

PART NINE

YOU AND YOUR FAMILY

Children are a sacred trust, an honor in the home, a grave responsibility before God. They are gifts from Him, placed in our care for a few short years. Our duties are to help them to grow up with healthy physical bodies (as much as is in our power); with well-trained minds; and with knowledge of right and wrong, but preferring right; with teaching from babyhood about God and their proper relationship to Him. A big order? Yes, but God has furnished much help in His Word, and the Christian couple have within them that gift of the Holy Spirit which is our guide in spiritual matters. It is a job well worth study and diligent application on the parent's part. There are many good publications, by reliable authors, to be had for helps for even the most inexperienced young couples who are starting their families. Never to be minimized is the sage counsel of older people who have accomplished the task of rearing a family before.

In Psalms 127:3-5 we read children are a heritage of the Lord, a defense for their parents, a source of happiness, a recommendation to their enemies. Pretty wonderful, isn't that?

According to the Bible, there is a definite relationship established in the home. Going back to 1 Cor. 11:3 we found God, Christ, father, mother to be the order of authority. Subject to parents are the children, Eph. 6:1-3. Christ set the perfect example for he was subject to his earthly parents as a child in Luke 2:51. The Ten Commandments contain the same teaching in Ex. 20:12. Solomon included obedience to parents in Prov. 23:22.

Parents do wrong if they leave obedience to the choice of the child. One of the most important teachings it is possible for parents to give their children is "to obey." Obedience must begin before a child is a year old, and continue as long as the child lives at home. The present teaching of "self-government" of a child is quite prevalent - and the resulting juvenile delinquency is very prevalent, also. Mothers, listen to Solomon in Prov. 29:15. Do you want your child to bring you shame? Insure his obedience, and give him wisdom. Let your discipline begin when he is young, for Solomon again says in Prov. 22:6, a child when properly trained will be walking the same way when he is old. Children are without wisdom and it is the parent's obligation, their duty to the little ones, to change their childish foolishness to wisdom, Prov. 22:15. Believe me, "the rod" is only one part of the process of teaching children, and should be used with wisdom - use it seldom, but thoroughly. Never use it in anger. Be sure the child knows why he is corrected. After punishment, hush his crying, take him in your lap and talk things over again. He will love you more than before. Listen to the words of a little first grader, "Mommie, I don't think Al's Mommie loves him. She never spanks him when he's naughty."

Do your children know your disciplining them is part of your obedience to God? Do you tell them so? Did you ever put your crying child in your lap after a thorough spanking, kiss him and cry with him that he may know his disobedience has hurt you, too? So that the children of today who are the church of tomorrow may know how to love their children

even as they discipline them. Oh, the shame of slapping, threatening, yelling, undisciplined, unloving parents. They plainly disobey God who said, "Provoke not your children to wrath."

Parents, never disagree over discipline of a child in his presence. Nothing is more confusing to him, nor more destructive to his security. Discuss such a thing quietly in the privacy of your own room - alone, you two. Any disagreement between parents should never be aired before children. Mother and Father must share this responsibility. Mother, do not leave punishing for "Father when he gets home." Let a child look for his coming with joy. It is nearly always best to give the chastening at the time of the wrong doing. Father should not leave it all to Mother, either.

Although God has always considered man as the head of the home, and therefore requiring a greater responsibility from him, much is written in the Bible concerning Mothers and children. That is understandable, because during their most important years, children are with their mothers all day. Read Prov. 1:8, 6:20, dealing with the "law of the Mother." (Psa. 113:9) bids us be "joyful" mothers, consider the effects of a mother and a grandmother on a man named Timothy in II Tim. 1:5; two women who were wise enough to begin training the small child in spiritual things. Surely the two women were as delighted with the result as Prov. 29:17 promises they should have been. There are two opposite effects of children on their mothers. Prov. 10:1 "heaviness," versus Prov. 31:28 "blessedness." Which will yours be?

Please consider seriously, and often, the following procedure practiced by Susanna Wesley in England many years ago, remembering that the nature of children does not change with the passing of years. Mode of travel, scientific knowledge, conveniences of home and advancement in industry may be vastly different; but the heart, the will, the development of a child is the same in all generations.

SUSANNA WESLEY

Eighteenth Century

Few women on this earth have ever produced any more profitable sons than did Mrs. Susannah Wesley (Mother of John and Charles Wesley).

They delivered England from Moral and Spiritual Bankruptcy.

She was the mother of nineteen children! Her husband, Samuel, was a well-educated teacher and author. Samuel was her first son; John was her second; Charles, her third son wrote 6,000 songs.

What was her procedure in rearing them? I believe she could teach all of us some practical lessons in child rearing.

She wrote to her son, upon his request, concerning the disciplining of her children. This is what she wrote.

1. When turned a year old (and some before) they were taught to fear the rod and to cry softly. (Fear authority, parents and God; mindful of others.)
2. In order to form the minds of children, the first thing to be done is to conquer their wills! And bring them to an obedient temper! To inform the understanding is a work of time, and must with children, proceed by slow

- degrees as they are able to bear it; but the subjecting of the will is a thing which must be done AT ONCE, THE SOONER THE BETTER!
3. Whenever a child is corrected, it must be conquered! This will not be a hard matter unless the child has been allowed to grow up in self-indulgence.
(Hard to correct a high-school kid if he has never been corrected!
Reform school - first offenders - hardened criminals.)
 4. When the will of the child is totally subdued, and it is brought to revere and stand in awe of the parents, then a great many childish follies and inadvertencies may be passed by.
Should some be overlooked and taken no notice of, and others mildly reprov'd; But no wilful transgression ought to be forgiven children, without chastisement, less or more, as the nature and circumstances of the offense require.
(This is the basis of Law. Punishment should be fitted to the offense!)
 5. I insist on conquering the will of the child early! Why? Because this is the only strong and rational foundation of a religious education, without which both precept and example will be ineffectual!
 6. As self-will is the root of all sins and misery, so whatsoever cherishes this, in children, insures their after-wretchedness and irreligion; whatever checks and mortifies it, promotes their future happiness and piety!
 7. The children of this family are made to understand they may have nothing that they cry for, and instructed to speak up handsomely for what they want!
(Hinting taboo.)

Such was the training Mrs. Wesley gave her children, and it worked. Not one of the nineteen was ever in jail, except for serving God.

The Christian home is not a democracy. It is a monarchy ruled in loving authority by the king (father) first; secondly the queen (mother). Both have only the lasting good of their subjects (children) at heart. This peaceful kingdom can be destroyed by either bullying despots or insubordinate subjects.

In October 1961 I helped in showing some film strips at the *Louise Home* here in Portland. It houses many unwed mothers-to-be, unwanted girls, some without parents, and some who had been taken from home because of unfit parents. The matron described some situations thus: Many came from poor homes - debauched, filthy. Some have never been in church in their lives, never heard the word righteous, never have prayed, never have thought about, or reached out to God. Unguided. Some mothers never come to see their daughters. Some mothers came and girls cry and do not want to see their mothers. Some are from wealthy homes.

It makes no difference what the social strata, godlessness and lack of loving training have the same effect on children. It produced the same result in 1 Samuel 3:11-14 hundreds

of years ago. Even though Eli was a trusted servant of God, he was held accountable for, blamed for, the godliness of his children. Eli had not obeyed Deut. 6:4-9. Will God accept less from parents today after two thousand years of Christian influence? Surely not.

Training children goes farther than discipline and verbal teaching. It requires care, understanding, forethought, patience, and example. Christian families who are faithful in church attendance and whose children are brought up in the church still cannot expect the church to do all the moral and spiritual training of their children. It is the daily task and privilege of the parents.

There is no preacher on earth who can overcome on the Lord's Day, all the other days of parental hypocrisy. Children know. The Christian home should be *The Church* in example seven days a week (II Cor. 3:2) "living epistles known and read of all men." In our homes the sermons are to be acted out; the preaching commended, referred to repeatedly before the children. Home is where children learn their attitudes toward the church, learn to pray for the church, the preacher and be thankful for them. Family prayer time should be a pleasure to the children.

The result of child-training will eventually be tested and proved when he is old enough to be somewhat on his own - in high school, on his first job - by the friends he chooses, by the clothing he, or she chooses when not supervised, or by the actions they go through when with the "gang," by the language they use away from home, etc. Parents, are your examples leading your children right?

HOW TO STAY YOUNG

By Herbert Hoover

The older I grow, the more I appreciate children. Now, as I near my 80th birthday, I salute them again. Children are the most wholesome part of the race, the sweetest, for they are freshest from the hand of God. Whimsical, ingenious, mischievous, they fill the world with joy and good humor. We adults live a life of apprehension as to what they will think of us; a life of defense against their terrifying energy; a life of hard work to live up to their great expectations. We put them to bed with a sense of relief -- and greet them in the morning with delight and anticipation. We envy them the freshness of adventure and the discovery of life. In all these ways, children add to the wonder of being alive. In all these ways, they help to keep us young.

WHY TEENAGERS GET OUT OF HAND

A poll was taken recently by George Gallup on "Why Teenagers Get Out of Hand." The conclusions of the poll were:

1. Parents are not strict enough.
2. Parents do not provide proper home life.
3. Parents are too indulgent - give children too much money.
4. Parents have too many outside interests.
5. Both parents work even though the mother is needed at home.

Read these points over again carefully and note that each reason for the juvenile

problem begins with the parents.

WASHINGTON (INS) - F.B.I.--

Director J. Edgar Hoover bluntly declared Saturday that the "penalty of law" should be imposed on parents who allow their youngsters to become juvenile delinquents.

Hoover said it is his "firm belief" that mothers and fathers should be "made to face legal and financial responsibility for the criminal acts of their children."

The FBI chief said "there certainly in no more basic factor" for the rising tide of juvenile crime "than apathy or failure of parents in properly discharging responsibility to their children."

In an outspoken editorial on delinquent parents in the current FBI "Law Enforcement Bulletin" Hoover said: Without doubt the parent who fails to provide moral training and discipline in the home must assume the major share for juvenile delinquency.

Still this basic failure is appallingly prevalent; and the regrettable fact is that the irresponsible parents who neglect their duty continue to do so because they are not held responsible for their dereliction."

He added: "The startline crime conditions existing today reflect that in America the home is failing in its traditional function as the first and foremost classroom -- a place of learning how to live as well as a place of living."

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

I took a piece of living clay
And gently formed it day by day,
And molded with my power and art,
A young child's soft and yielding heart.
I came again when years had gone,
He was a man I looked upon;
He still that early impress bore,
And I could change him nevermore.

HOW?

Now shall we teach
A child to reach
Beyond himself and touch
The stars,
We who have stopped so soon?

How shall we say
To him, "The way
Of life is through the gate
Of love,"
We who have learned to hate?

How shall we dare
To teach him prayer
And turn him toward the way
Of faith,
We who no longer pray?
-- Mildred R. Howland

T WAS A SHEEP

Twas a sheep, not a lamb, that went astray
 In the parable Jesus told.
 'Twas a grown-up sheep that wandered away
 From the ninety and nine in the fold.
 And out on the hilltops and out in the cold
 'Twas a sheep that the Good Shepherd sought.
 And back to the flock, and back to the fold
 Twas a sheep that the Good Shepherd brought.
 Now, why should the sheep be so carefully fed,
 And cared for still today?
 Because there is danger if they go wrong
 They will lead the lambs astray.
 For the lambs will follow the sheep, you know,
 Where e'er they wander, where e'er they go.
 If the sheep go wrong, it will not be long
 Till the lambs are as wrong as they;
 So still with the sheep we must earnestly plead,
 For the sake of the lambs today.
 If the lambs are lost, what a terrible cost
 Some sheep will have to pay!
 -- Selected

Prepare your children for the attitude they will find in the world toward Christians and the stand we take on many things, for the Christian's stand must be very different on many things. Children will reflect the convictions of the home.

Many people of the world act as if spiritual, live Christianity would degrade their children's abilities; blight their dignity; disgrace their name; destroy their standing in the world; tarnish their character. Schoolmates often make fun of the Christ we love, using His name to curse with. They say only the foolish, not quite smart, and the ignorant believe in God. Eph. 6:12 and I Cor. 1:19-29.

Our children today face worse enemies than our pioneering forefathers did on the plains coming west. They faced Indians, wild beasts, hunger, thirst, cold, burning heat, death. But our children face enemies of their souls; enemies that can destroy morals, ideals, spiritual growth, faith itself, and end in damnation. Teach your children to dare to be different. I quote from *Little World of Home* by Wilfred and Frances Tyler, pg. 5-6.

Most people are satisfied to be like the crowd. It is easy to go with the gang. It is difficult to be different, but it is admirable if the difference is character building, Christian, and worthwhile in the development and preservation of wholesome

personality. . . . Any individual who dares to be different will face teasing, good or bad, and will have pressure put upon him to get in the mold with everybody else; but the person with conviction and feeling about his habits will go steadily on toward his goal as he sees it and will, in the end, be a helpful partner in a Christian marriage.

Take time to play with your children. Have fun as a family at home. Plan together for these play times, and have other pleasures that are a surprise to everyone. No one has more right to joy than a Christian, so make it a part of your family life. Have a place for children to play at home; backyard, barbecue pit, swing, ball diamond, basement, etc. For many years our back yard had five bare spots in the lawn in summer - home, first, second and third bases, and pitchers box. I could not grow tuberous begonias in the back yard; but I've seen a lot of ball games there in the past. There are no bare spots now; I could put the begonias anywhere I please now; the children are all married now. Enjoy your children while you can; take time to be with them while you can. In the October 1964 *Reader's Digest* is an excellent article entitled, "The Night the Stars Fell." It is worth parents' time to read it.

I quote again from *The Little World of Home*, page 57: "Is it unreasonable to say that the character of the impression made by the home is in direct proportion to the nature of its pleasures - what it terms real fun, where it looks for happiness, when it considers itself having a good time?" Make your home a place to live; not just exist.

If possible, have living things in your home for your children. I do not mean to make your home a menagerie, nor for one parent to insist on pets when the other disagrees. We must be sensible. However, children love living pets - kitten, puppy, hamster, bunny, guinea pig, bird, fish, turtle, etc. Those who live on a farm know how children love their "own" calf, colt, or even a little pig.

The care of a dependent pet teaches children responsibility. Their pet must be fed and watered regularly. Cages must be kept clean. Children learn to do unpleasant jobs uncomplaining, because they love the pet, and that is one facet of unselfishness. They learn a mother's love for the helpless babies. An old cat and her care of her kittens is a great contrast to the "unnatural affections" spoken of by Paul in 2 Tim. 3:3 and seen today often in homes in both parents and children.

Our children never will forget the fight our old cat, Panda, put up to protect her little "family" from a marauding old cat one night. One of the most loved gifts we ever gave to one daughter was a little Boston Terrier, Trixie. And Trixie one time saved that same daughter from being hurt by a Manx cat. Somehow kittens and little girls, dogs and little boys always made a good combination in my mind. Let me add a word of warning. I knew of one instance where the pedigreed dog had preference to the children. Heaven forbid! Be sensible enough to put the pet in its proper place.

Children must be taught to work. In *God's Woman* by C. R. Nichol, page 37-38, we read:

Though it is the order of heaven that man be the breadwinner; it is also the will of Jehovah that women work. They do not fulfill their divine mission on earth when they eat the bread of idleness. When they do not teach their children to be workers, they make a mistake which will certainly rebound on them. It seems to be the ambition of some "fond mothers" in these modern times to rear their sons in idleness, and school their daughters for a castle of indolence that they "toil not, neither do they spin.

It has been said that he who does not teach his son a trade makes him a thief. And it may be said with confidence that she who does not teach her daughter to work, to do things useful, is thrusting on society a parasite, is defying the law of Jehovah, and is scheduled for grief.

God ordained that women be helpers of men. They supplement each other, not in work alone, but in Society as well. They are fitted each to each in all righteous endeavors. . . .

If a boy and girl are allowed to grow to maturity without having been taught to work, they have suffered a grave injustice at the hands of their parents.

I heard a lady say one time, "It is pretty hard to tell a daughter over the phone how bread dough should feel. She had not shown her daughter when she was growing up at home. Girls who are not taught the real pleasure of homemaking in their years at home have been cheated out of part of their birth right.

Titus 2:3-5 is a charge to "aged women." I wish to emphasize just now, two things from verse four. We are to teach young women (and that includes our own daughters) to "love husbands" and "to love their children." Doesn't it seem strange anyone should need to be taught those two things? Could it be any woman would not know how? Could it be any woman would not love her own husband and children? One she promised before God and witnesses to love - the other is her own flesh and blood. Look at American divorces and the undisciplined, neglected delinquents today. Are we older mothers at fault? What examples did we live before our growing children? If the daughters had seen in their mothers, only love and respect for their fathers in their growing up years, would they not love their husbands? If they had been truly loved in word and action as a child would they not love their own children? How can you tell your child how to love, when you have not demonstrated it before her in the last twenty years she lived with you? You criticize and belittle your husband and she will do the same to hers. You neglect and push aside your daughter and she will do the same to hers. Love, respect, honor, obedience and consideration are taught by example, not recipe.

THE CHILD S APPEAL

I am the Child
All the world waits for my coming,
All 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 know nothing.
Why I came I know not;
How I came I know not.
I am curious; I am interested.

I am the Child.
You hold in your hand my destiny.
You determine, largely, whether I shall succeed or fail.
Give me, I pray you, those things that make for happiness.
Train me, I beg you, that I may be a blessing to the world.

Mamie Gene Cole

PLEASE GRANT

There is so much I want to do,
 Lord, let me stay
Until I have done all these things;
 This boon I pray.
I want to tutor John some more
 Before he goes
To college, and I must transplant
 The red Jack rose.
I must train Susan in the tasks
 Of baking bread
And housekeeping, so that she can
 Serve in my stead.

There are many things, dear Lord,
 I'd like to do,
So many things before with life
 My hand is through.
And so I'd like a few more years,
 If it could be;
The time to get all these things done,
 Please grant to me.

(There never is a time when all is done.) Let us be careful that our prayers are not selfish, including nothing spiritual.

PARENTS, DO YOU HAVE THE FOLLOWING CHARACTER TRAITS?

1. Suspicion, stubbornness, and conceit.
2. Envy and jealousy. Worry about "what others think."
3. Take trifles seriously - misinterpret commonplace events.
4. A peculiar and sensitive person who manifests mistrust and disdain.
5. Proud and uncompromising.
6. Conceited and uneasy - often sullen and sulking.
7. Resentful of restrictions and discipline.
8. Ambitious and persistent. Often inventive.
9. Antagonistic to family and distrustful of doctors.
10. Dominating, egotistic, and antisocial - at least unsocial.
11. Always starting lawsuits - seeking "justice."
12. Crank, radical, anti-this or that. Troublemaker.
13. Do you "hear voices?"

"Many supposedly sane people, however, act in a paranoid manner when they allow some trivial grievance or a passing social slight to develop in their minds until it becomes an all-absorbing thought." -- Dr. Wm. S. Sadler.

Let us as parents so discipline our thinking, acting, our entire lives that we may eliminate from our thoughts, reactions -- even our dispositions -- anything that we do not want to develop and grow in our children.

It is plain to see the entire list above is made of those traits plainly spoken against in the Scripture and must be "put to death" (Col. 3:5) by a Christian, before she can "put on" (Col. 3:12) the life of God.

Are you willing to sacrifice your family for Christ and His Church? Matt. 10:37-38. Remember the Scriptures learned before. Gal. 5:24; Luke 9:23; Gal. 2:20. Crucify self; deny self; take up cross! Daily. Are you willing that your children choose to leave home, choose the mission field to labor in, dedicate their all to Christ and His church, go to a foreign land where you may not see them for a few years?

Can you see your own children's sins as God sees them? Are you willing to try to help them be converted overcomers according to the Scripture? Or do you overlook their wrong doings, even excuse them, or condone and defend them in their sins?

Are you willing to sacrifice your husband to the Lord's work? Matt. 19: 27-29. Remember the greatest commandment, Matt. 22:37-39. If you are a preacher's wife you may have to stay at home many times to care for the family and keep the children in school while your husband is away preaching in meetings, rallies or other gatherings. It is not easy, but it brings a great blessing when we are obedient to God, when we strive to fill the place God has given us as mothers, and fill it full.