alert during their formative years than to wish you had been.

Was it easy for my mother to keep an eye on me? Certainly not! I was a hyperactive child, full of energy, running here and there from early morning until night. They tell me that as soon as I could walk, I was climbing. One day Mother heard me calling, "Lookey at me horsey." She went outside and found me straddling the smoke house roof. It's still a puzzle how I got on that roof. Another time she found me almost at the top of the windmill with the fan blades whirling in the Oklahoma wind. Thank God for Mother's watchful eyes that saved me from grave injury or possible death.

The following are some old, wise sayings that helped me through those years when I struggled to be diligent about keeping a watchful eye on my own children:

*"Nip it in the bud."* The bud is just a little knot on a branch. However, it has the ability to become an enormous branch from which many limbs sprout. Buds show there is potential power. If we pinch off the buds, no flowers or branches will grow. Children are developing habits as they grow. If we encourage good behavior, good habits will grow like flowers to brighten the child's life. When the possibility for a bad habit first shows life, a parent should pluck off the bud by scolding, training, or disciplining each time it happens. That will stop the development of that habit. Take stealing, for example: a stealing habit is preventable if young children are disciplined for stealing from siblings right in the home. Nip any bad habit (disrespect, talking back, wastefulness, anger, laziness, etc.) in bud form before it grows strong enough to control your child. In years to come you will be thankful,

and you won't find yourself standing in a courtroom wringing your hands as you helplessly watch your child being escorted away to prison. You are training the child to control his spirit, and Proverbs 16:32 says, "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty: and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."

At what age should we start nipping the bud of unacceptable behavior? While the baby is still in your arms is the best time. When he or she arches his back in rebellion; that is the time to begin correcting this developing habit of "having things my way." When the baby in your arms screams at you when he doesn't get what he wants, that is not the time to guess what he wants and satisfy him; instead, it is your opportunity to "nip in the bud" a habit that could destroy your child's character. You must be careful to use these opportunities. If you don't correct this habit, someday his or her blood-curdling screams will be heard across the supermarket. That will be embarrassing. On the other hand, it could be disastrous when he or she is making important decisions for life and your advice is not accepted. Parents should realize that what seem like "innocent" habits can develop into monstrous attitudes. When this happens, the child cannot be the person he or she wants to become, because a habit was allowed to grow until it is controlling him or her.

"*A stitch in time saves nine.*" Mothers mended their family's clothing back in the old days, before it was fashionable to wear ragged clothes with unsightly holes. Sewing up a small tear was easy and took only a few minutes. If the rip was left unattended, it would soon be so large that it would take nine stitches to one, compared to the small tear. Children's behavior is somewhat the same. Those little acts of stomping the feet, arching the back, slapping, taking a sibling's toy, or speaking a defiant "no" can be corrected without severe discipline when they first appear; however, if left unattended, a habit will develop that could take much time and effort to break.

Mothers and fathers must realize that evil influences come from within as well as from without. Every child is born with a self-preserving personality. The more this personality develops, the more

self-willed the child will become. Selfishness causes problems of many sorts; two serious problems are unhappiness and rejection by others. A parent can help his child enormously by teaching him to be caring and considerate of others.

We thank God for mothers who will sacrifice their personal goals to watch over the children that God has put in their care. It is a full time job being a watchful mother. We also appreciate fathers who support these mothers and provide life's necessities so they can stay home and be with their children. Remember: "The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame" (Proverbs 29:15).

## Chapter Sixteen

# TRAINING THE CONSCIENCE

**“...I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts...” –Hebrew 8:10**

“*A*nd I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works” (Revelation 20:12). “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day” (John 12:48). Because every person will be judged by what is written in the Bible, we must obey and diligently teach our children the precepts and standards of God’s Word.

Parents should establish standards of right and wrong and impress them upon their children at a very young age. Primarily, this is done by not allowing *yourself* to transgress God’s laws (personal example); also, by telling stories, memorizing scripture, and day-to-day instructing while playing and working together. Making the baby be quiet during worship is training him to respect God and the one leading the worship. When he yells, pat or cover the mouth. If he squirms to get out of your lap, squeeze the upper forearm and whisper, “I will release you when you sit still.” This is training in submission. Any naughty action at any age should not be laughed at, but taken seriously.

Fathers and mothers are the child's "conscience" before his personal storehouse of right and wrong is developed. However, it is very important that parents teach even very young children how to listen to and obey signals from their conscience. Positive and negative training does this. By "negative" I mean restrictions, warnings and consequences (spanking, time out, etc.), which are used predominantly in the early years. Positive training is encouragement when right decisions are made or when instructions are followed. By using both positive and negative training, parents are building a moral conscience in the child.

This moral conscience is like a million-dollar bank account from which your child can draw at any given time. From this stored information the conscience will interact by prompting, confirming, warning, or accusing. A child without this moral storehouse is like a ship without a rudder or anchor. He may drift into the teen years and make decisions that ruin many lives—his own life, his children's lives, and his grandchildren's lives. He may also affect others outside his family. Parents, please be careful and build the moral conscience in the child's early years.

Every child has the right to be protected. "...The devil, as a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8). Children need spiritual as well as physical protection. Building a moral conscience is one way of protecting your child. We protect them only if we stay under the authority of God and receive of His wisdom, for "I know that the way of man is not in himself: It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23). God will show the parent (who seeks his wisdom) how to deal with each individual child.

Although every person is born with an inclination to be self-centered (sinful), the spirit cries out for communion with God. The conscience is God's way of communicating with humans. The Hebrew word "heart" refers to conscience in most scriptures. "Thy word have I hid in my heart [my conscience], that I might not sin against thee" (Psalm 119:11). Even some people who have no biblical teaching do what is right because they communicate with

God by listening to and obeying their conscience. Read Romans 2:14-15.

Dr. Dobson, who has dealt with thousands of children, said, “A child believes in God because his or her parents say it is the right thing to do ... [At] about 5 or 6 years of age, however, she begins to think more about what she is told. Some children come to a fork in the road about that time. Either they begin to internalize what they’ve been taught and make it their own, or else the Bible stories become like the fables ... I certainly don’t mean to imply that parents should wait until the child is 5 or 6 to begin spiritual training. Neither are subsequent years insignificant. But I am convinced that our most diligent efforts ... should be assigned to the child of 5 or 6 years.” It is preposterous to think that our actions, the child’s teachers, childcare givers, older siblings, TV, movies, internet, radio, and books do not affect which fork the child will take.

Using the moral conscience which the parent has built into the child, God will alert the child when he is about to do wrong, and/or encourage him when he is doing what is right. He will condemn when wrong is done and confirm when right is done or when a wrong is corrected. As choices are made throughout the day, the conscience is continually sending messages that either confirm or reprove actions. The guilty feeling is a warning; the happy feeling is an encouragement from God.

Besides supplying a sense of right and wrong, the conscience also communicates through fear of rejection, shame and accountability. After Adam sinned, he doubted God’s approval and hid himself. Read about this in Genesis 3. Cain felt he would be killed because he had killed his brother, Abel. He felt accountable for his actions when no one had accused him. (Genesis 4:14) These incidents occurred *before* God’s commandments were presented to man.

Positive training such as instruction, encouragement, and reinforcement are used mostly in the middle (8-12) and upper years. If parents do not move from negative to positive training in the middle years they limit the child’s capability to reason morally, or to practice obeying his

own conscience. In these years the child must assume the responsibility of his actions. Let him practice what has been taught. Look for the good the child is doing so you can confirm good actions and encourage more right decisions. We must encourage children to do right as opposed to only discouraging them from doing wrong. They should see obedience as something attractive, not just something done to avoid punishment. Only very young children should refrain from doing wrong because they will receive parental punishment. Older children should choose the right because of consequences. They should think, "I will do this because it is right, and I will be blessed." Or, "I ought not do this because it is wrong, and God will not bless it."

It is also important to teach children how to clear their conscience after wrong is done. Children respond in different ways to a guilty conscience: some are hyperactive, some are irritable, some withdraw, and some become fearful. Be sensitive to each of your children. Abnormal actions may present a clue that a child needs help to clear a guilty conscience. It will take time and attention to be constantly alert, but it will save time and worry in years to come. Patience and wisdom from God are needed as you probe into your child's mind to help him understand his feelings of guilt. Then bring him or her to an attitude of accepting the responsibility for his actions. This is not done by accusing or manipulating; it is done by seeking God's wisdom to know what questions to ask that will lead the child to understand his feelings, see his mistake and admit his error. After responsibility for wrong has been accepted, then show him from God's Word (if you know a verse to fit the situation) how he has displeased God and must ask God's forgiveness.

Sometimes instruction and prayer are all that is needed. But there are times when an apology to the person whom he has offended is also needed. Sometimes suffering a punishment also helps to clear the conscience. When the conscience is clean, the child will feel happy again. Help your child stay happy by helping him keep a clean conscience. This happy feeling is God's way of saying, "Great job."

The devil is seeking to capture our children's souls; not in one great

leap, but slowly and subtly. He does this by destroying, bit by bit, the keen awareness of their conscience, thus hardening their conscience and blocking the avenue by which God speaks to their soul. The conscience becomes insensitive if he or she is allowed to continually do wrong and not be held accountable. “Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil” (Ecclesiastes 8:11). It is easier for a parent to ignore the wrong. But what is that doing to your child’s conscience? Ignoring wrong can lead a child to believe that God does not see every action. The Bible speaks of a “conscience seared as with a hot iron.” When a conscience becomes seared or insensitive the child will find it difficult to respond to God’s call to repentance.

Let’s be alert to all that is happening in our children’s lives, so that they can continually hear God’s still small voice and repent of any evil action or attitude. We want each child to follow Christ and live so he or she will hear God say to them on that final day, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you” (Matthew 25:34; also read verse 41).

## Chapter Seventeen

### THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE

**“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another.” –John 13:35**

I grew up on a farm in the Willamette Valley of Oregon. We worked hard and I loved it. I felt like I was the best-loved child in the whole wide world. Our parents treated us four children equally, without any partiality, but my older sister grew up feeling that our father did not love her. How could this be?

It must have been something about our love languages that triggered our different feelings. The information that I have gathered came from the books written by Gary Chapman, Judson Swihart, John Trent, Gary Smalley, and Gary Ezzo, who study family relationships, and from my own fifty years of observing families. I do believe that every person has a different way of perceiving love. My perception of love happens to be *acts of service*. I watched my father working year after year from sun up to sun down to supply for our family. This along with many other things convinced me that I was dearly loved.

In John 13:34 Christ says, “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.” Christ’s love is honest and sacrificial. God is love. In John 13:35 Christ said, “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” Love, therefore, is a very important

ingredient in the Christian home. Faith, hope, and charity (love) are all parts of a Christian's life; "but the greatest of these is love." Our neighbors will not believe we are a Christian family unless we have love one to another.

My father, a man of integrity, expressed love by doing acts of service and honoring my mother. Rarely did he say, "I love you." But he would say, "I will not permit you to do that because I love you, and I know that is not good for you." He would say, "You girls do the dishes, and show Mother that you love her." He showed great respect for each one in his family, especially our mother. She wasn't allowed to lift heavy things, carry a bucket of water or hoe the garden if Dad was near. He would take the hoe and tell her to go rest. Only once did I hear him scold her. He never ignored or humiliated anyone—even those whom we knew he disdained. Honoring and doing for others were the ways he showed love.

Love is an emotional language. It is part of the nurturing that is spoken of in Ephesians 6:4. "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Love must be expressed in a way that touches the emotions of the person we love. If it does not touch their emotions in a positive way, it is like speaking a language they do not understand. To avoid this, one must attentively observe each child and one's own spouse to be able to express love to each in his or her preferred way.

Various authors may express the love languages using different words; however, most agree on these five basic ideas:

- 1. *Words of affirmation,*
- 2. *Acts of service,*
- 3. *Gift giving,*
- 4. *Quality time,*
- 5. *Physical touch and closeness*

Every person feels a degree of love through each of these expressions, but one will usually mean much more than the other four. Most

small children will respond to all five, but around their pre-teen years, each will begin preferring one over the others. Which of the five do you enjoy the most? Which one means the least to you?

*Words of affirmation* meant the least to my father. He would say, “Words are cheap. Talk costs nothing. To prove love, you must use some muscles.” What was least meaningful to him was most meaningful to one or more of his four children.

1. *Words of affirmation* are especially meaningful to persons suffering from low self-esteem. But it must be legitimate praise, well thought out and from the heart. Even children see flattery as meaningless. Our words must build up. Praising them for things they did not work for, such as God-given talents or natural beauty is great; however, praising them for those things that are under their control, such as a job well done, a good grade earned, a character change, etc., is better. Give them praise for things they have accomplished.

2. *Acts of service*. “Let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth” (I John 3:18). *Acts of service* may have been Apostle John’s love language. Clean a room, pull weeds, or fix a bike tire for a person whose love language is *acts of service*. Don’t do something you want done, and expect them to accept it as a gesture of love. Sorry! It won’t touch their emotions. Do something *they* would like to have done.

3. *Gift giving* is another way to show love. Be sure to get something that the person likes. Don’t buy a cookbook for your daughter who hates cooking. Bringing a gift home when you have been away lets the person know you thought of them while you were separated. A gift need not be expensive, but taking time to wrap it prettily shows you put some love into it. Handmade gifts are excellent.

4. *Quality time* is the number one language of love for many children and teenagers. The “American Dream” has influenced parents to buy far too many things using credit cards. Consequently, parents must spend most of their *time* paying for and caring for all those *things*. While children are given many things for entertainment, their heart longs for *time* with Mama or Daddy. Parents, I admonish you to give

that lonely heart your undivided attention. Play his game. Read her choice of books. Fix his bike or just sit and talk with him. Don't promise to do something with them after school, then spend the evening catching up on things needing to be done around the house. Using your time in that way will be saying, "My duties are more important than you." The child will feel less loved than before you promised.

5. *Physical touch and closeness* is one of the ways Jesus showed love. Mark 10:13-16 says, "And they brought young children to him . . . And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them." A soft touch says, "I love you." All childhood worries flee away when the little one snuggles up in Daddy's strong arms. Stay connected with your children by holding their hands, giving them a hug or just putting your arm around them in public. Besides showing your love, touching them will help your children develop both emotionally and physically.

Gentle words touched my older sister's emotional cord. Her preferred love language was *words of affirmation*. In adult life she was deceived by sweet words from people who did not really love her. Dad struggled to make each of his children feel loved, but he never understood that what he considered almost useless could have meant more than gold to my sister. *Quality time* was her second choice for feeling loved. Dad had to work long hours in order to supply our physical needs, so there wasn't much of that either.

While I grew up happy and carefree amid this wonderful home life, my sister's heart was aching because her preferred love language of *encouraging words* and *quality time* were rarely demonstrated. Many a dedicated Christian parent (with a heart full of love) does not understand his child's love language. Some have judged their child as being unthankful, which has caused even more distance between them. It is my prayer that this chapter will help a frustrated parent and a child's aching heart to be knit together. May God bless each reader.

## *Chapter Eighteen*

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### **THE DINNER TABLE**

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**“Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord...His seed shall be mighty upon earth...” –Psalms 112:1-2**

*F*ormer President Ronald Reagan said, “All great change in America begins at the dinner table.” Creativity and inspiration are two important ingredients for starting change, and these can be encouraged at the dinner table, when the atmosphere is relaxed and secure. Together those around the table can build dream castles, span difficult waters, conquer hard, rugged mountains, or explore deep, dark caves. They can dream of becoming a missionary, a nurse, a millionaire, or a famous horse trainer. Supportive conversations around the dinner table may be so inspiring that one may do better on a history test the following day.

What happens at dinner tables has a profound effect on children’s lives, both present and future. Much good can be accomplished or much bad can result. Extreme amounts of information are absorbed as people are sharing ideas and experiences while they are together. Polite, respectful, thankful attitudes can be developed, anxious or wounded spirits can be healed, and depressed emotions can soar again. However, the reverse happens at a meal where there is complaining, criticizing, fussing, or even disinterest shown.

Parents set the mood for productive meals. Mother (no matter how

grumpy you feel), serve your family with a smile. Show appreciation for the food, the provider, and for each son and daughter God has graciously given. Do as Jesus did. He took upon Himself “the form of a servant” and served even his enemies (Philippians 2:7). By so doing you are teaching your children to honor their father, to respect one another, to be a servant like Jesus, and to be grateful.

Children should sit quietly while a sincere prayer of thanksgiving is offered. Only God can cause food to grow, so meals should be eaten with great respect to Him. Invite Jesus to be there. Some families have a plate for Jesus. Others sing a thanksgiving song, or say memory verses before starting to eat. Whatever habit you form, be consistent, and do it with reverence, not as just a hurried ritual. Pretend Jesus is present at your table and act accordingly.

We want each member of our family to receive the kingdom of God, so let’s be very careful to honor Christ at the table. Do your children see patience when the meal is late, when the food is overcooked, when the tastes doesn’t suit you? What kind of topics are discussed? In some homes the Sunday church sermon, a politician, the city authorities or the school teachers are torn apart. Complaining, criticizing, and murmuring will not inspire a child nor encourage him to seek for righteousness.

Children should be encouraged to try new foods. They should not be allowed to complain and fuss about what is on their plate. If a child fusses or refuses to eat, just calmly send him to bed without any food. Let that child hear the remainder of the family laughing and having fun at the table. If he cries himself to sleep, hopefully he will eat without grumbling at the next meal. If he throws a fit, beats on the door or comes out of the room, then he must be disciplined for that behavior, but not for refusing to eat. If the child has been rewarded by getting the food he wants in between meals, that needs to stop. This method may need to be practiced many times until the child is persuaded that he must eat what is on his plate.

If our children experienced hunger like children do in developing countries, we would not have such a problem getting them to eat.

Although we may be able to provide our children with what they want to eat, we should not. They should learn to eat what is served. What husband, wife, boss, or teacher in their future is going to gratify all their wishes? We should prepare them to have self-control for the future problems they may face. Besides, how does Jesus look at us when we spend money to satisfy the whims of our children or ourselves that could be used to keep another child from starvation? Jesus said, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind ... and ... thy neighbor as thyself” (Matthew 22:37-39). Is pampering ourselves and our children’s expensive tastes showing love for the hungry in developing countries? Families should keep a “Remember the Poor” collections jar for money to be given once a month to others more needy than themselves.

Family dinners need not be costly in order to be a place of inspiration for change. The atmosphere is what makes the meal uplifting or depressing, a big fuss or a fun time. One of my family’s most enjoyable meals was a bowl of potato soup with a wedge of cornbread. One time, when we lived in Mexico, all I had to cook was cornmeal, pizza sauce and a little cheese, so I made cornmeal pizza. It was a hit from the start. After they were teenagers and went to Pizza Hut, my younger children hunted for it on the Pizza Hut menu.

Let me suggest that after reading this, when you sit down to the next family meal, just be quiet and take mental notes of what is happening at your dinner table. Was the experience one that lifted and inspired your children for greater love for God and others? Did it motivate them to be better, to learn more Bible truth, or to get higher grades in school? Did each one feel important to the family, or did one child carry his plate to another room to eat? Did one get offended and leave the table crying?

Why do some teenagers not want to eat with their family? Why do they find excuses to not be at evening family worship or not want to play games with the family? The answer is clear. They have experienced pain instead of support when they were together with their

family. What are your children experiencing at your dinner table today?

My desire is to help parents become more aware of what could be happening at their tables. Depending on the attitude of the parents, dinner time can be a constructive time or it can be a negative experience. Be creative and ask God to help you to see how you might improve your family's dinner time. Welcome Christ by making a place for him and say positive words about the church and authorities. Give each child a smile and praise so they will feel important. Remember President Ronald Reagan's words, "All great change in America begins at the dinner table." Try making your dinner time a platform for inspiring your family to go far.

## *Chapter Nineteen*

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# **TRAINING CHILDREN TO BE WITNESSES**

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**“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me...” –Acts 1:8**

*W*e are careful to teach our children to obey the Ten Commandments. We also stress the new commandment that Jesus taught his disciples. “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another” (John 13:34). But we often ignore His last commands, “Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel” (Mark 16:15). Just before He ascended, he also said, “Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses” (Acts 1:8). These last words of Jesus are very important to the spiritual life of our children.

Sometimes we overlook their need of being filled with the Holy Spirit and being a witness for Christ. The infilling of the Holy Spirit and witnessing for Jesus are a vital part of a person’s spiritual life, children included. Jesus said in Matthew 10:32, “Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.” Our children can begin witnessing by testifying in church. Revelation 12:11 says, “And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony.” A short testimony, “I thank God I am saved,” gives Satan a slap.

When I was ten years old, a girl in my class brought her Bible to school and invited her friends to her church. She knew the particular doctrines of her church and read the scripture to prove them. That was years ago. I have forgotten most of my classmates, but her influence follows me today. Encourage your children to dedicate their lives to God and be filled with the Holy Spirit, so that they can begin witnessing for God while they are young. One of mine did at age nine.

It is very sad that many children are growing up ignorant of what is acceptable and not acceptable to God. There are children in almost every neighborhood who do not know of Jesus' saving grace. Some have only heard the word "God" or "Jesus" as a curse word. Let's help these little lambs know the truth so they can be forgiven and have a clean, free conscience. Jesus said, "Suffer the children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Luke 18:16). Let your children make cookies and juice drinks. Then invite the neighborhood children into your home. Sing some children's songs and tell them a Bible story. Let your children tell the story or lead the songs if they are capable. It will give them self-confidence and bless their souls. Encourage your children to be heroes for Jesus by bringing their little friends to Him. Getting the children involved to helping others know Jesus is the best way to keep them serious about their own soul's condition. If we are not enthusiastically helping others know about Christ's saving power, our children will not believe it is important.

Our freedom to share the gospel may be prohibited in the next decade. Matt Kaufman reported in the *Citizen* magazine, "What is taught in many college classrooms today is that Christianity brought on the Dark Ages, held back science, imposed superstition, promoted slavery, oppressed women and minorities, fostered brutal imperialism and generally caused or aggravated a host of evils throughout history."

"Christianity is the enemy of progress," is also taught. What will happen to our opportunities when 90% of our leaders have that opinion of Christianity? *World Net Daily* reported that Anthony Mirto and Ernest Simpson, working with Gideons International, were criminally

charged after handing out Bibles near a school in Key Largo, Florida. Rio Linda High School in California suspended students for wearing shirts with scriptures printed on them. A student attending Oakridge High School in Michigan was reprimanded and sent home for writing, “I’m straight” on a piece of tape and putting it on his shirt. Should we not be making better use of our opportunities while we have the liberty to do so?

Recently I read a book titled, *The Pastor’s Wife* by Sabina Wurmbrand. It describes what happened in Romania before freedom was snatched away from its people. Similar things are happening in our country. Children are gathering evil attitudes from worldly entertainers, teachers, and peers. God help us to be alert and bring understanding to the little lambs that we can contact. Let’s do everything we can to save them from a life of misery and an eternity without God while we have the opportunity.

We must believe what Jesus said and teach our children to believe it. His Word says, “Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest” (John 4:35). Jesus also said, “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me” (John 12:32). Be encouraged and believe Jesus’ words that there are people around us hungry for God, and that He will draw men, women, and children.

Hezekiah said, “This day is a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and blasphemy: for the children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth” (II Kings 19:3). Let us pray, and have our children agree in prayer with us, that God will give us strength to bring forth children. Isaiah 66:8, says, “As soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.” Travailing is spiritual warfare in prayer. Reaching souls for Christ begins with travailing prayer. Through prayer God equips us with His love, kindness, wisdom, and anointing. His Spirit also works on the hearts of those to whom we speak.

Today we have the freedom to obey Christ and be witnesses. Let us make space in our lives to train ourselves and our children to witness for Christ and reach the little lambs in our world!

***NINETY AND NINE***

*The ninety-nine within the fold,  
Are safe from fears and storms of night.  
But one is on the mountains cold,  
'Twill perish there—how sad the sight!*

*Chorus*

*Go search it out, and bring it home,  
No more in darkness let it roam.  
You'll find it there in dreadful plight,  
Oh! go and bring it back tonight.*

*The ninety-nine are safe today,  
They're all at home, so fully blest  
But one is wandering far away,  
Upon the mountain's snowy crest.*

*The Shepherd dear, aloud doth weep  
Because one lamb afar doth roam;  
The ninety-nine He'll safely keep,  
We'll seek that lamb and bring it home.  
—W. G. Schell*

## *Chapter Twenty*

### **GIVE US WISDOM**

**“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally... and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering...” –James 1:5**

*T*here is a verse in Proverbs that parents often quote: “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Proverbs 22:6). I suppose we parents find a certain amount of comfort in this verse. We console ourselves by thinking we are training, or have already trained, our children in the way they should go; therefore, they will not stray from God’s way, or, if they do stray, they will return again.

I personally know of generation after generation of some families whose children have not departed from the way. I have also noticed that quite a few of my church friends of younger years have returned to Christ in their older years. But some go away and, as far as we know, never return to the Savior.

Is something missing in the training when children go astray? The scripture implies that training is the reason children stay in the right way. Isn’t the Word of God always true?

We don’t know why seemingly well-trained children depart from the way. However, God’s promise is, “If any of you lack wisdom...let him ask in faith, nothing wavering.” Faith is the key to getting the wisdom we need to train our children so they will desire to stay in

God's way. Faith holds steady when emotions are going up and down. In times when our children are rebelling, we must keep praying that God will keep our faith steady. Sometimes parents become discouraged and stop listening to God's faint whispers of wisdom, or obeying them. Their faith wavers and they try in their own strength, using their human wisdom to change the situation. Faith is always connected with a willingness to obey God. Faith is increased as we obey the impressions of the Holy Spirit.

I knew a mother who prayed much for her boys to love God's way. However, judging by the way she spoke, she expected them to follow the evil one, for when they did wrong she would sigh and say, "I knew they would do that." I wondered why she prayed for them to do right if she expected them to do wrong. That mother's sons did as she expected. They did not yield to Christ and at least one served time in prison.

God expects us to put wings on our prayers by not doubting, but rather trusting Him and expecting our children to do what we have trained them to do. Most children, when they are young, will do what parents expect of them. Our expectations reveal our faith or lack of it. Although we may fear they may choose to do wrong, and we know they have that possibility, we shouldn't let them know by verbalizing it. Instead of confessing our fears, we should confess our faith in God and the child. We should also plead for Jesus' protective spirit to be over their souls continually.

"For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed" (James 1:6). Ocean waves dash against the shore and tumble back out. Back and forth the water rolls. Some parents' faith—and their training habits—are about as unsteady as the waves. One day the child can do nothing right. He is constantly being scolded for first one thing and then another. Days later, when mother is feeling great, the child throws his toys, stomps in the mud puddles, plays in his food and Mom laughs at what he does. This kind of training confuses and discourages a child. Even though the child has a desire to do right, he or she does not know from one day to the next what is expected. He

becomes confused and will surely depart from such an unpredictable life. To train a child in “the way he should go,” parents must know *the way* and have their emotions under Christ’s control. When a parent’s faith (expectations) and emotions are unsteady as the waves of the sea, “let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord” (James 1:7).

A more precise meaning of “Train up a child in the way...” is *to bring into a narrow way or a disciplined manner of living*. The cry of every unregenerate child or adult is to be unrestrained; to live without boundaries. But Jesus said, “narrow is the way which leadeth unto life...” (Matthew 7:14). Early on, a child must know he has boundaries, that he is responsible to God, that he will give account to God for his thoughts and behavior. Every parent needs to have earned enough trust to be able to put boundaries around their children and the children not become bitter. The Christian life is a narrow, disciplined way. A child who has already had stable boundaries in their formative years will find it easier to live for Christ.

An undisciplined person will not be very successful in life nor in his walk with God. We must train our children to control their desires and bring them into subjection to their authorities so when they are older they will be able to submit to God’s ways. The Apostle Paul said, “I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, after I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway” (I Corinthians 9: 27). My child will be a castaway unless he brings his desires under God’s control.

According to Matthew 18:14, We know it is not God’s will that any of these little ones should perish. In John 12:32, Jesus said, “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.” This was spoken about Jesus being lifted up on the cross. He died as He was lifted up on the cross, therefore, we know He is drawing *all* men. He is drawing our children. Praise God!

Let us do all we can to bring them up within God’s boundaries, training them in “the way they should go.” At the same time, let us be very careful that we are following God’s wisdom and expecting Him to

answer our prayers. Be watchful that our lack of faith, low expectations, careless words, hasty actions, or out-of-control emotions do not keep our children from having a desire for God. Using the wisdom that God gives, let us honor our children, taking them by the hand and leading them to Jesus.

Jesus said that whatever we do to the least of these little ones, we have done it unto Him.

## *Chapter Twenty-One*

### **BUILDING SELF-WORTH**

**“I can do all things through Christ...” Philippians 4:13**

Chickens have what is called a pecking order. Every member of the flock fights for its place in the pecking order. Often it is an old hen that gets what she wants because she has pecked all the other chickens in the pen into submission. A large rooster may be right under the hen or vice-versa. Under the leader come all the others in order of their pecking ability.

Animals in the wild operate in similar fashion. There may be many packs of coyotes in the area. Each pack has a leader and one pack will be the leader of all packs in the whole area.

A pecking order will also develop in a family unless care is taken. The one at the top might be the oldest, the strongest, the most beautiful, or the most intelligent. The youngest, an overweight child, the one with less beauty, the slow learner, the late bloomer, or the child who looks different may end up on the bottom. The others fall in stair step order according to their ability to bluff the others. The order in a Christian family should be: Christ is the head; then comes Father, Mother, and then the children, who are on the same level unless given authority by a parent.

Every human is born with the need to be accepted and loved.

Babies will cry when they are neither hungry, cold, hot or wet. Cuddle them and they are content because what they needed most was to feel secure. At times toddlers will not sleep in their beds, but will rapidly fall asleep when near a parent. When a child clings, he is insecure. He or she needs to cling. Forcing them to stop clinging increases the need. Hug them; hold them tight until they are ready to be released, for even small children need acceptance.

Every child in the family deserves the same love, attention, and approval. Normally a child will strive to get his or her emotional needs fulfilled within the family. If they fail they may go into denial or more often go searching for acceptance among peers.

The child will then struggle through peer groups until he finds a group who will accept him. If he has much self-esteem left when he or she leaves the family to seek approval elsewhere, he will start with a group which is near the top of the pecking order that has already developed in the school or neighborhood. If he does not find acceptance there, he will seek another. On down the ladder he goes. With each failure of acceptance, he or she feels more of the pain of rejection and loses more of his most valuable possession, his *self-worth*. In this emotional condition the child may strip himself of his moral standards and do almost anything for acceptance. A rejected teenager sometimes does things that are self-destructive. Another sad thing is that the group which accepts him is usually made up of those with his same problems. Unaware that this relationship is increasing his problem by feeding the wound created at home, he or she may turn to alcohol, drugs, or fornication as a way of escaping the pain.

If your child is conforming to his peers at his own expense, take a look at what is happening in your home. Are the emotional needs of this child being met? Is the child receiving love, attention, and approval? Does he or she seem happy when interacting with his siblings? At this point he may already have a guilty conscience, which will lower his *self-worth* even more. He needs much prayer, but also multiplied amounts of love, attention and approval from his family to rebuild how he should feel about them and himself. The faith already

instilled in the child, coupled with love from his family will help keep a child from destroying himself after everything else has failed.

Parents, begin praying if this is happening in your home. Humble yourself before God and repent of failure for letting this condition develop. Repent of any other failures or sin in your life. Fast often. Parents should do everything they know to do in order to again win the heart of this child. Take full responsibility as if salvation from this condition depends all on you.

Here are some things parents have done when facing this problem:

- 1. Show special love by complimenting her each time you see her. (Say she is beautiful; that he is strong; that her hair is beautiful; that he is a good worker etc.)
- 2. When possible, prepare his favorite foods.
- 3. Invite him to accompany you even though you may feel ashamed of the way he looks.
- 4. Present him to new acquaintances as a proud parent.
- 5. Never nag. He already knows you think he is doing wrong. That's impossible to hide.
- 6. Above all else, let him know that you love him, regardless of what he does

The worst thing a parent can do is to keep reminding him of the bad choices he or she has made. That will make him feel more hopeless and want to get away from you. The child who has *low self-worth* must be convinced that he is valuable; that you believe he can become a great person. I am convinced that many caring Christian parents have driven their children further away while struggling to help them. Pray for God to help you know *how* to show love, because it is difficult to refrain from conveying the message; "I dislike what you are doing."

A daughter from a Christian family told me, "My parents only love me when I perform as they desire." Later, she almost died from drinking too much alcohol.

Here's what happened in our home. Tim was a good-natured little

boy that people loved to tease. Both friends and family teased him a lot. He just smiled at the jokes, so no one realized the damage that was being done. As time passed, his *self-worth* was going down. We moved to the US away from all his friends. He had only attended schools where Spanish was spoken so he found himself at the bottom of his class. He turned to the church for approval and was not accepted by his age group. Then he turned to the world. There he found acceptance. Soon he began stripping himself of his moral standards. Finally, acceptance and encouragement from his family pulled him through. He could not destroy himself as some others were doing, because by then his family had seen what was happening and began proving that they loved him. He found new better friends. After seven years of struggling; he came back to his roots, gave his heart to Christ and became a new creature. During those seven years he had continued to believe that someday he would change because *someone had faith in him*.

Mothers, fathers, siblings—don't give up if you have a person of *low self-worth* in your family! Show that person that he is valuable, needed, and wanted. Have patience; it may take a long time, but faith is not what we see. It is what we cannot see. Walk by faith and not by sight. "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (Hebrew 11:3).

## *Chapter Twenty-Two*

### **PRAISE GOD, I CAN WORK!**

**“...When we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.” –2 Thessalonians 3:10**

*I*n the beginning, when God had just finished creating things on the Earth, he gave his very *first commandment*. It was a command to *work*. He first created an environment that, if left unharmed, would continually recycle itself to supply the needs for the entire creation. Then he made a man and woman, Adam and Eve. Boys and girls imagine that Adam and Eve had no work to do in that beautiful garden God had created. But that is not true. God commanded them to, “Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing . . . upon the earth.” Adam was to subdue and have dominion over all the animal kingdom and to take care of this wonderful earth. God gave him authority over all kinds of animals. Even strong animals can be frightened by a fearful man much weaker than the animal.

Adam and Eve had a tremendous job, but their workload greatly increased after they sinned, because then they had to cultivate their crops among weeds and thorns. God established only one day per week for rest. Working was not a curse placed on Adam after he sinned. He

was instructed to tend the garden and subdue the animals before he sinned.

Paul instructed the people in the city of Thessalonica that “if any would not work, neither should he eat.” Also, he advised younger women to marry, bear children, and guide the house, lest they become busybodies, wandering about from house to house, speaking things they ought not speak (I Timothy. 5:11-14). Paul knew that young women love to communicate, and that it would be better if they were busy with a home and children. Men and women were created with a desire to be productive. If they are not doing something useful, they may probably be doing something destructive, for we are created for work. It is evident in our society that idleness is detrimental to any human. Idle, undisciplined parents raise irresponsible children who become lazy parents. For the most part, these parents also generate lethargic children. The Bible tells us to redeem our time; to be industrious. Ezekiel 16:49 tells us that the iniquity of Sodom was “pride...and abundance of idleness...” An old, wise saying is, “An idle mind is the devil’s workshop.”

God promised the Israelites that if they would carefully obey His commandments, there would be *no one poor* among them. However, because they were a selfish and rebellious people, some became poor. When this happened, God established laws to protect the poor. These did not include free handouts for them; they always had to work for their food.

The laws for provisions for the poor stated that all fruit that ripened after the harvest was to be left for the poor to glean. The farmers were also to leave the corners of their fields for the poor to gather for themselves. Whatever fell to the ground must remain for the poor to pick up. If a sheaf (a bundle of wheat) was accidentally left in the field, it was to remain there for the poor to find. When the farmer shook the olives from the trees, whatever did not shake off was to be left for the poor to pick. These instructions are found in Deuteronomy 24:19-22; also Leviticus 19:9-10. In those years people lived off what the land produced. These laws also allowed families

who had lost their land to be able to recover it during the year of Jubilee, which was the fiftieth year. That year, land was returned to the original owner.

The book of Ruth tells how Ruth and her mother-in-law, Naomi, got their food by gleaning the fields after the harvest. All they had to eat was what Ruth could pick up after the workers had harvested the field. Ruth worked hard in the heat and the cold to gather their food a tiny bit at a time. After Ruth brought the food home, it had to be processed; the little grains of wheat or barley had to be cleaned and ground before bread could be made. Usually animals stomped out the kernels on a threshing floor. However, in small amounts, threshing was done by hand. It was a long, tedious job. The grains were then ground by placing a small amount of grain between two stones and rubbing one stone against another until the grains were ground into course flour. Then bread had to be made. There was no place to get a month's supply of food and have the rest of the month to sit idle.

From olives came oil for cooking, enhancing skin, and for anointing. The small olive fruit, about as big as our thumb, had to be picked from trees, washed, then crushed and filtered, and then pressed and filtered again through a cloth. It was a long, hard job to get the oil. Other fruits were picked, then crushed and drained for juice; or sundried and then stored. Although the landowners shared with the poor, both Ruth and Naomi, along with all the other poor souls worked hard to maintain themselves. They did not eat free handouts.

“Ingrained deep within the American spirit is the willingness and the desire to give an honest day's work for an honest day's pay. This spirit of being responsible for ourselves has no desire to simply exist on handouts from the government or just depend on the generosity of others. It is this same independent spirit that has allowed America to create the greatest and strongest economy in the history of the world. ...The powers of the world look at our nation and ask where that spirit of honest labor came from and where this work ethic originated. It came from the [God fearing] men and women who lived before us. Those generations were raised to believe in...honest work, which is

found throughout the Word of God.” (from *The American Patriot's Bible*).

People who have not learned or do not practice these principles of honest work have no mooring by which to stabilize themselves; so, following the whims of their human nature, they have fallen into a miserable condition of poverty. We pity those who have missed becoming a part of this godly heritage. However, since neither God nor the government is responsible for our food or shelter, and each person is responsible for himself, parents must teach their children how to work. God has promised the working person food and shelter, and He has kept this promise throughout all generations.

God's system of taking care of the less fortunate forced people to work for their food and other needs while also giving them a chance to get out of their poverty. God offers the same chance to the poor in our world. God will greatly bless them if they will work for their needs.

A person in poverty must discipline himself and his family to enjoy working. Start right at home: grow a few vegetables in the yard or in containers on the deck. Make things to sell, babysit children, clean houses or yards for the neighbors. There are ways that the less fortunate of today can live God's way. There are opportunities for the poor to come out of their poverty. God will bless those who obey His Word and work as the Apostle Paul did when he said about himself, “Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labor and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you” (2 Thessalonians 3:8).

God will bless those who obey his *first commandment*. (Genesis 1:28). They will feel better about themselves and enjoy life more when they work to supply their own needs. God created man to be industrious and productive. Start doing things God's way and soon instead of receiving help you will be giving to others. God said, “if any would not work, neither should he eat.”

### ***IT COULDN'T BE DONE***

*Somebody said that it couldn't be done,*

*But he with a chuckle replied,  
 That maybe it couldn't but he would be one  
 Who wouldn't say so till he tried.  
 So, he buckled right in  
 With a trace of a grin  
 On his face. If he worried, he hid it.  
 He started to sing  
 As he tackled the thing  
 That couldn't be done,  
 And he did it!*

*Somebody scoffed, "Oh, you'll never do that,  
 At least no one has ever done it."  
 But he took off his coat  
 And he took off his hat,  
 And the first thing we knew,  
 He'd begun it!  
 With a lift of his chin  
 And a bit of a grin  
 Without any doubting or quit-it,  
 He started to sing  
 As he tackled the thing  
 That couldn't be done—  
 And he did it!  
 —Edgar A. Guest*

## *Chapter Twenty-Three*

### **GOD'S CREATIVE POWERS**

**“All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.” –John 1:3**

As each school year ends, parents have more time with their children and can have a more active role in educating them. It is a good opportunity to influence them in right attitudes and thoughts. Some will be looking for summer activities to keep their youngsters busy. Instead of looking to our culture and society for activities, why not use the opportunity to teach them more about God? Parents can counter some erroneous teachings their children may have accepted, or teach them how to study the Bible, to memorize scriptures, or how to be a blessing to others.

We know there are many evolutionary theories that are presented as truth in our state or national parks. Personally, I believe it is not fair to the younger generation to have such information presented as truth when in fact they are only theories. The following evidence will help your children know the truth about the earth's existence:

How long does it take to make an island, or a canyon or a mountain? According to the evolutionary theory, the Grand Canyon took from 3 to 6 million years to form. Let's see how long it took God's nature to form an island with canyons and mountains.

As anglers were throwing their net into the icy North Atlantic

waters, 33 kilometers south of the main island of Iceland, one shouted to the other, "Look a ship is on fire!" The cold wind lashed their faces as they raced their boat toward the flames. From a safe distance, they watched gigantic flames leaping high in the air! However, there was no ship in sight. They quickly radioed headquarters. "It looks like a volcano is erupting! Flames 100 feet high are shooting out of the water! We are four miles from Geirfuglasker."

Dr. Thorarinsson, a geologist, arrived in a helicopter two hours later. The following days, other scientists from around the world came to study what was happening. Yes, a volcano was erupting! Several leading evolutionary geologists watched as natural forces within the Earth formed a new island with a landscape that appeared to be thousands of years old. "The varied and natural landscape was almost beyond belief," Dr. Thorarinsson reported. "What elsewhere may have taken thousands of years...the same development took only weeks or even a few days." Geologists watched small amounts of lava flow gently down to the edge of the sea. As the cold seawater splashed upon the hot lava, it shattered into a billion small bits, making beautiful sand.

The island was named Surtsey. Shortly after the island's first birthday it had a mountain with an active volcano, wide sandy beaches, and impressive cliffs that were grayish-white, and resembled the cliffs on the English Channel. There were hollow, secluded valleys, soft waving surfaces and boulders worn almost round by the surf. Gales and sandstorms dealt blows on this island within that first year.

Within two years, an island nearly three miles square had formed. That same year, 1965, Dr. Thorarinsson built a house on the new island. It was a headquarters for scientists studying the new plants and animals as they invaded the island. By 2003, sixty different plants and ten different nesting birds were reportedly found on the island. Surtsey Island looked like it could be 10,000 years old!

What geologists learned at Surtsey is good evidence that our earth may be much younger than what is shown by the information displayed

in our parks, in our study books, and in many other kinds of educational materials.

Evolutionists use a uniformitarian timescale for estimating the age of the earth, rocks, fossils, etc. According to this timescale, changes in the Earth's surface have come primarily through gradual processes rather than sudden upheavals. This new island showed us that this timescale could be very misleading

An average depth of 150 feet of rockslide and volcano debris covered twenty-three square miles of a valley on the north side of Mount Saint Helens. This lowered Mount Saint Helens 1314 feet. In this valley, brooks and gullies formed within five days. They were of sizes which, before, a geologist would have thought it took hundreds of years to form. Some of the gullies are 50 feet deep. A miniature Grand Canyon over 100 feet deep formed in one day. The erosional features of Mount Saint Helens are not unique but are similar to those seen elsewhere.

In 1958, at Lituya Bay, Alaska, an enormous tsunami estimated to be 1720 feet above the ocean destroyed the forests along the shore. It stripped the hills of vegetation and changed the mountain into a wasteland. It caused a landslide that dumped forty million tons of rock, vegetation and debris into the inlet of Lituya Bay. Such stripping would have taken thousands of years under evolutionary patterns.

On November 20, 1980, a Texaco oil driller accidentally penetrated an underground salt mine under Lake Peigneur in Louisiana. 240,000,000 cubic feet of lake water emptied suddenly into the mine. This caused treelike patterns of channels in the lake bed, some with depths of 200, and up to 300 feet. The whirlpool that formed from the water rushing into the salt mine below swallowed the \$5 million oil drilling rig, another nearby drilling platform, a barge loading dock, seventy acres of soil from Jefferson Island, trucks, trees, structures, and a parking lot. The sucking force was so strong that it reversed the flow of a twelve-mile-long channel that led to the Gulf of Mexico and dragged eleven barges from that channel into the swirling vertex. Over a two-day period, the previously eleven-foot-deep freshwater lake was

replaced with a 1300-foot-deep saltwater lake. Wow! What God's creative powers can do!

Scientists have estimated that the 277-mile-long Grand Canyon, carved by the Colorado River took three to six million years to form and that this took place long before man kept records of erosion. However, one of the world's largest man-made disasters was the unrestrained flooding of the same river in 1905-06. In nine months the runaway river formed thirty-three miles of channels with an average width of 1000 feet, and a depth of fifty feet. It removed almost four times the amount of dirt removed while digging the Panama Canal. If the Colorado River had kept eroding for 100 years at the rate it did those nine months, the United States could have had two Grand Canyons. This is not considering possible earthquakes or other upheavals that may have helped in forming the Grand Canyon.

It is believed that the earth and the moon are about the same age. It is also known that strong ultraviolet light from the sun's rays change rocks to dust at a very slow rate. A billion years of erosion, even at this slow rate would have left great amounts of dust on the moon's surface. However, the astronauts did not sink into dust when they landed on the moon. They only found enough dust to make good footprints.

All of this—Surtsey Island, Mount Saint Helens, the Colorado River flood, the well drilling accident at Lake Peigneur, Louisiana, a small amount of moon dust—and a multitude of other evidence has caused many leading scientists to believe that God is the creator of all things. Many have also concluded that the Earth could be only a few thousand years old, which agrees with the Bible record in Genesis.

This chapter was written before I learned how to find information on the Internet; however, there is plenty out there on this subject. I advise parents to get several books and magazines and read them to their children. Here is a list of books I used for references:

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David C.C. Watson, *Myths and Miracles*, Creation Science Foundation Ltd., Australia, 1976;

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*World Book Encyclopedia*, Chicago, Illinois, Field Enterprises, Ed. Corp., 1976.

***GOD SPOKE AND IT WAS DONE***

*When all space was filled with darkness,  
Ere the light began to shine.  
God spoke the Earth into existence  
By His mighty power divine.  
While the darkness still prevailing  
Far more dense than shades of night;  
God, moving on the waters,  
Spoke and said, "Let there be light."*

*Light sprang forth at His commandment  
In a most mysterious way;  
God divided the light from the darkness,  
And the light He called a day.  
Then God divided the waters,  
With a firmament so fine;  
And the evening and the morning  
Were the second day of time.*

*God caught the waters by His Word  
And brought them into seas;  
Then told the earth to bring forth grass,  
Many herbs and fruitful trees.*

*The fourth day God made the sun,  
The moon and stars for lights;  
The sun to shine throughout the day;  
The moon to shine by night.*

*God spoke unto the waters, then,  
And gave them a command  
To bring forth fish and flying fowl  
To fill the sea and land.  
And when the sixth day did appear,  
God spoke and it was so,  
That beast, cattle and creeping things  
Upon the Earth did go.*

*God also said, "Let us make man,  
In our image him to be;  
And let him have dominion  
Over the Earth, land and sea."  
So, God ended the creation,  
All was finished 'neath the sun;  
Everything as He commanded,  
For God spoke and it was done.  
—Ulysses Phillips*

(Ulysses Phillips, *Inspiring Poems and Songs*. Hudson Printing Co., Inc. 1009 Central Ave. Anderson, IN 56016. 2015. (used by permission))

## *Chapter Twenty-Four*

### **BECOMING USEFUL FOR GOD**

**“...Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” –Romans 12:1**

The twelfth chapter of Romans teaches us to become a living sacrifice for Christ. The first years of a child's life are the years when the parents should diligently form the foundation for a strong disciplined character, which is necessary for becoming a living sacrifice. A parent can help build a child's good character by consistently approving good behavior and consistently reproofing selfishness. Learning to share is good practice for sacrificing unto the Lord, and the younger, the better. If learned when very young, sacrificing for others will be a normal way of life for that child.

Small children can be learning to serve others by sharing with and assisting younger siblings in putting away toys, carrying things to their father while he is resting, and taking gifts to sick friends. As they get a little older, they can serve by washing dishes, setting the table, helping clean the house, pulling weeds from the garden, raking leaves, etc. By working and doing things for others, your child will be learning the concept of being a living sacrifice. Serving others will also bring him rich rewards and make life easier when he or she becomes an adult.

The famous American evangelist, Charles G. Finney, said about child rearing: “To *train* is to ground them in *correct views* of truth and

in *right principles of actions*. *Catechize* is to thoroughly instruct them in the *great principles of righteousness*.” One question we should ask ourself: Am I grounding my small child in the correct views of truth and the great principles of righteousness—such as sacrificing for others—or am I just providing for my child as he or she is growing up doing what they desire to do?

Romans 13:13-14 reads: “Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering [sinful activities in a private room] and wantonness [immorality], not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.” The things mentioned in this verse are the normal things that sinful people do. However, there are many, many innocent entertainments which are not sinful, but are a total waste of precious time. We must be wary of those things, because nearly all entertainment is geared to fulfill the desires of the flesh; so, in excess, it becomes sin. Entertainment feeds the flesh; note that we just quoted the Bible verse which instructs us *not* to make a provision for satisfying our fleshly desires.

The problem with entertaining the flesh is that it is addictive. Additionally, what satisfies the flesh today will not satisfy in coming years. It will need something more daring, more exciting or more sinful. If a child habitually satisfies his flesh, his selfish desire can become a monster beyond control. This is demonstrated by stealing, fighting, murder, rape, etc. The goal of every parent is that his child enters heaven after this short life. Allowing them to habitually satisfy their flesh, even with clean entertainment, keeps their minds busy and saps their desire for a relationship with Christ. Self is not only hard for a child to deny, but it is everyone’s worst enemy. A brother in Christ from Pomona, CA, often said, “M.E.— My Enemy.”

Living in a prosperous nation where our neighbors seem to have everything they need, parents are asking, how can we teach our children to become living sacrifices? The following ideas may be of some help:

- 1. Be an example using your money wisely 100% of our money belongs to God. The “lust of the eye and the pride of life” causes many Christians to use money unwisely.
- 2. Let our children see you sacrificing your time and energy while helping others.
- 3. Take your children to visit others. Teach them to arrange flower bouquets to take to people you visit.
- 4. This is an opportunity to help them overcome timidity by singing or quoting Bible portions in front of only one person when visiting.
- 5. Sponsor an orphan or engage in some other worthy project for the poor.
- 6. Give them opportunities to earn their own money to do things for others.
- 7. Every girl should learn to sew. Who knows—God may send them to a poverty-stricken place where they will need to remake clothes for the needy.
- 8. Boys need the opportunity to learn to do minor repairs around the house so they can help the widows and elderly. (This is really a good self-esteem builder!)
- 9. Children can help the elderly with their yard work or other tasks they can no longer do.

Encourage children to do these things as unto the Lord. Doing for others will keep children from wasting time and money on useless entertainments. It will also help to develop confidence and a good self-image.

Congratulating our sons and daughters when they help others is the best way to motivate them to become a living sacrifice. Most children want to please, or at least they want adult approval. Constantly, throughout the day, give them compliments for constructive things they are doing, especially when it is something that blesses another person. Even if the job is imperfect, do not humiliate them by criticizing. If they are trying, that should incite your praise.

Those children who are taking up most of your time will soon be gone. Everyone makes time for what is most important to them. Is the most important thing to you training your children to be prepared for adult life and eternity? Then take time to disciple (discipline) them. Train your child to become a living sacrifice. Trust God to give you strength and grace to keep at it until they take the responsibility of disciplining themselves. “The word *train* means to ground them in correct views of truth, and in right principles of actions.” Are you training?

Are we willing to stop using God’s money for unnecessary comforts for ourselves and our children? We can give our time and money to help others; by so doing, we can lead our sons and daughters into a joyful life of service for Christ.

### ***YOUR MISSION***

*If you cannot on the ocean  
Sail among the swiftest fleet,  
Rocking on the highest billows,  
Laughing at the storms you meet,  
You can stand among the sailors,  
Anchored yet within the bay---  
You can lend a hand to help them,  
As they launch their boats away.*

*If you are too weak to journey  
Up the mountain, steep, and high,  
You can stand within the valley  
While the multitude goes by.  
You can chant in happy measure  
As they slowly pass along—  
Though they may forget the singer,  
They will not forget the song.*

*If you have not gold and silver  
Ever ready to command,  
If you cannot toward the needy  
Reach an ever-open hand,  
You can visit the afflicted,  
O'er the erring you can weep—  
You can be a true disciple  
Sitting at the Savior's feet.*

*Do not then stand idly waiting  
For some greater work to do;  
Fortune is a lazy goddess,  
She will never come to you  
Go and toil in any vineyard,  
Do not fear to do or dare.  
If you want a field of labor  
You can find it anywhere.  
—By Ellen Gates*

## *Chapter Twenty-Five*

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF OUR PROMISES**

**“Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.” –Proverbs 13:12**

**D**o you have a son or daughter who is rebelling? It might be related to a broken promise, one you made many years ago that you have forgotten.

There was a son who had been a very obedient child, but in his teen years he began showing signs of rebellion. The parents were hurt and sought to find out what had happened to cause this change.

After praying daily for several months about the situation, the father decided to take the boy out for lunch and open up the subject. He ordered the son’s choice of food and did all he could to make his son happy and relaxed. First, he made small talk about school, his friends, etc. Then the father asked questions about his son’s interests and about what he planned to do in the future.

After they were through eating, the father said, “I love you very much, Son. Please forgive me for any time I have offended you.”

The father was surprised when after a long silence, the son said, “Dad, do you remember the time you promised to take me fishing? That morning, I got up and had my fishing gear ready before the sun came up. At breakfast, Mom told me that someone in the congregation needed your help and you had gone to help them. I waited on the porch

until the sun went down. You never came for me nor called to explain the situation.

“Every hour I became more bitter as I thought of other times when you promised similar things. Each time it happened the same way. You got busy and forgot your promise. I was convinced that I was less important to you than other people. I also concluded that others were more important to God, because God didn’t answer my prayer that you would return so we could finish up the day fishing. That day I began questioning: *Why should I strive to please either you or God?*”

The father had a hard time remembering the occasion. He was a busy minister; he also worked another job so his family could have some things they needed. The father thought: *Isn't my working two jobs proving my love for you? How could you not appreciate what I am doing? Why couldn't you excuse me for not keeping those little appointments I made?*

We read a story in the Bible that also illustrates the importance of keeping a promise. King David’s nation was suffering drought. King David knew God controls the weather so he inquired of the Lord the reason for the drought. God told David it was because Saul, the king before him, had broken the league their nation had made long before with the people of Gibeon.

Joshua, Israel’s leader before King Saul, had made the league (Judges 9). The men of Gibeon lived in Canaan, not far from Joshua’s camp, but they pretended to have come from a far country and were hungry and needy. They promised to always be loyal servants if they could only live in Canaan. Joshua felt sorry for the people, and without taking time to ask God, he hastily made a league with them. More than three hundred years later, Saul became King of Israel and tried to destroy all of them.

We might think that the generations following would not have been responsible for a promise they did not make. Another logical reason for not being responsible for this promise would be that it was made under false pretenses. Whatever way we might reason out of the responsibility for this promise, God expected the nation who made it to keep it

or make reconciliation for it. God's people had disobeyed His commandment when making the promise, but nonetheless, the league had to be kept. When David recognized the wrong done and reconciled it with the Gibeonites, then God answered their prayers and sent rain (2 Samuel 21).

We can readily see that the percentage of Christian children coming from Christian parents is not very high. *Could many of these children be offended because of unkept promises?* How often parents make hasty promises without much consideration of the difficulties involved in keeping the promise! That is a big mistake. It could easily be offensive if the child believes it with all his heart as the boy did when his father promised to take him fishing. Children expect parents to keep a promise. They equate a parent to God. They kind-of think parents ought to be perfect, but on the other hand, are very forgiving if parents humble themselves and admit their mistakes. Making hasty promises and not seriously trying to keep them is a good way to destroy your child's faith in you. More seriously though, it often destroys his desire to serve God.

Maybe the promise was made long ago and you have forgotten it. Has the child forgotten it or is he or she holding an offense against you? Is someone else offended because we have not kept a promise? Does your child know about a promise you made to your spouse that has not been kept? He or she might be resentful because of that. Rebellion is often caused because of offenses growing into bitterness. Take some time with your son or daughter and see if you can resolve a hurt. Try taking that troubled son or daughter out to lunch, and gently visiting with them until they are able to trust you. Then they may be able to relate the memories of a problem. Apologize, ask forgiveness and make any amends possible. In the future, do your best to keep all promises you make.

### ***YOUR WORDS***

*Stand upon your word and honor,*

*Always keep your promise true;*

*For your word is more than speaking;  
Yes, my friend, your word is you.*

*Guard your words with zeal and favor.  
Be not rash or speak in haste.  
Do not speak beyond your power,  
Lest your words should go to waste.*

*So this one thing do remember,  
That your word, my friend, is you;  
When you vow or make a promise,  
Always strive to make it true.*

*A portion of —“**Your Words**” —by Ulysses Phillips*

*(Ulysses Phillips, Inspiring Poems and Songs.  
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## *Chapter Twenty-Six*

### **GOD HEARS OUR CRY**

**“In my distress I called unto the LORD, and...he heard my voice...and my cry came...unto his ears.” –Psalms 18:6**

**D**o you sometimes feel the things you value most are being ripped away leaving your heart torn and bleeding? You feel hurt and angry, and you cry till you have no more strength to cry. There have been several times in my life when I had spells of crying in this way because of conditions in my family that I could not change. Please don't give up in despair. God is on His throne and He answers prayer.

In 1 Samuel, chapters 28-30, we read the account of David living among the Philistines during a time when he was hiding from the wrath of King Saul. The Philistines were Israel's worst enemies; however, Achish their King, asked David to be his body-guard. Later, when they were fighting against Israel, the Philistine lords persuaded King Achish to send David and his men back home. The leaders thought that perhaps in the heat of the battle David might turn against the Philistines, in hopes that it would appease King Saul's wrath.

Three days later, when David and his men finally arrived back to their homes in Ziklag, they found nothing but the smoldering remains of their homes. Enemies had taken their wives and children captives and set their homes on fire. Each of those strong, robust soldiers sat

down and cried and cried and cried. They moaned “until they had no more power to weep.”

Just like these fathers, many exhausted parents are weeping for their children today. They watch anxiously as a son or a daughter gets involved in self-destructive activities while passing up golden opportunities to be saved, educated, and established in adult life. Distressed mothers wringing their hands while daughters, given to sensuality, invite immorality into their lives. Fathers likewise bow their heads in shame because of the choices their sons are making.

Does it look as if what you have worked for so long is being hopelessly destroyed? Are those years of careful training, consistent prayer, and your Christian example being burned to ashes by ungodly philosophies? Does the conscience of your sons and daughters, once so easily pricked by the Holy Spirit, seem hard as steel? How about all those appropriate behavior patterns you thought were programmed into your child’s mind? Are the aspirations you had for your precious son or daughter being consumed by the love of worldly pleasures that have no lasting value? Do you sometimes weep until you have no more strength, as David and his men did?

In his anguish, David sought the Lord by going to the man of God. He followed the instructions given to him, and he and his men were able to rescue every man’s family and cattle. Then David praised God, saying, “In my distress I cried unto the Lord, and he heard me” (Psalms 120:1).

Let us look at this story from another angle. To protect himself from King Saul, David was living in enemy territory among sensual heathen idol worshippers. Although David did not bow to their idols nor follow their sensual life style, he was willing to conform to the desires of King Achish and go to battle against his own people.

Perhaps when we see our training going up in smoke it might be helpful to look within and see if maybe we, too, have changed. Turn on the search light and ask yourself these questions: Are my priorities the same, or has the spirit of this world rearranged my values? Is my conscience as keen to the Holy Spirit as it once was? Have the cares of

life crowded out my time spent in God's Word? Is the tenderness and respect for my spouse the same as in years past? Have I submitted to peer pressure? Have worldly promotions dampened my fervent love for God?

Let's all ask ourselves, "Am I innocently helping the enemy who is leading my child astray? Am I in some way enabling my child to continue an ungodly lifestyle?"

Other questions to ask ourselves are: "Am I away from my home working or helping others when I should be at home watching out and caring for my family? Am I robbing my children of my love and influence by not being with them more? What is most important? Which projects are a God-given responsibility, and which are just my own chosen activities?" Answering these questions honestly and repenting of any mistakes may help a parent turn these conditions around.

We may be like David, a man or woman "after God's own heart." And just as David failed, we may have failed in some areas. If you feel you have made mistakes, then do as David did. Repent and cry out to the Lord until there is no more strength to cry; then follow God's instruction. God reacts positively to repentant prayers and obedience.

In Luke 18, Jesus told about a hard-driving, inconsiderate judge who helped a poor widow, only because she continually and persistently begged him. At the end of the story, Jesus added, "And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily." So, we have our promise straight from the Word of God; and not only do we have that one, but a multitude of others.

Here are a few:

- 1. "Thus saith the LORD . . . They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured [rebelled] shall learn doctrine" (Isaiah 29:22-24).
- 2. "He hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; . . . to comfort all that mourn;

... to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness..." (Isaiah 61:1-3).

- 3. "Thus saith the LORD; Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears: for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the LORD; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy. And there is hope in thine end, saith the LORD, that thy children shall come again..." (Jeremiah 31:16-17).
- 4. In the tenth chapter of Ezra we have the account of the Israelites, who repented of their transgressions and found God's favor again. Although it was a grievous sin, and many were guilty, yet in verse two we read, "We have transgressed against our God ... yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing."
- 5. Jesus said in Matthew 18:18-20, "Again, I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

Dear parents, take courage. God is on his throne and Jesus is also interceding for us and our children. He has given us power to bind spirits that have our children bound. He has also promised to be wherever two or three are gathered in His name. Where He is, there is power for deliverance. Let us meet together in twos or threes and pray for our children. There is victory in Jesus' name.

## *Chapter Twenty-Seven*

### **YOKED TOGETHER WITH CHRIST**

**“Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” –Matthew 11:28-30**

A yoke is a piece of equipment used to connect two things so a task can be done. Christ is saying to us, “Come under My yoke. Connect with Me and I will help you in your relationships, on the job, with your children, in your education, and in all areas of your life. I will carry most of the load. Together we can do impossible things.”

A few days before his crucifixion Christ said to his followers “Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high” (Luke 24:49b). After he was crucified and resurrected, he met with many disciples in Jerusalem. Just before he ascended, He told them again, “Wait for the promise of the Father...” (Acts 1:4). Until Christ’s disciples were yoked together with Him through receiving of the Holy Spirit, they were not equipped to go into the world and preach the Gospel as Christ had commanded them.

Before receiving the Holy Spirit, Peter said to Jesus, “I will lay down my life for thy sake” (John 13:37). However, he failed miserably, and instead of standing up for Christ, he denied Him three times. After he was yoked to Christ through the Holy Spirit, he preached confidently to an enormous crowd. Later when authorities who could have killed him told him to stop talking about Jesus, Peter answered boldly,

“We ought to obey God rather than man” (Acts 5:29). What a difference in Peter after he yoked up with Christ through the infilling of the Holy Spirit!

We have many biblical and historical examples of God helping people after they yoked themselves up with Him. Consider:

Fearful Gideon yoked up with God before he attempted the work that God had laid out for him, and he successfully delivered the Israelites from the Midianites, who had oppressed his nation seven years. Read about it in Judges chapters 6-7.

Hezekiah knew his army was no match for the Assyrian army that had come to conquer his nation, so he went into the house of the Lord and yoked himself to God in prayer. God then sent a death angel among the Assyrian soldiers. In the morning they found 185,000 dead men in the camp. (2 Kings chapters 18 and 19).

Joseph was only 17 when he was sold as a slave into Egypt. Alone in a heathen land, he could have taken up the lifestyle of his peers. Instead, he obeyed the commandments of God. Thirteen years later, at age thirty, he was promoted to Prime Minister of Egypt. He kept himself yoked together with God; consequently saving the Egyptians and his own family from death. (Genesis 37-50).

David was another young man who yoked up with God at an early age. He was but a boy when he battled the giant, Goliath. David did not trust his own ability to kill Goliath; nor had he trusted his own strength to kill the bear or the lion that he had killed in the field while caring for his father’s sheep. David had strength because he was yoked together with God. (1 Samuel 17).

Josiah became king at age eight, and “he did right in the sight of the Lord.” At the age of 16 he began earnestly seeking God’s will for his nation. Four years later, with his plans in place for restoration, he began purging Israel of evil. Yoked together with God, Josiah “took away all the abominations out of all the countries that pertained to ... Israel, and made all that were present in Israel ... serve the Lord their God” (2 Chronicles 34:33).

Did you ever wonder why God blessed our nation so abundantly in

its early years? It was because our leaders kept our nation connected to God's Word. In those years, the Bible and the New England Primer were the only books in some schools. Almost every school used them as regular textbooks until 1900.

The New England Primer is saturated with Bible stories, verses, questions, and answers about the Bible's meaning. It contains prayers, the Ten Commandments, old-fashioned Christian ethics, and other commandments of God. Instead of the students learning, "A as in apple, B as in boy, C as in cat," they learned, "A—A wise son maketh a glad father, but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother. B— Better is little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble therewith. C— Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. D—Do not this abominable thing which I hate, saith the LORD ... L—Liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire."

Men yoked together with Wisdom from God's Word were capable of making wise decisions for our nation. Our founding fathers believed it was very important that men have a good knowledge of the Bible. Benjamin Franklin said, "My advice to a young man would be to create a firm belief in the Word of God." When Patrick Henry was near death, he laid his hand upon the Bible and passionately declared: "Here is a book, the Bible, worth more than all the others that were ever printed."

Benjamin Rush, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, father of public schools, textbook author, doctor, etc., said, "The Bible should be read in our schools in preference to all other books .... By removing the Bible from schools we would be wasting so much time and money in punishing criminals and so little pains to prevent crime. Take the Bible out of our schools and there would be an explosion in crime. This divine book above all others favors the equality of mankind, the respect of just laws, and those sober and frugal virtues that constants [steadies] the soul of our government."

John Adams, our second president, affirmed that for our nation to succeed its people must yoke up with Bible teachings. He said, "Let ministers and philosophers, statesmen, and patriots, unite their

endeavors to renovate the age by impressing the minds of men with the importance of educating their little boys and girls .... How can we continue an independent nation unless the general principles of Christianity are taught to our children? We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion. Our constitution was made only for a moral and religious people, it is wholly inadequate to govern any other.”

Abraham Lincoln said, “The philosophy of the classroom in one generation will be the philosophy of the government in the next generation.” (Quotes from *The American Patriot's Bible*).

Our nation has been falling since people decided that Bible standards were a burden instead of a blessing. Somewhere in the years since our founding Fathers, this nation has forgotten that when yoked with God, He carries the bigger part of the load.

Jesus is still inviting us to “Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto you souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” For the sake of our families, our cities, and our nation, let us take up again the yoke of Jesus, and seek to be continually guided by the Holy Spirit.

## *Chapter Twenty-Eight*

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### **WILL YOUR CHILDREN SURVIVE THE BLIZZARD**

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**“Love not the world...If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” –1 John 2:15**

**B**lizzards often completely paralyze any activities in an area, sometimes causing death to those caught without warm shelter or food. In 1940, when I was a little girl living in Oklahoma City, 144 people froze to death when a cold, Arctic front swept in. In 1958, there were 171 deaths in the Northeast; then years later in the same area, 100 died in a 1996 storm. New York lost 400 people to a blizzard in 1988. In 1993, another Eastern area of the country lost 200 people. Many people in the United States have died from blizzards, but in Europe, 1000 people died in only one blizzard.

A blizzard occurs when masses of cold, polar air move out of the arctic regions and into the Temperate Zone. When the polar air masses meet moist warm air masses coming from the tropics, cold fronts form, separating the two kinds of air masses. Heavy snow falls along this cold front, and high winds blow around the low-pressure area where the two air masses collide. People often lose their lives during blizzards because they get so cold that hypothermia sets in. A person then becomes confused and will actually lay down in sub-zero weather and go to sleep. Hypothermia is the greatest danger of being out in a blizzard.

A spiritual blizzard is blowing across the Church today. The chilling spirits of Satan have moved into the temperate regions of Christendom and are paralyzing many once-dedicated believers. An adult or a child can get so busy with earthly things, that their minds become confused. Thinking they are okay, they give up the fight against the onslaught of Satan, and die spiritually.

Revelation 20:7-9 tells us, "... Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations ... and they compassed the camp of the saints...." Also, chapter 9 tells us that the bottomless pit was opened and spirits would come out that were commanded to hurt all men which had not the seal of God on their foreheads. These prophecies of the "end time" are surely being realized today. Millions of seductive spirits are swarming out of the bottomless pit and cooling down those who were once on fire for God. And God said, "So then because thou art lukewarm, ... I will spew thee out of my mouth" (Revelation 3:16). I wonder how many folks will be rejected and eventually die in this awful spiritual blizzard? Then what will happen to the children of those who have grown cold and have been spewed out?

Many people have lost their passionate relationship with Jesus in this spiritual storm because they did not suspect its force nor the direction from which it came. Weather forecasters can usually tell when a blizzard is coming, but occasionally the blizzard will change direction and strike cities unaware. This spiritual blizzard is much the same. There are subtle, intangible, and deceptive evil forces behind those powers that cause the cooling off. The impact of that spiritual force is far greater than we suspect. Satan is shrewd, and he changes his tactics often and deceives many. Every person must be on guard and be skillful in spiritual warfare to be able to detect the subtle attacks. As recorded in church history, we find that even the very elect were deceived. Lord, help us to be seeking God, and watchful to know when and how Satan is working!

The subtle power of this blizzard is similar to a whirlpool. If one is not careful, the suction of this world will take him under while actively struggling against it. Notice that people who have struggled to keep

free from covetousness eventually get pulled under by an undetected power stronger than they. Then they become victims, neglecting their spiritual life and the training of their children. Satan magnetizes a parent in different ways. He presents doubts and offenses, unforgiveness, a need for the children's education, entertainment, and love of the world, which suck them into the whirlpool and down they go.

A person can get trapped in the cares of this life. Houses, cars, food and clothing are necessary and demand attention, but Jesus said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all *these things* will be added unto you" (Matthew 6:24-34). Jesus teaches that He feeds the birds of the air, and that we are worth much more than they. Yet judging by the anxieties people experience, it seems that God cares for the birds, but not for them.

Jesus warns in Luke 17:26-30 that as it was in the days of Noah and in the days of Lot, so shall it be in the last days. What was happening then? They were eating, drinking, marrying, buying, selling, and building. What are we doing today? One would think that since food and shelter are more easily obtained than in years past, we would be more carefree about them; but sadly, we are not. Our conversation shows that the devil's snowflakes of materialism are flurrying through our minds (Matthew. 12:34). Listen to the conversation the next time you are among a group of Christians. What are they talking about? Food. Clothing. Home improvement. Vehicles. Out of the abundance of the heart they are speaking. Jesus said, "After all these things do the Gentiles seek." Judging by our conversations, will our children judge us to be unbelievers or Christians?

The force of Satan's subtle, demonic power is blasting at every soul. He is influencing believers through the desires of the flesh that are not sinful, such as food and shelter. Satan is using these things to lure good Christian families into loving the world more than loving God. I John 2:15-16, says, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust [desires] of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is

of the world.” Oh, if parents who love good things of the world could only see the damage it does to their children, they would begin to abhor the temporal and invest more in the eternal. “Luxuries” to this generation will be necessities to the next, and these insatiable, fleshly desires could easily blind one to true spiritual riches. Will these children survive the force of the storm and arrive safely at their eternal end?

During storms of physical persecution, Christians go through all sorts of pressures, yet they stay true to God. However, the power of materialism is so different that it is hard to distinguish when “things” are a blessing from God, and when they are a curse. Planting and building, buying and selling are perfectly legitimate and even beneficial, but that power presses upon men today until they lose their spiritual direction and become confused; eventually, may lose their way. Notice how Christians are feverishly making business deals. They are hurrying here and there doing business, talking on the phone in every place and during all hours of the day and night. Their affections are buried under materialism and their spirits remain so lean that they could crumble under the slightest pressure.

Men talk about being caught in the rat race. The race for what? To accumulate more temporal goods? Isn't it to enjoy as much of the world as possible? If we want to enjoy the world it is because we love the world. In the good old days, when it was really hard to earn enough to supply a family's needs; a man would work at one vocation and spend his evenings at home with his family. Today fathers are working two jobs, or both mother and father are working, leaving little time for teaching God's Word to their children. Some entrepreneurs have their fingers in several businesses and they are caught up in a marketing maelstrom that is whirling them madly around like a caged rat on a treadmill.

This is not God's plan for his people. God says, “Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God” (Colossians 3:2-3). Are your children convinced that you are dead to the things of the world? When do they

see your eyes sparkle? Is it when you hear God's Word, or when you've purchased something at a terrific bargain?

A storm has formed under the dictates of Satan and has moved out over the church world. Let us say, "No" to acquiring better "things." Let's take shelter and security in God's Word, for that is the only way to protect our families and ourselves through this terrible blizzard. It is the only way to avoid being paralyzed by Satan's power against Christians. Will your children survive?

## *Chapter Twenty-Nine*

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# **GAINING RESPECT FROM TEENAGERS**

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**“Her children arise up, and call her blessed;” –Proverbs 31:28**

*W*ouldn't you love to hear your children blessing you? Then let's start today to gain our sons' and daughters' respect so they will have a desire to bless us. King Solomon, the author of The Book of Proverbs, says that the children of a virtuous woman will arise up and call her “blessed.”

In today's society, we are being bombarded on every side by the subtle message that parents and children dislike each other. It is one of the Devil's master plans for destroying families. Subtly, parents are depicted as mistreating poor, innocent children or in some cases abusing harmless little children. I know real child abuse exists, but I also believe that these subtle messages have caused many noble parents to be far too indulgent with their children.

Respect is earned. To earn complete respect, a parent must be wholly obedient to Christ and respect all authorities in his or her own life. If you have a spirit of rebellion (which you may not realize), it will surely affect your children. Your children may conform to your wishes and show outward obedience, just as you attend church and conform to its standards. But don't expect your children to respect your convictions unless you are totally submissive to God.

Sometimes we as parents are responsible for rebellion, if it does develop, because we did not earn our children's respect in formative years. It may have been through lack of wisdom, fear, neglect, or other reasons. Whatever the reason, let us repent before God for allowing it, and start today to cultivate respect in our sons and daughters. The idea that children will bless their parents is strange to most people. Even those who believe God's Word, when faced with angry, disobedient teen-agers, often doubt that child will ever bless them.

Let's talk about some ways that will aid in earning our children's respect:

- 1. Repent of any mistakes; then let your children see that you love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength by living His principles and by praying and reading God's Word every day.
- 2. The greatest love we can give to our children is to connect them to God's wisdom. Pass God's wisdom on by teaching "line upon line; here a little and there a little" (Isaiah 28:13). This is done by interjecting God's principles and His actual words into daily conversation, and by following His instructions in daily choices. Remember, "more is caught than taught." If a parent keeps a repentant attitude and follows God diligently, God will help your rebellious teens to begin respecting you.
- 3. Your children's interests may feel unimportant to you, so counter that by putting aside some of your duties and doing something they like to do. Sacrifice your desires for theirs. Do anything they want to do—play, draw, run, sing, or share memories and laugh together.
- 4. Show genuine interest in their interests.
- 5. When they test you, be strong to stand by rules and Christian principles already established in your home. Stand together with your spouse when children try to manipulate between the two of you. If your children use peer pressure

to get permission to do what they shouldn't do, stand by your convictions. They may get angry, but will respect you later.

- 6. A mother will gain much respect when the children see her respecting and obeying her husband when it is difficult to do so.
- 7. Be your child's friend, but not his chum. Teens have many questions about life. Try carefully to get them to open up and talk. Then listen prudently. After you have gained their trust, give suggestions, if appropriate.
- 8. In most cases, defending your child when others question his behavior will cause him to disrespect you. At such times we must remember that every person is born with a self-defensive nature. Defending him if he is lying in self-defense (which you do not know) may add more guilt. He may think you not wise if you believe him, and unconsciously blame you for the misery. It is best to take time to explain your doubt, give needed instructions, and pray with the child to relieve the guilt. This may anger the child but it will gain you more respect. Our goal is to be an eternal help for our children, not just a quick fix for present problems.
- 9. Let them see you spending your time wisely and cheerfully sacrificing for others. In this way they will see that you also "...love thy neighbor as thyself." (Matthew. 22:37-39). When our daughter, Rosa, was ten months old, she drank one can of evaporated milk every day. We had just two cans, and no money to buy more, when James discovered a Mexican baby, crying of hunger, whose parents had no milk nor money. He gave one can to the baby's mother. That night, God sent Bro. Harland Smith to our house with a bag of groceries. Cans of evaporated milk were in the bag! Your sons or daughters will respect you because of what you do.

A Christian pastor had three sons. He was very occupied in his ministry—preaching, visiting the sick and those in prison, and doing other duties that fall on a pastor. The oldest son became a devoted Christian, but after his marriage he asked his parents to visit his wife sparingly and never invite her to their church. The second son, who also had not had his emotional needs met at home, found companionship among his peers, and as a result, fell into sinful habits. By the time the third son was born, the father had learned to slow down and had begun to practice some of the above methods of gaining respect. The third son respected his father almost to the point of idolizing him. What a difference gaining respect made in the lives of these sons!

Be a friend to your child, and train him to be a friend to Jesus. Christ was His disciples' best friend. He imparted His wisdom that prepared them to continue following God after He was gone. If a parent keeps an humble, repentant attitude and follows God diligently, God will change rebellious children into respectful, responsible ones. It may take years; especially after your child has had to deal with a self-willed child of his own. We are preparing our children for eternal life. Be a careful example of how to live, and they will bless you as Solomon blessed his mother. Proverbs 31:28, "Her children arise up, and call her blessed." Believe your children want to bless you and let your conduct excite that kind of love in their hearts.

## *Chapter Thirty*

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### **TOO MUCH FOOD AND TIME: A SIN OF SODOM**

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**“Behold this was the iniquity of...Sodom, pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness...neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me: therefore I took them away as I saw good.”**

**—Ezekiel 16:49-50**

**D**o you wonder why our founding fathers had fewer moral concerns in society? There were many reasons: the most important was that the Bible was taught in homes and schools as the rule-book for life. Another important reason could be that children were very busy; even small children had to work to help their family survive. Are we permitting our children to follow a path to Sodom’s wickedness when we supply an abundance of delicious food and allow them hours of idle time?

My parents often quoted the old saying, “An idle mind is the devil’s workshop.” Furthermore, hard times forced them to keep us busy. We had animals to care for—a dog and cat, chickens, rabbits, pigs, turkeys, goats, a cow and a horse, and sometimes ducks. We cooked and heated our home using wood. The logs had to be sawed into fifteen-inch pieces with a cross-cut saw. Those portions had to be split into small pieces, then carried inside. In summer we had a big garden to tend. In the fall we harvested and preserved garden produce and bushels of fruit and vegetables we bought from produce farms nearby. Each year we home-processed animals: about 100 chickens, a dozen rabbits, a pig and sometimes a goat. All the picking, cleaning

and processing took weeks. The devil had little time to make a workshop in our busy minds. We worked and played outside until dark. Then we had inside chores and homework to do.

Today very few children have lengthy, hard chores to keep them busy. Parents have to make a special effort to see that their children learn responsibility and how to work. Every child should have duties equal to his or her ability. Even small children should be responsible for keeping themselves and their rooms clean, doing homework, and helping with meals and other family chores. By the time they are young adults, they should be earning money and paying for some of their clothes, their car, car insurance, gas and repairs, unless their time schedule is full of very rigid studying. Each person has natural desires to please the flesh, and when children have a lot of free time, the devil has a better chance to set up his workshop in their minds. When both mind and body are busy with useful work, evil temptations cannot enter so quickly.

Mothers, I beg you to keep your children occupied with constructive projects: cleaning, sewing, music lessons, art projects, woodwork or maintenance of mechanical things. When children have little to do, they have more time to experiment with sin. Parents are, in essence, giving their children “fullness of bread and abundance of idleness”—the very things that caused Sodom to decline. A child who is kept busy working or physically playing will be tired at night. A tired child will not be staying awake probing the Internet, playing computer games, or doing things that appeal to the flesh.

If you hear a child say, “I’m bored,” it is time to find projects for him or her to do. If nothing you suggest excites his interest, then have him or her help you, and force him to stay with the job until it is done. Start this training when the child is small. It is very difficult to get an older child (six and up) to work after they have spent six years pleasing themselves.

Here are some suggestions for activities:

- 1. Whenever possible have a picnic lunch in your yard with

your children. They will spend a lot of time setting up a table, finding seats, and carrying out the dishes and food; also putting things away after eating.

- 2. Read to them, or let them listen to character-building or Bible stories while traveling, when they lie down for naps, or while going to sleep at night. Listening encourages a child to be still and create images in his or her mind. The mind is robbed of this creativity while watching motion pictures, because the images are already formed. For this reason, educational videos, although very profitable, should be limited.
- 3. Whenever a child brings in an insect, flower, or reptile, stop (if possible), and study facts about it.
- 4. Let them work in the kitchen beside you. Allow them to practice cooking skills with you. My friend, who had many foster children, began teaching them to cook when they turned five. Their first project was their own birthday cake. By age eight, my children could cook simple meals and clean up the kitchen alone.
- 5. Play educational games: Uno (small children learn colors and numbers), Memory, Monopoly (children learn how to use money), checkers (they learn strategy and reasoning). Make games matching a foreign word with its English equal or Roman numerals to Arabic numbers; addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division facts with correct answers; geometric symbols to their written names, etc. Play these as Memory is played.
- 6. Each of my girls sewed a dress for themselves at age ten or eleven. They had already sewed several smaller items. Every girl should learn to sew. There are always mending projects, alternations, and special garments to be made. Who knows? God may send them to a poverty-stricken place where they will need to make or remake clothes for the needy.

- 7. Make room for a small garden, even if it is in pots. Home-grown and home-preserved foods make wonderful gifts.
- 8. Every child should learn to preserve foods by drying, freezing, or canning.
- 9. Teach your children how to arrange flowers. It is fun for them to take their bouquets to people when visiting. Let them buy vases, baskets, and artificial flowers at garage sales and thrift stores.
- 10. Give them opportunities to earn their own money or to do things for others.
- 11. Children can keep their home lawn presentable. Learning how to care for a yard might develop into jobs for earning money.
- 12. Girls can do baby-sitting in your home or in the homes of trustworthy friends.

Doing these things will help develop confidence, a good self-image and an excellent work ethic. It will also curtail the natural selfish desires of the flesh. The self-confidence, approval, money or other rewards earned from staying busy will help children get a handle on life. Children who have learned to take responsibility in their own homes will be far ahead of their peers who have not learned these disciplines.

God help us to save ourselves and our families from Sodom's sin, "fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness." The sacrifices parents make so that children can have or do what they want could be propelling them toward tragedy. Let us not allow our children to grow up in the sins of Sodom.

## Chapter Thirty-One

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### NOT HELPING THE POOR

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**“Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. The Lord will preserve him, and keep him alive; and he shall be blessed upon the earth: ... The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.” –Psalms 41:1**

Christians in our country are living a standard better than that of kings in former ages, while our brethren in some countries are barely surviving in miserable circumstances. Apostle Paul said, “As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Galatians 6:10).

There is a mindset in the world that ten percent of one’s income belongs to God; the rest is for whoever earned it. Jesus taught, “We are bought with a price.” The reality is that Christ owns us, and everything we have belongs to Him. If they would live a simpler lifestyle, some might be able to live on half of what they are earning. Or maybe some could give sixty or seventy percent and live on what is left. The widow in Mark 12:44 gave “all her living.” Although the others gave larger quantities, Jesus said that she gave *more* than they all.

God’s love causes a Christian to love helping the poor, but fear of a possible future need and the demanding lifestyle of our culture may cause parents to not listen to the voice of conscience when it comes to giving. Or they may compare themselves to others who don’t help the poor. This attitude could be propelling their children toward a tragedy, because Satan may use it to harden the tender hearts of their children.

It is better to do God's will, no matter how difficult. The Israelites let fear keep them out of the beautiful, fruitful Canaan land. Their children had to suffer the hardships of living in the wilderness for years and years until all the adults had died. Then the children went fearlessly into the gracious land God had prepared for them years before (Numbers 13:25-14:11). Will our children suffer because of our lack of faith? God may have something beautiful in the future for us if we throw ourselves out on faith and give generously to the poor.

Here is my experience. One time I gave to the poor \$200 that I needed. A few days later, someone gave me a check for the same amount. Not many days afterwards, another person gave my husband a check for \$250. At different times throughout my life, I have kept an account of what we had given; then recorded the gifts given to us the following weeks afterward. Many, many times, God returned *more than double* what we had given. Jesus said, "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again" (Luke 6:38). If we give little, the return is little. If we give abundantly, God gives back abundantly. "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again" (Proverbs 19:17).

The Bible makes many more promises to those who help the poor. Consider the promise at the beginning of Psalms 41. According to the promise, those who give will be delivered in time of trouble! They are promised strength, long life, health, and comfort in sickness.

Would you like to have a good attitude? Here is how: "He that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he" (Proverbs 14:21b).

Want all your needs supplied? "He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack: but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse" (Proverbs 28:27).

Would you like to be always flourishing? God says we can be if we keep the fast for the poor that He spoke about in Isaiah 58:6-11. "Is not this the fast that I have chosen? ... to deal thy bread to the hungry, and

that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; ... And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; ... the Lord shall guide thee continually ...” What an awesome reward!

Would you like for God to bless all your works? “ ... Thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother: But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need ... for this thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou putteth thine hand unto” (Deuteronomy 15:7-10).

John the Baptist also included helping the poor when he told the people what God wanted them to do. John said, “He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise” (Luke 3:11). Since Jesus said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive,” and we have many good promises of receiving from our heavenly Father when we give, I hope we will all pledge to extend more help to the needy around us. Apostle James puts a clincher on these thoughts by telling us, “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit [help] the fatherless and widows in their affliction and to keep himself unspotted from the world” (James 1:27).

We can cling to our finances and let our poor brethren go hungry, and both we and our children will miss the many blessings God has promised. Or we can fall on our faces before God and ask Him to reveal to us His will for our family. Let’s go together with our sons and daughters into the icy waters of self-denial and give more. Will our families escape the wrath of God if we do not share our abundance with our poor brethren? “As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them of the household of faith.” We have an abundance of almost everything; shouldn’t we give and give and give?

## *Chapter Thirty-Two*

### **BEING A LIGHTHOUSE**

**“Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.” –Matthew 5:14**

Lighthouses are constructed to illuminate the area around a harbor so the ship’s captain can dock safely. God is calling every parent to be a lighthouse to their children, so each child can see clearly how to safely enter heaven’s harbor. As children navigate through life, they will be threatened by many dangers. They will face spiritual, physical, financial, and emotional storms. They may traverse seas of hopelessness, be swamped with financial obstacles, or have to withstand the turbulence of false doctrines.

Years ago, before electronic navigation was highly developed, an actual flame burning inside a structure shone out into the darkness. This flame was magnified numerous times by reflectors and multiple powerful lenses. The flame and lenses were located very high near the top of the tall lighthouse. It was an arduous job to keep it fueled, also keeping the many huge reflectors and lenses free from soot demanded relentless attention.

It also takes relentless effort to keep our life clean so Christ’s light shines through to our children. Jesus is the Master Lighthouse. He is the flame that will shine from within the parent. But fear of man, pride

of life, cares of life, an uncontrolled temperament and numerous other daily obstacles can cause smudges that hinder the reflection of Christ's light. If Satan cannot hinder our example by getting us smudged up with things of the world, he will get us down under accusation and depression. This will also keep Christ's light from shining through. Let us be honest with ourselves and seek God to keep our lives free from anything that would hinder Christ's light from illuminating the children. After we have done all we can to light their lives, we must also trust His power, to protect our children through storms of temptations.

As thousands of lives have been saved because of the light from lighthouses, the reflection of Jesus's light through parents has helped thousands of children to avoid hidden dangers and enter into Heaven's harbor. Satan, the prince of the world, fights relentlessly against each vessel. He has developed strategies that far surpass the human mind. However, God has harbors of safety where our children's ships can find some refuge. Here are some beacons of light that will help young people navigate through the great storms, hurricanes, and typhoons that pound upon the face of the water through which they are traveling.

- 1. A good knowledge of God's Word
- 2. Having faith in God through obedience to Him
- 3. Enough self-control to be able to submit to others
- 4. Having a balanced amount of self-worth
- 5. Knowing they are loved and important to family
- 6. Being willing to love and sacrifice for others
- 7. Being organized with a good work principle

Satan fights to keep parents from establishing these principles within the character of their children. Then he fights to keep the children from listening to the inner voice of their conscience. However, "Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world." There is much evidence that many a young person has been saved from disaster because a Bible memory verse came to their mind during a temptation. A good job has been saved because of honest habits or good work

ethic. Having faith has helped many a young person through spiritual tempests. Having self-control has mended many a marriage breaking apart. Therefore, being a lighthouse that reflects Christ's light throughout your children's entire life is very important.

Will you be a lighthouse for Christ?

## *Chapter Thirty-Three*

### **GOD'S PROMISES**

*H*ere are some promises God has given me at different times when I was praying for my children. I hope they are an encouragement to you.

When Satan brings a flood of discouragement, quote these promises from God's Word to him. By believing these promises we are cleaning away doubting smudges from our lighthouse lens allowing your children and others to see Christ's light of hope.

- 1. "Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart" (Psalm 37:4).
- 2. "Therefore fear thou not ... neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity" (Jeremiah 30:10).
- 3. "...Jacob shall not then be ashamed ... [with fear and disappointment because of his children] ... they will revere the Holy one ... and reverently fear the God of Israel. Those who err in spirit will come to understanding, and those who murmured [discontentedly] will accept instruction" (Isaiah 29:22-24, *Amplified Bible*).

- 4. “But thus saith the LORD, ... I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children” (Isaiah 49:25).
- 5. “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end” (Jeremiah 29:11).
- 6. “The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee” (Psalm 102:28).
- 7. “... I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring” (Isaiah 44:3).
- 8. “...he will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee: he will also bless the fruit of thy womb... (Deuteronomy 7:13).
- 9. “The just man walketh in his integrity: his children are blessed after him” (Proverbs 20:7).
- 10. “Behold, I will do a new thing...I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert” (Isaiah 43:19).
- 11. “When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee” (Isaiah 43:2).
- 12. “As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of my mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever” (Isaiah 59:21).
- 13. “Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring your seed from the east. and gather thee from the west” (Isaiah 43:5).

Be encouraged. “When you have done your best, let Jesus do the rest.” Satan always comes to steal, kill, and destroy. But God’s Words

are life. Claim these true promises of hope in times of sadness, and Christ's light will shine from within.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Charlotte's ability to write comes from God, the Master Author. Born dyslectic, she credits her success in school to her mother and siblings reading to her, and to having learned during family worship to listen prudently.

When eight years old, Charlotte came to Jesus while kneeling beside her mother's bed. She was a very curious, adventurous child, but her father's strict discipline kept her from going in the evil way. Also the family practice of singing, reading the Bible and praying together every evening kept her with a good relationship with Christ.

Charlotte has been a lifelong student of child training and family life, continually researching, writing, and observing the outcome of children from different methods of parenting.





## ALSO BY CHARLOTTE HUSKEY

1. *Mabel a Demonstration of the Power of God's Word.*

2. *A Faithful Father*; a sequel to *Mabel*

3. *How Big is God?*

4. *Growing Up with God in the Valley*, a sequel to

*How Big is God?*

Books translated into Spanish:

5. *Mabel Una Demostración del Poder de Dios*

6. *¡Que Tan Grande es Dios!*

