

# *Families*

**“As for me and my  
house, we  
will serve the Lord.”**

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Many of the thoughts and comments made in this handout have come from books and articles I have read over the years. Some of the statements made have had to be generalized because changes are continually occurring in our society. I am not able to be precise as to the source of the phrases and ideas that I have used in this handout, but some of the books I have read in the past are listed in this bibliography. I have appreciated the teaching others have given on these subjects and I am sure some will recognize their own thoughts referred to and some may be quoted nearly word for word.

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FAMILIES: three, or more one hour sessions.

## INTRODUCTION:

### God and the Family.

- His involvement [Ge.5:1-5]
- His estimation [Ex.12:26-28]
- His evaluation [De.11:18-21]
- His delegation [He.11:23]
- His observation [Gen.7:1]

### Parents and the Family.

- Their planning.
- Religious educators.
- Family strengths.
- Their participation.
  - Man's role.
  - Woman's role.
- Their partnership.
- Needed: flexibility, availability, sacrifice, cooperation.
  - Needed: to really know our child/children.
- Needed: the willingness to accept differences in children.
- Needed: discernment to know how to deal with bad bents.
  - Needed: parents who plan.

- Needed: limitations and rules.
- Needed: a good husband/wife relationship.

#### Children and the Family.

- Learning spiritual values.
- Learning personal values.
- Learning social values.

MAN'S ROLE: masculine care  
1 Thessalonians 2:7-12

- Fond affection [v.8]: "affectionately desirous."
- Transparent life [v.8]: "our own souls."
- Unselfish diligence [v.9]: "laboring."
- Spiritually authentic [vs.9,10]: "we preached....we behaved."
- Positive influence [vs.11,12]: "as a father doth his children."

WOMAN'S ROLE: "no one is poor, who has a godly mother." Abraham Lincoln

Proverbs 24:3,4.

- Wisdom is the ability to see with discernment, to view life as God does.
- Understanding, the skill to respond with insight.
- Knowledge, the trait of learning with perception.
- By wisdom a house can reach its full potential.

- By understanding one bring order and uprightness to homes.
- By knowledge life is filled to overflowing with good memories, positive attitudes, mutual respect, and a depth of character.

#### 2Timothy 1.

- “Your tears.” Tenderness is learned from mothers by all family members.
- “Your faith.” Spirituality must be authentic. Faith becomes real when it is seen at home.
- “Your confidence.” Power comes from God. The reality of the mother flows through to the child.
- “Your love.” Selfless love. The highest good for the other person. When it hurts, when you’re tired, when it means self discipline, when it means don’t quit.
- “Your self-control.”

#### HUSBAND AND WIFE TOGETHER

##### Proverbs 22:6

- “Train up.” [a] A word used for putting a rope in a horse’s mouth to give it direction. [b] A word used for stimulating a sensation in the mouth of a newborn to cleanse it and create a thirst.
- “In the way.” In the way of his own mannerisms. Every child/person is different so we must learn the mannerisms of each individual.
- “He should go.” Parents should discern the individuality and strengths God has given to each child. We do not condone or excuse self-will but understand each has natural inclinations.
- “When he is old.” Of the age to grow facial hair. Not a man of 65 years coming back to God after a life of sin.
- “Not depart from it.” The teaching heard will never leave him/her. The child will be confident enough not to succumb to undue pressure from without.

#### Families

A FAMILY IS AN ORGANIZED SOCIAL STRUCTURE RECOGNIZED BY SOCIETY AND BY GOD.

By way of introduction, we need to be able to clearly identify some things in order to make sense out of the biblical truths we will be presenting. An interesting thing to note is that if you have a child until they are eighteen and allow for one hour a day of direct interaction with that child, you have 273 days to do your parenting. The average American father spends 37 seconds a day with one-on-one interaction with his child.

1. What are the primary relationships in your life? What is their order?

God and I - forever; husband/wife- lifetime; children- 20 years; assembly believers- as long as we live in the area;  
workmates- as long as we are in that job.

2. Would you want your children to have the same attitude toward others that you have?

3. Would you want them to have the same values, beliefs, convictions, degrees of commitment that you have?

4. Are you willing to make any necessary changes in your life for the benefit of your child's educational or cultural welfare; spiritual and eternal welfare?

GOD IS INVOLVED IN FAMILY LIFE. (Gen. 5:1-5)

FAMILY LIFE IS IMPORTANT TO GOD. (Ex.12:26-28)

THE FUTURE OF OUR CHILDREN IS IMPORTANT TO GOD. (Deu.11:18-21)

THE FAITH OF PARENTS IS THEIR GREATEST ASSET. (Heb.11:23)

EVERY FAMILY ACTION IS UNDER GOD'S OBSERVATION. "...thou and thy house..."

- In times of danger (Gen.7:1). Noah, and his house at the flood.
- When God reveals His secret counsels (Gen.18:17-19). Abraham, at the judgment of Sodom.
- When called to make a change (Gen.35:1-3). Jacob, going up to Bethel.
- When serving and worshiping God (Ex.10:8-9). Israelites, leaving Egypt.
- When called to make choices (Jos.24:15). Joshua, standing before the nation with his family.

- When evil is in the household (1Sam.3:11-13). Eli, in relation to the wickedness of his sons.
- When Christ comes into a home (Lu.19:9). Zachaeus, when he received Christ.
- When a choice for salvation is made all are affected (Ac.11:14). Cornelius, and his household.
- When the joy accompanying salvation is real (Ac.16:31). Jailer, when obeying the Gospel.

#### PARENTS ARE RELIGIOUS EDUCATORS.

We are continually communicating religious and moral values in what we say and do. We must live the basic themes of the Gospel including love, forgiveness, compassion, peacemaking and sensitivity before our family.

- Talk naturally about God.
- Take time for discussion about God in unstructured situations (outside, during travel).
- Talk about God in structured situations as in morning and evening devotions.
- Evaluate your marriage regularly.
- Encourage your partner's spiritual development.
- Express feelings and ideas as well as facts.

Linda and I have lived over half of our lives together. We have tried to apply biblical principles to our lives and to that of our children and grandchildren. The more mature believers are instructed to pass on what we have experienced ---

Physically:

Emotionally:

Spiritually:

We are not experts. There are no family-life experts because each family is unique. The reason then for meetings like this is to pass on biblical principles that will---

1. Encourage you to continue doing what is right.
2. Urge you to begin doing what is right that you may have left undone.
3. Persuade you to reject what is wrong and to forsake what you may have been doing that is wrong.



Because God is the originator of marriage and families, and because God is love; marriage and properly conducted families are the means by which God makes a testimony to the world. The Lord's Supper is the weekly ordinance whereby God shows to the world through His people, the value and the purpose of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. Baptism is a once-in-a-lifetime ordinance, which shows to the world the identity and purpose of the life of a believer. Marriage is the every-day ordinance in which God's purpose is to show the value and object of His love toward us.

We have already introduced this subject by beginning with God's role in family life. It is interesting to note that in the cycle of God's work in Genesis we are introduced to --

[1] Moral deterioration. ch.3. [2] Polygamy. ch.4. [3] Sexual words and thoughts. ch.9. [4]Adultery. ch.16. [5] Homosexuality. ch.19. [6] Rape. ch.34. [7] Incest and prostitution. ch.38. [8] Seduction. ch.39.

God begins with establishing His purposes in the family and immediately it is attacked and still is today. I have the conviction that a soul is transmitted from God to personhood at conception, The heart begins to function between 14 and 18 days from conception. Every organ has begun to form in the first month, Movement of arms and legs begins in six weeks. Brain activity can be detected at 43 days.

In the 1960's and 70's a new line of thinking began to be accepted. It is acceptable now, for me to think first of myself. Secondly, somehow my actions are separate from the consequences of those actions. Science, technology, government, money or knowing people higher up the ladder than me, will take care of my problem.

God established the social order of families for very good reasons: to propagate the race; to preserve life; to prepare each succeeding generation for life; to promote harmony and respect among all humanity; to protect the young; to teach the children to recognize and bow to authority. The first place to learn this in the home. It is essential that the nature of, and ways of discipline and authority be carried out properly. "The rod" [Pro.25:15] is the same word as scepter, tribe and authority indicating that it means "authority and standards." "Foolishness" means self-will, refusal, rebellion and disobedience, not humor or boyishness. When do you bow to God's authority? Is it because you are afraid of His discipline or because you love and trust the One who has the hand of authority? You may have children who will obey because of the fear of punishment but they will not be mature. Because we love them, we discipline and correct wrong behavior.

The order and subject matter of this teaching time then will be as follows. Some things will take longer than others. Some things we will repeat if we feel it necessary.

1. GOD AND THE FAMILY.

2. HUSBANDS AND WIVES IN THE FAMILY.

3. CHILDREN AND THE FAMILY.

4. CHILDREN AND THEIR IDENTITY.

5. CHILDREN AND FAITH.

6. CHILDREN AND THEIR NEEDS.

## 7. DISCIPLINE IN THE FAMILY.

## 8. COMMUNICATION IN THE FAMILY.

How do you deal with conflict in the family? Do you experience power struggles in the family? How do you communicate in the family? We hope to give you some guidelines so that you will be able to get answers from God.

### STRONG FAMILIES

To be strong, parents must...

- Continually listen to God [De.6:4]
- Whole-heartedly love the Lord and model that love [De.6:5-6]
- Diligently teach their children truth [De.6:7-9]. Christianity is designed for everyday living. Teach the children God's truth at home.
- Greatly fear the Lord and let your reverence show [De.6:10-15]

Dr. Nick Stinnett of the University of Nebraska, conducted a "family strengths research project" several years ago in South America, Switzerland, Austria, Germany, South Africa and the United States. The only criterion for being included in the sample of strong families was the families had to be able to rate themselves high in marriage happiness and in their satisfaction in parent/children relationships. It was not limited to Christians.

He writes of his findings and information collected from the study of 3000 families.

Strong families...

- Are committed to the family.
- Spend time together.
- Have good family communication.
- Express appreciation to each other.
- Have a spiritual commitment.
- Are able to solve problems in a crisis.

## ERODING FAMILIES

Pro.24:3-4: Wisdom – the ability to see with discernment and accuracy; to view life as God sees it. Understanding – the ability to respond with insight and full awareness in order to restore something to its original purpose. Knowledge – the ability to learn with perception, grasping the facts so that truth can be pursued.

- What about parental authority? Who is in charge? In many homes, the child is boss and knows it.
- What about sacrificing your own goals for marriage and family? When we marry we choose to forfeit all our rights. It is the same when we have children.
- What about the dignity of fatherhood and motherhood? A father who even jokingly lies to his children, will find it hard to be respected. A mother who whines will find it the same.
- What about the distinction between males and females? Roles have to be defined in a blended culture.
- What about bearing, nurturing, training and releasing children? For 20 years, this is your “family” responsibility.

## MAN’S ROLE IN THE FAMILY. 1Thessalonians 2:7-12

We will not become fully equipped in our parenting roles, because just when we think we have learned, the child has moved way on to a different phase of life. Our priorities are to (1) live before our children as Enoch, Eunice and Lois lived before theirs. (2) lead our children like Abraham did [Gen.18:19]. (3) leave a legacy to our children: David (honor God); Moses (confidence in God); Onesiphorus (serve God). (4) let them go. God does not hold us responsible for what our children might do in the future, but for what we have taught them.

Clear-thinking, hardworking, straight-talking men who are thoughtful, loving and willing to change, are needed in every family. The role system in families is what has held civilization together. When these get blurred, the family gets thrown into confusion.

He is to provide masculine leadership and can do so because he has.....

- Discipline of character – trusted and faithful
- Strong determination to set a course of action – not easily deterred
  - Courage to stay at a task – not a quitter
  - Not afraid to show his feelings (vulnerability).
  - Men of integrity – can be counted on
  - Men of courtesy – respectful; have some dignity

Honest-to-goodness men are men who are.....

- Discerning – see ahead
- Decisive – make decisions wisely
- Strong-hearted – not touchy
- Know where they are going and are confident enough in themselves and God, to get there.
- Not afraid to take the lead - responsible
- Not afraid to stand tall and firm in their principles even when the going gets rough – not easily swayed
- Clear thinking – can speak plain
- Hard working – not a complainer
- Straight talking: tender, thoughtful at the same time.
- Don't feel the need of asking permission for taking charge – know their role

The distinction of the sexes is a biblical precept. God made us "... male and female ..." (Ge.1:27). When the roles get blurred then comes confusion and chaos. A good illustration of masculine care is in 1Thessalonians 2:7-12:

- v.8. Fond affection: "affectionately desirous ." To feel ones self drawn to something or someone - a father and a newborn, prodigal returning; don't hold back your affections. This is not just in infancy, but all through life.
- v.8. Transparent life: "our own souls." (life). Isn't the Gospel important? Isn't the Gospel enough? Transparency and vulnerability are involved in imparting the soul of a parent to the child. Admit stress, admit failure if necessary. Be available in emergencies.
- v.9. Unselfish diligence: "laboring." There is nothing wrong with hard work. Hardworking fathers need to provide for their families. We are wise to show our children how to keep at a thing. Children won't fully appreciate something they know they don't really deserve.
- v.9,10. Spiritually authentic. "we preached -- we behaved." Fathers need to take leadership in the spiritual life of a family. Uprightness and devotion are evident and enable a father to speak frankly to his children and still be appreciated.
- v.11,12. Positive influence. "as a father doth his children." Don't say "No" when you can say "Yes" truthfully. When some unimportant matter arises, don't get too negative and treat it like a crisis. The best gifts we can give our children are our presence and influence – and perhaps some good memories.

#### SUMMARY OF MAN'S ROLE.

1. To provide intelligent leadership.
2. To give deliberate love.

3. To provide his family with unlimited sharing of his life.

4. To avoid spiritual impoverishment and to help his family do the same.

#### WOMAN'S ROLE IN THE FAMILY.

The role of the woman (i.e. wife and mother) is different but not conflicting. Two properly understood roles that are practiced faithfully will not clash but quietly and powerfully mesh. Children are not the center of the family; the mother and father are. Conflicts arise when we try to take over the role of our partner and/or leave our own responsibilities undone or only partially done.

Support, understanding, empathy, unity are so important as we fulfill our roles in family life. You understand that I am speaking of family life here, not marriage. Marriage is discussed in another place.

“No one is poor, who had a godly mother.” Abraham Lincoln.

Pr.24:3,4.

- Wisdom is the ability to see with discernment, to view life as God does.
  - Understanding, the skill to respond with insight.
  - Knowledge, the trait of learning with perception.
  - By wisdom a house can reach its full potential.
- By understanding one brings order and uprightness to homes.
- By knowledge life is filled to overflowing with good memories, positive attitudes, mutual respect, and a depth of character.

Mothers, by the nature of physiology, have a different instinct towards children than fathers. Men are hit with it all of a sudden. Women have lived with this person day and night for nine months. Ladies know instinctively what we can never quite attain to. The “precious and pleasant riches” filling the rooms of the house in Proverbs 24 are...

- Character traits.
- Memories.
- Lasting relationships etc.

What young people get from their mother...

2Ti.1.

- “Your tears.” Tenderness is learned from mothers by all family members.
- “Your faith.” Spirituality must be authentic. A church, Christian school, Christian friends can deposit facts. Faith becomes real when it is seen at home.
- “Your confidence.” Power comes from God (inherent strength, inner might). The reality of the mother flows through to the child.
- “Your love .” Selfless love. The highest good for the other person. When it hurts, when you’re tired, when it means discipline, when it means ‘don’t quit.’
- “Your self-control .”

#### SUMMARY OF WOMAN’S ROLE.

1. Equality is not the question.
2. A helper fit for him.
3. Creativity.
4. Teacher.
5. Ambassador of the kingdom.

The family unit is the basic building block of society. It is the means of passing on values, truth, attitudes. If you are not a Christian your family life will never be totally fulfilled. Significance comes from wholeness. The reason for wanting to live by the standards of the Lord Jesus Christ is our love for Christ. If one has the Spirit of God, then that one personally has peace and can express that; toward God expresses thanks to God and the Father; towards others submits (“rank under one another”: a military term) to one another. That whole subject of submission in Ephesians 5:22-6:9, is illustrated in the family. When we are filled with the Spirit, there is submission of .....

- Wives to the husbands.
- Husbands to the wives.
- Children to parents.
- Parents to children.

· Servants to masters.

· Masters to servants.

Submission is not impossible to do. These are illustrative of genuine, Spirit-filled submission as God intended it to be. according to 1 Corinthians 7:1-3 we are to give to the wife all that meets her needs and wives are to do the same to the husband. Men and women are equals - there is no spiritual superiority (1Co.11:3). Function is unique; essence is the same in the family, spirituality is the same in the family. The man is called upon to take the authority and lead the family. Human society must have authority; in nations, assemblies and families.

#### HUSBAND AND WIFE TOGETHER.

In a proper and biblical relationship between parents and children there is: love, gentleness, provision and caring on the part of the parents, and honor, obedience and love toward the parents on the part of the children.

#### AS CHRISTIAN PARENTS WE BEGIN FROM A BASE OF CONFIDENCE

- \* God chose to give us these children: they were His choice for us and we are His choice for them
- \* There are no perfect parents, there are no perfect children and this is not a perfect world.
- \* We do not automatically know "the right way." We are learning.

#### CONTRASTS

##### The Word of God Modern Thought

- \* Parental authority Controlling parents are tyrants
- \* Authority, control, obedience is desirable versus Children have all the rights of grownups
- \* Love and discipline go together versus Love children and they won't need discipline.
- \* Training in obedience and respect for authority will help children achieve their potential versus feed clothe and shelter and give all the benefits and then stay out of their way so natural "goodness" emerges.
- \* God has appointed parents to teach and prepare your children for life versus learn from the "professionals" because it is out of date to live biblically under grace.
- \* Obedience will likely give a wholesome self-image versus insisting on obedience will destroy self-esteem.
- \* Insist children choose right rather than wrong versus imposed standards will damage a child's ability to learn about right and wrong (moral relativism).
- \* I do not need my children's approval all the time; I do need their honor and obedience versus you must prevent negative feelings to be a good parent.
- \* Correction is necessary to a child's behavior versus use only positive methods to train children.
- \* Children are not faultless and sinless versus there are no bad children, only bad parents.

WE HAVE A NATURAL DUTY TO TRAIN OUR CHILDREN, AND A NATURAL RIGHT TO REQUIRE OBEDIENCE OF CHILDREN

\* The home is God's classroom: the rules we make and enforce, will together teach them knowledge of God, right and wrong, cultural heritage, awareness of the world we live in, honor to God, parents, church and country. They should learn the value of effortful work; play is a re-enforcer of work well done – not the reason for existence and the right of destiny for us all. They should learn to eat right, give love and respect to family, friends and strangers, help neighbors and those in need, consider others.

\* "Unconditional love" does not mean we disregard a child's behavior and give approval regardless of actions. It is like God's love that is not sentimental, but cares enough to insist on right behavior even when the child resents it. We are to love in a way that teaches and trains our children.

## PARENTING

- Parents have control over consequences: we control all a child needs to live – food, clothes, shelter, games, money; also, the intangibles of love, attention, affection, and approval.
- We apply rewards or correction dependent on the child's behavior. Children find it hard to pass up the behavior in exchange for something they want. Rewards for behavior are given to us by God.
- Discipline is to control behavior. Punishment for wrong-doing is a natural consequence. Punishment is the payment for misbehavior.
- Reinforcement of a child's behavior by regular, consistent responses from a parent or adult really does promote the changes that we want to see. When it is done immediately and consistently, it usually is effective. The main obstacle to this is method working, is parents indulgence and unwillingness to displease their child. At first reinforce every time, consistently with tangible re-enforcers. As right behavior is learned, replace them with social reinforcement (praise, etc.). God loves people even when they sin [Rom.5:8] and He also chastises them with that same love [Heb.12:6].
- Show your approval with praise, attention and recognition for good behavior. Smiles, hugs, touch and enthusiasm in the voice are great re-enforcers.
- Don't ignore good behavior and focus on the bad. However, do not aid bad behavior by ignoring it or being manipulated or intimidated by child's demands. We actually create problems in this way, rather than solve them.
- Avoid generalizing problems. Specifically define problems and solutions.

Needed: Flexibility, availability, sacrifice, cooperation between ourselves.

Needed: To really know our child/children.

Pr.22:6. A common misunderstanding of this verse is: "If we take our child to meetings and Sunday School; read the Bible to our child and teach verses and hymns; pray with them; arrange for the best possible schooling; strictly enforce our rules -- when he finally finishes sowing wild oats, for he surely will; he or she will come back to God. So don't worry too much."



- “Train up:” a word used for putting a rope in a horse’s mouth to give it direction during the breaking time. So, bringing a wild spirit into submission with a rope in its mouth is the first idea. b] A Hebrew mid-wife put her finger into crushed grapes or dates, and then put her finger in the mouth of the newborn and massaged its gums, palate and roof of the mouth to stimulate sucking and perhaps even cleanse the mouth. So, cultivating a sensation in the mouth, cleansing and creating a thirst are involved in this meaning.
- “In the way:” (Pr.30:18,19) “... the way of an eagle,..serpent,..ship,..man with a maid.” It really means according to his way! No two children are alike so we must know the characteristics of each; the mannerisms. We cannot mold them and press them into our own mold, put them into a kiln until they get good and hard and then send them on their way.
- “He should go.” Parents should discern the individuality and special strengths that God has given each child. We do not condone or excuse self-will but understand each has natural inclinations. Teachers, other parents, grandparents can help in discernment; but ultimately it is the father and mother harmoniously together that does the training.
- “When he is old:” This is not a man of 65 years coming back to God after a life of sin but the word ‘old’ means of an age to grow facial hair.
- “Not depart from it:” He will be confident enough in himself, not to succumb to undue pressure from without. The teaching he heard when young will never leave him. He will know who he is and who his people are and be able to withhold himself from evil.

TRAINING A CHILD: start early [Pro.13:24; 22:15]. Don’t wait until school days. Stay the course [Pro.23:13-14; 3:11-12] in spite of pressure. Don’t expect the impossible – model what God expects you to be. When maturity is obvious, back off and take your hands off. Cultivate healthy respect. Give adolescents room to make up their own minds. Help them make personal decisions rather than forced decisions.

Needed: The willingness to accept differences in children.

Two major mistakes we make...

1. We must rear our children the way I was reared. This is usually a father’s problem.
2. Comparing our children with each other.

Pr.20:11-13. Open your eyes. Watch your child in action. Learn the abilities; the natural inclinations (bent); the characteristics; the good; the bad and adapt your training accordingly. Cultivate and nurture the healthy traits and commend them. Counteract firmly the troublesome, unwise traits. Be solidly together in this. “A child left to himself bringeth shame.” (Pr.29:15 NAS). The child’s bent is formed by God as He weaves the new person in the womb of the mother (Ps.139:13). God is not ashamed of His workmanship. A child is not conceived by blind chance. God gives enough of each parent to the child that we have lots in common; enough of the other parent that we can love without restraint; enough uniqueness that we are constantly fascinated by what unfolds before us.

Needed: Discernment to know how to deal with bad bents.

Ps.51:5. "Behold,... born with a sinful nature." The nature is passed on from parents to child. The process is not sinful but the person.

Ps.58:2-5. The evil bent in a child is like a deaf cobra slithering out of a bottle and not hearing the sound of the trainer. Our children, left to themselves, would be barbarians. They know nothing of our language, our culture, our religion, our values, our customs, our relationships. These totally uncivilized people are given to us by God to be tamed. They come to us totally self-absorbed, totally selfish, and totally self-centered. Parents must unite in paying attention to the children, and must discipline when self-will attempts to take charge. Ignoring signs of rebellion, results in tragic consequences.

An example of this is found in a book by J. Oswald Sanders in a book published in 1958.

"The father of Jonathan Edwards was a minister and his mother was the daughter of a clergyman. Among their descendants were 14 presidents of colleges; more than 100 college professors; more than 100 lawyers; 30 judges; 60 physicians; more than 100 clergymen, missionaries and theology professors; and about 60 authors. There is scarcely any great American industry that has not had one of his family among its chief promoters. Such is the product of one American Christian family, reared under most favorable circumstances.

The contrast is presented in the Jukes family, which could not be made to study and would not work, and is said to have cost the state of New York a million dollars. Their entire record is one of pauperism and crime, insanity and imbecility.

Among their 1200 known descendants, 310 were professional paupers; 440 were physically wrecked by their own wickedness; 60 were habitual thieves; 130 were convicted criminals; 55 were victims of impurity; only 20 learned a trade (10 of these learned it in a state prison), and this notorious family produced 7 murderers."

It makes all the difference in the world when parents counteract the bad. Kids are smart; they may learn how to cover up their wicked ways, but their attitudes will finally emerge.

Needed: Parents who plan.

1. Determine your priorities.
2. Record your observations.
3. Share your findings.

Needed: Limitations and rules.

Without rules and limitations there will be chaos. When you discipline, identify the reason or objective of the discipline.

Both parents are striving to produce responsible adults who are able to function independently of us, yet be wholly submitted to God. We need a plan, both effective and flexible to do this.

Four principles to help set limitations are.....

1. Be clear (Eph.5:3, 4): There is no doubt about what God expects.
2. To answer questions before they arise (De.23:14; Rom.13:1, 2): "Because I said so," is not always a fair or helpful answer. If there is no reason given to obey, when Mom or Dad are not around they will do what they want. Why not lie?  
Why wait for sex until marriage?
3. The consequences of disobedience (De.28:15-25; Ga.6:7, 8; Ep.5:5): Your children need to know what to expect when they disobey you. Consequences in proportion to what was done; clear, consistent, corresponding to the action.
4. Rewards for faithfulness (De.28:1-7; Ja.1:12): A merit system

Useful ways to set limitations.....

1. Start early: get children used to living within limitations.
2. Both parents set up the system: eliminates confusion and tension.
3. Give increasing amounts of freedom and responsibility:
4. Don't allow fear of a child's rejection to be a factor in decision making. Making limitations sets us up to be disliked.
5. Setting limitations takes time.

Needed: A good husband/wife relationship.

Good marriage is not the result of instinct. Certain things are necessary to harmony and happiness...

· Maturity: Unselfishness (Ph.2:3,4)

How to overcome selfishness

1. Face it as sin.
2. Confess it as sin.
3. Ask for help to take away that habit (1Jn.5:14-15).
4. Repair the damage.

· Submission: (Ep.5:21)

Marital relationship first; then the marriage relationship

· Love: (1Co.13.

How it shows...

1. Patience.
2. Kindness.
3. Generosity.
4. Humility.
5. Courtesy.
6. Unselfishness.
7. Good temper.
8. Guilelessness.
9. Sincerity.

Love your partner for the Lord's sake.

Get to the Author of love and He will give it to you.

· Communication: (Ep.4:15)

Pray for wisdom.

Plan a time that is good for your partner.

Don't discuss anything that is too serious or negative after 10:30.

Allow a reaction time. "I'm sorry"; "I love you."

· Prayer:

You can shout, scream, discipline, punish and threaten; but the model you leave is what is cemented -- the magnet of a model.

· Christ:

Husbands: the differences between you and your wife cannot be eliminated. "...Live with her in an understanding way."

Wives: demonstrate Christianity in your lifestyle. The inner qualities are what counts. Remember -- men have an inferior ego-strength.

· Change: (Ez.36:25-27; 1Pe.3:7)

A new heart and a new spirit

(Ep.4:17-32) 'Competent to Counsel.' pp.231.

(Col.3:1-14) 'Christian Counselor's manual.' pp.161-216.

When is a withdrawn husband not withdrawn? When he is loving and demonstrative.

When is an unsubmitive wife submissive? When she is willing to listen and follow her husband's suggestions and leadership.

"If a child lives with criticism, he learns to condemn."

"If a child lives with hostility, he learns to fight."

"If a child lives with ridicule, he learns to be shy."

"If a child lives with shame, he learns to feel guilty."

"If a child lives with tolerance, he learns to be patient."

"If a child lives with encouragement, he learns confidence."

"If a child lives with praise, he learns to appreciate."

"If a child lives with fairness, he learns justice."

"If a child lives with security, he learns to have faith."

"If a child lives with approval, he learns to like himself."

"If a child lives with acceptance and friendship, he learns to find love in the world." By Dorothy Nolte

Summary: The Four Brides of Genesis.

1. Eve: Brought by God.

a. It is God's work to bring two together.

b. God does know what is best.

c. His purposes in the man/woman relationship are best.

2. Rebekah: Brought by a servant.

a. There was a definite and specific girl for the man.

b. God had a way of letting them know by answered prayer.

c. Both parties knew God was in it.

d. Both were ready for marriage.

e. God makes sure there is love when two people take Him into consideration.

3. Rachel: Served for by love (agape).

a. Love is not what I get out of it.

b. The right one is worth waiting for when there is love.

c. Love grows and is strengthened when there is testing.

4. Asenath: Type of the church.

a. Sacrifice has its reward.

b. Marriage is only part of God's over-all purpose for one's life.

c. A wife's most fulfilling role is the one God gives her.

#### PARENTHOOD

Children are an integral part of family life. There is no questioning the fact that family life often centers around them, their activities, their wants and wishes. Before getting into some of the specifics in relation to the needs of children and how parents can fulfill such needs; we need to get a view of how faith develops. Faith is not transferred by programs of skilled design but by relationships. Values are not so much taught as caught by your children. Life without God is really senseless. All of life's work, building a home, establishing a career, and raising a family must have God as the foundation.

Families establish homes and watchmen guard cities, but both of these activities are futile unless God is with them. A family without God can never experience the spiritual bond God brings to relationships. A city without God will crumble from evil and corruption on the inside. Don't make the mistake of leaving God out of your life -- if you do, all accomplishments will be of no value. Make God your highest priority, and let Him do the building.

Hard work honors God, but working to the exclusion of rest or to the neglect of family may be a cover-up for an inability to trust God to provide for our needs. We all need adequate rest and times of spiritual refreshment. There is a balance to be maintained: work, while trusting God; rest while trusting God.

Too often children are seen as liabilities rather than assets. Rather than seeing them as a distraction or nuisance, we should see them as an opportunity to shape the future. God values them highly so let us not consider them as an

inconvenience. This is the attitude God is trying to promote in Psalm 127.

INCEPTION: God's family portrait. (Psa.127)

"The Lord (Jehovah) build (a process)..." We need God in this work.

· House: rest, love, personal safety.

· Walled city: protection; safety from enemies.

Attitudes: impressions are being made for good or bad -- anxious toil, covetousness, undue concern.

1. We say, "God listens with concern to every prayer," but we are too busy to listen to our children, how can they understand a God who hears.
2. "God is a loving Father," we say; but if fathers are less than loving to our children, how can our children relate to the Father in heaven as a loving Father?
3. "The Bible is the most important book in the world," we say, but if our children never see or hear us read it, how can they relate to what we say or do?
4. "The fruit of the Spirit is...." and we name them all, but if our children look in vain for that fruit in our lives, how can they understand our words?
5. "Christ changes our lives and we become new people," we say, but if our children watch us 'cut corners' and compromise integrity in little ways, how do they know we will not do that in important things?

· Children make a family: love has an earthly object.

· The weight of a parent: arrows reach beyond us, children's attitudes reflect home training. Our strength can be put into our children.

In order for God to solve our problems, He gives us.....

1. The courage to face our problems honestly.

2. The wisdom to understand what's happening.

3. The strength to do what we must.

4. The faith to trust Him to do what we cannot do.

· A properly guided family will subdue enemies: put to shame adversaries.

INFLUENCE: God's value center (2Ti.1:3-5; 3:14-17; 1Pe.3:1)

- Unfeigned faith: without deceit; grandmother, mother, then an impressionable son. This home may have been a divided home.
- The cause of faith: the scriptures; knew them from childhood. Create a desire for God's Word. Do not treat the Bible as a dull book. We create excitement by being excited. Some specifics.....

1. Surround kids from an early age with good books.

2. Share things you are learning. Thankful for what; praise God.

3. Consistently show your appreciation for God's Word. Not the word of man but God.

· Family Devotions: the family altar.

1. Teach the Word of God (De.6:5-9).

a. Establish a convenient time.

b. Meal times are often the only time all are together.

c. Don't try to do it all at once by making it too long.

d. Vary it from time to time if you can.

e. The objective is to make them God-conscious and form an unbreakable habit.

2. Have the children participate in some way.

a. Reading in turn.

b. Ask a question on the reading while you are reading. Change the format from asking questions or telling the kids something like this....

- "As we read this chapter, try to find something in it that Dad needs to hear."

- "Can you see something here that might encourage Mom?"

- "What, in this passage, makes us feel good about Jim because it describes what he is doing?"

c. If some incident has happened (a death or sickness in the family), change the format and discuss what the Bible teaches about it.

3. Pray out loud.

a. Mention family needs.



b. Give thanks for your blessings.

c. Count some blessings.

d. Speak the children's names and visitors too, if others are there.

e. Ask aloud for specific help if you or the family is going to some danger or problem (exams etc.).

4. Don't get discouraged.

a. The children may not respond for awhile.

b. They may feel embarrassed at first.

c. You might be embarrassed but keep on.

INSTRUCTION: God's training school (De.6:5-9; Pr.22:6; De.11:18-21).

· Cherish it myself (v.5).

· Teach it to your children (v.7). Why we attend meetings; the Lord's supper etc.

· Talk of it in all conditions (v.7). On a vacation why go to meetings.

· Bind it in all we see and do (v.8). Business; ethics.

· Make it obvious to others. Write it.

IMPACT: God's security force. (Ps.78:6-8).

· The Generation to come might know God's truth (v.6).

· Assure the continuation of God's truth (v.6).

· Might have a positive hope (v.7).

· Might be willing to do God's will. Able to resist evil.

· Take a spiritual physical of your family...

1. Watch how they talk to others.

2. Listen carefully to what they like to talk about.

3. Look at their priorities.

4. Notice how they respond to spiritual things.

5. Pray with them.

CHILDREN NEED: (Ep.2:6-10; Je.29:11)

Significance: a sense of uniqueness - a specialness.

Give them something to accomplish and then compliment them. Introduce them by name. Offer choices. Spend time.  
Show interest even in a scratch.

- Comes from knowing you have a unique position in the family. [the red plate].
- Comes from knowing you have skills and gifts that are uniquely yours.
- Achievements are developed from a sense of belonging, worth and confidence.

1. Belonging comes from home.

2. Worth comes from knowing we are in the image of God.

3. Confidence comes from what we can do.

- Affirmation of good qualities is a must.

1. Specific affirmation: "That was a wise decision." "That took courage."

2. Directive affirmation: "You are beginning to finish what you start." "You will be able to help that person."

3. A pat on the shoulder or a hug. Touch.

- Dealing with ridicule and teasing.

1. Take time to explain the value of not conforming to behavior that is wrong or destructive.

2. Clear thinking is needed and our assurance that we like them.

- Remember children are not carbon copies.

- Insecure parenting can be sensed by children.

- Insignificance creates problems.

1. People who want to be just like everyone else.

2. Wishy-washy. Not able to make solid decisions. "Well, yes and no.."

3. Rejected. Jealous, hard to forgive.

4. Wasted potential.

5. A moral pushover.

#### Security (1Jn.4:4)

Assurance is based on values. A value is a principle which a person cherishes enough to practice in his life. We are living in a 'values vacuum' in our present day society. God has designed us as believers to live in accordance with values revealed in the scriptures. These values include certain absolutes. The best way to treat another human being is to respect God's absolutes. People are created in the image of God (Ja.3:9). Lying, stealing, getting high, having sex outside of marriage are destructive to people and to their relationships. People or societies that believe this is okay, become their own god.

We are here to meet needs in a values vacuum. Relationships are being destroyed on a wholesale basis. We as believers have a commodity necessary to an unstable society. Our culture needs us. We have people who understand absolutes and live by unchanging values. Even our strugglers are way ahead of the average person. A general rule is we start from where we are to meet needs. Mothers meet the needs of mothers; singles the needs of singles; young people the needs of young people. We need to be prepared to meet the needs in each area of people.

Filling needs in a values vacuum (J.3:13-) requires a 'wise man;' technical term for 'teacher.' When it speaks of knowledge it means, expert knowledge. In his 'conversation' [life] the wise man demonstrates his work with meekness of wisdom. The pride of knowledge has always been the besetting sin of professional teachers. Pride of knowledge [false wisdom] pertains to earth, not heaven; to mere nature, not to the spirit; to hostile spirits of evil, not God. This only produces confusion and disorder (1Co.14:33) and evil work (1Jn.1:5). The wisdom from above is practical and preserves unity and peace.

Children need to know the boundaries. Parents at home not leaving 'latch-key-kids.' Parents who provide constructive criticism. Children need parents instead of gifts. They need a sense of belonging. Often the cause of starting substance abuse is parental conflict, personality change and peer pressure.

· How we communicate values.

1. Quality relationships.

2. First hand involvement.

3. Personal concern or responsibility.

4. Allow young people to learn the consequences of their actions and behavior.

5. Model what we seek to develop in our children.

· How we show values.

1. Talk about why you do things.
2. Help a child develop a reflective approach.
3. Maturity with added information.
4. Provide experiences to broaden information. [the red Dodge pickup]
5. Provide for privacy.
6. Allow interaction with peers.
7. Let them handle stress.
8. Give them freedom to fail.
9. Help them to recognize the difference between Christian and non-Christian standards.
10. Teach children to look at others from Jesus' viewpoint.
11. Be a friend and be available.

· When others don't value what you believe, we have options.

1. Isolation from the problem: easy for you but hard for the unbeliever to understand..
2. Identify completely with the value of others: compromises biblical truth.
3. Dual-standard approach: it's okay as long as you aren't a leader.
4. Transformation approach: go, stand up and preach and rebuke the ungodly.
5. Tension strategy: come up with an alternative approach.

Acceptance:

Some things your child can't do. Don't over-protect them. Each child is different. Help them find achievements. Accept his friends. Treat them as persons of worth.

· Pressure is an inevitable part of life. (1Co.10:13).

1. It is not harmful unless it lasts too long or gets out of control. Learn to manage it.

2. The only way to reduce stress is to lighten the pressure by God's help understanding all people have it. Choose a way to escape it.

3. Peer pressure is a natural part of growing up. It is blended into our growing experience. Don't consider it in isolation. It is a changing thing.

a. This is where the rubber meets the road. To some kids it means stress, struggle. abandonment of values; to others - they are hardly fazed by it.

b. A strong self-image helps one cope with it. People with answers don't help as much as people who listen.

4. Personal identity assurance is a key to acceptance. A child gains most of his identity from parents for the first 9 - 12 years. Then focus shifts to peers. Later to self-perception. Each builds on the other but doesn't cancel out.

· The problem of pressure. (Mk.6:30-44)

1. Pressure is one's own response to outside circumstances; obligations; changes.

a. Childhood: everything is new; perhaps demanding parents; school pressures -- they need the haven of home security, comfort, relaxation.

b. Teenage: changing bodies; competition; changing schools; life- molding decisions; a peer group of insecure, inexperienced young people; styles of clothes; to drink [drugs, sex etc.]; to rebel.

2. Changing social values produce pressure.

a. Explicit sex education without moral values.

b. Values clarification.

c. Courses on death and dying, drug education, psychodrama, global education.

d. Indiscriminate watching of TV, videos and video games.

e. Rock music.

· Resources for dealing with pressure.

(1Pe.5:7. "Casting all your care upon Him."); (Ph.4:6,7. "Prayer and supplication."); (Ph.2:20. "No man like-minded."); (Ep.6:10. "Be strong in the Lord."); (Ma.6:25-34. "Seek.. the kingdom of God.)

1. Family: Family life takes time, scriptural training, assembly involvement, effective Bible teaching/learning program. Strong family life produces strong young people.

2. Peers: Clearly define the guidelines and stick to them. Modify if necessary; demand respect. Accept counsel from spiritual people your own age.

3. Self: Accept yourself as God made you. Looks, talents are deceptive [there could be no better method for teaching the

worship of beauty and materialism than is done with a luscious Barbie doll].

a. Apply self-discipline.

b. Change relationships: a turning point and a break must come between friends because the conduct of companions is contagious.

c. Develop a thankful attitude: do a Bible study on thanksgiving.

d. Learn to be content.

· Good things about peer pressure (Ph.3:14)

1. Provides motivation. Nothing is more pathetic than a wasted life.

a. To establish moral principles.

b. To build inner endurance.

c. To know who you really are.

2. Provides incentive for control.

a. Develop a positive mental attitude.

b. Find the will of God for your life and do it.

c. Commit yourself to basic values.

d. Seek advice from competent people.

e. Work out a clearly defined set of goals.

f. Establish priorities.

g. Take time to love others.

h. Keep the light burning at the end of the tunnel.

To love and be loved:

Love is learned. We teach it. It must be spoken. Love calls for action. Love means trust. Love listens. Love shares experiences. People are more important than things. We are responsible to meet the emotional needs of our children.

We must obtain our emotional needs elsewhere. On occasion we can share personal information only for their educational benefit - not for my emotional needs.

· We are responsible to make our children feel loved first.

· We are to be authority figures and discipline them second.

· Unconditional love is the basic foundation for a solid relationship.

1. No matter what he looks like.

2. No matter what his assets, liabilities and handicaps are.

3. No matter how he acts.

4. Teenagers ask “do you love me?” primarily through their behavior, not words.

· Parents find it difficult to convey love because we are verbally oriented as adults rather than behaviorally oriented as are children and teenagers.

1. Children and teenagers generally reflect love rather than initiate it.

2. They will test us and our rules but will eventually come back for an emotional refill.

3. During times of upset and tension, excessive anger by parents makes it hard for them to return for a refill.

4. The more loss of control by parents, the more loss of respect by teens.

· Focused attention: physical and eye contact require little sacrifice. Focused attention does. (Ps.127:3-5; Ma.18:1-10; Mk.10:13-16)

1. The most demanding need teenagers have.

2. Girls particularly need some time alone with their fathers.

3. Watch for opportunities for additional time with your children.

4. The older children are, the more time they need; to not be willing to do this is interpreted as rejection.

5. Psychological defenses of a moody teenager are very high and take a lot of time to come down.

6. Look for the ‘oh, by the way...’ words which indicate the real thing is coming up ahead.

· Eye and physical contact: especially needed in periods of withdrawal.

1. Give loving eye contact even in times when she is uncommunicative.

2. Do not force yourself on your teenager during sullen times.

3. Touch even light, is usually not taken negatively any time.

4. Sometimes your child very subtly hints they want your attention or affection.

· From parent-control to self-control.

1. Initially rules are strict and resistive but towards maturity use less control.

2. Children must learn and experience consequences for their actions.

3. Allow privileges as age increases based on trust relationship.

4. Help them hand in hand to work toward being a responsible, dependable person as they comes to the age where your legal responsibility ends.

5. Engage your children increasingly in intellectual conversation.

6. Reinforce the ethical and moral value systems to guide them.

Praise:

Praise performance rather than personality. Praise what a child is responsible for rather than what he cannot help. Praise is important from certain people. Praise sincerely. Praise: the sooner the better. Take initiative in praising. Attitudes bestow praise.

Discipline:

To begin with, I want to make clear that I find extremes difficult. Any logic based on extremes, leads to ridiculous conclusions. For example; a way to stop all highway accidents would be don't let anyone drive a car. Or we could stop people from getting divorces by passing legislation outlawing marriage. This seems ridiculous but that is what is happening with the physical discipline of children. Because some parents and guardians have gone to abuse and injury of children, the pressure is on to eliminate any physical punishment when it comes to discipline. This is not to say we have any use or excuse for child abuse but that I want to make a case for balance and moderation in discipline. Do not make the extreme your standard.

Consistent, fair correction confirms our love to our children. When the limits are set, the rules enforced and we model what we expect; our children will be more happy and secure than those who have free rein. In Pr.13:24 Love and Discipline go together....

- The difference between -

Abuse Discipline .

Unfair and unexpected. Fair and expected.

Degrading and demoralizing. Upholds dignity.



Extreme - too harsh, brutal. Balanced - within limits.

Torturous - leaves scars. Painful but leaves no scars.

Results from hatred and resentment. Prompted by love and concern.

Creates terror, emotional damage, resentment of authority. Leads to healthy respect for authority.

Destroys self-esteem; leads to permanent damage and inability to maintain responsibilities. Strengthens self-esteem; leads to self-discipline.

Discipline should uphold the dignity of the child; not humiliate him.

- The difference between -

Crushing the spirit (Pr.17:22) Shaping the will .

Heart is sad. Joyful heart - cheerful face.

Dries up the bones. Good medicine.

Light goes out deep inside. Inner strength.

Awash and adrift. Reaching for goals and accomplishments.

- The difference between -

Willful defiance (Pr.22:15) Normal childishness .

Deliberate disobedience. Make mistakes.

Refusal to do chores. Forget chores occasionally.

Create havoc as a form of play. Spill things.

Walk into mud-puddles to see what you do. Get their good clothes dirty.

Start early. "Foolishness": a God-mocking, instruction-hating nature. Not impish nor mischievous.

Stay balanced. "Rod of discipline": Proper discipline preserves your child from heartache. Firmly punish willful defiance.

- The difference between -

Tongue-lashing (Pr.3:11,12; 29:15) Verbal correction .

Words of blame. Words of reproof.

Loud shouting. Quiet firmness.

Rapid speaking and running together sentences. Deliberate spacing of words.

Immediate reaction to something. Space for deliberate silence.

- The difference between -

Inconsistency Consistency .

When the rules aren't known. Firmly established rules.

Don't know what to expect. No child should be surprised by a spanking.

React in front of siblings/family. Discipline in private.

Don't really understand the seriousness. Careful explanation of the problem

Unreasonable. Reasonable.

Ephesians 6:1-4; Hebrews 12:4-14.

"Nurture" - discipline. "Admonition" - instruction. "Chastisement" - discipline.

Life is difficult and life is a series of problems. Do we moan about them or solve them? Do we want to teach our children to solve them? Don't require constant approval from your children. Discipline is instructing and training. Have a reason for what you do. Use the right method - regulation, imitation, inspiration. Develop respect. Improve communication.

Avoid extremes. God shows us the right way....

1. God sets forth His will.

2. God lays down the rules.

3. God says what the penalty is before the infraction happens.

4. God follows through with the discipline.

· Discipline is the basic set of tools we require to solve life's problems.

1. Problems are uncomfortable feelings which often bring pain so life has pain and joy. Problems call out our courage and wisdom. Problems make us grow mentally and spiritually. Almost all of us try to avoid them or get out of them rather than suffer through them.

2. Let us teach ourselves and our children the value of problems and the suffering they cause.

3. Four tools of discipline:

a. Pain first, pleasure later: some haven't learned this because of undisciplined parenting - severe punishment for minor infractions; fighting in front of children; making promises and not keeping them; not taking time for loving children -good discipline takes time.

b. Accepting responsibility: before a problem can be solved we must accept responsibility for it. Many try to avoid the pain of a problem by charging it to others. ["You kids are driving me crazy."]

c. Dedication to the truth: To have discipline, truth must be more vital than our comfort. We must examine ourselves. We must be willing to be challenged. Rules to follow if dedicated to the truth: never speak falsehood; remember, withholding truth is potentially a lie; withholding truth should never be based on personal needs; withholding truth should depend entirely on the needs of those from whom it is being withheld.

d. Balance: the discipline that gives us flexibility; A reasoned appeal that produces the desired result; the right amount of pressure.

· Discipline enables us to live life to its fullest.

Training and education are forms of discipline. Discipline is deliberately created stress in our relationship with our children to help them grow and learn. It comes from an attitude more than an action; from authoritative command rather than a demand. Discipline is a tool not a weapon; a process not a crisis. We are able to stretch and build our children by creating situations.

Punishment is a matter of justice. We must give a clear explanation and then make the discipline appropriate to the 'crime.' Barriers to discipline are: parental preoccupation, ambition, absence and activities [parents should be there in formative years].

Discipline with consistency. God came every day to meet with Adam and Eve to meet their spiritual needs. To provide for such needs we should give clear instructions first and corrections last. The ultimate goal is the child's confidence when they go on their own into the world.

· Types of biblical discipline:

1. A reasoned appeal (Ga.6:1). A brother overtaken in a fault
2. Open confession (Ma.18:15). Personal offense
3. Remove from a person (2Th.3:6). Disorderly walk
4. Silence imposed (1Ti.5; Titus 1:9). Unruly and vain talkers
5. Avoidance (Ro.16:17). One who causes division
6. No social contact (1Co.5:18-20). Immorality
7. Deliberate acts of rebellion (1Ti.1:19). A self-opinionated heretic

These types of church-family discipline are the same we use in our personal families. It means that we must articulate the guidelines. Make the perimeters clear, not haphazard. State the consequences whenever one steps outside the guidelines. Consistency in control brings security. Consequences are important enough to not want them repeated.

Punishment varies with children. Children range from being compliant to defiant. We have to discipline with love. Praying is most important.

Take the lead in encouraging them to behave rather than acting after misbehavior. Anger is not a motivating factor for good behavior; discipline is. Administer the discipline when necessary rather than when anger dictates.

Attack the problem not the person. Avoid the 'you are....' approach and deal with behavior. Let messages get to the brain. Reinforce the love, but deal firmly with the problem. Discipline is more an attitude and atmosphere than an action. It is training and education. It is the kind of strictness that produces respect. Discipline promotes growth and learning; punishment is a matter of justice when laws are violated. Discipline results in the orderly working of the family with rules, guidelines and understanding. Punishment is applied when discipline breaks down.

#### COMMUNICATION:

Communication is the process that allows people to know each other, to relate to each other, to understand the true meaning of another person's life. It is the process of sharing information [verbal or non-verbal] in a way a person understands what you are saying. It is Listening, Talking and Understanding in an intelligent, loving, helpful, life-changing way. The results of communication mean we have heard, been taught, renewed and changed.

We need to take communication seriously; listen to everything one has to say before talking. We have two ears and one mouth so perhaps we should listen twice as much as we speak. We need to learn to speak the language of our children; to give them undivided attention. To be involved in what the other person is doing; to keep secrets; to be open about yourself and your faults; to share some negative things from our past helps in open communication. Praise and encouragement; asking questions; asking opinions; keeping your eyes open to see expressions; ears open to hear the tone of voice aids in communication. Reflect on what you see and hear and delay reactions before responding.

God has given us ways to communicate with Him, and He with us. Similarly we do the same with others. Even in talking about our faith we follow the same process.

Ephesians 4:14-29; Colossians 3:8; James 1:19.

Listening: One usually hear only 20% of what is said.

- Effective listening means I am not thinking about what I am going to say when the other person stops. Not just appearing to listen but wanting to hear.
- Is receiving and accepting the message as it is sent, trying to understand what the other person really means. Be quiet enough to hear.
  - Reaching out and actively caring about what he says. [A family conference]
- Objectively taking what is said and not filtering the others words through our opinions and needs.
  - Knowing the situation before jumping to conclusions (Pr.18:13).
    - Is not second guessing the other person.
  - Eliminates a major source of frustration for both wife and husband.

Talking: Communicate clearly, personally noticing the other person's reaction.

- Four reasons for not talking (Pr.15:13).....
  1. Never learned to share openly with another and can't form words.
  2. Fear of rejection or hurt, scorn, put-down.
  3. It won't do any good; can't get through so why bother.
  4. I've got nothing to offer.
- Five levels of communication: do not be satisfied with low-level communication. (from lowest to highest)
  - Level 5: Cliches. "How are you?" "I am fine."
  - Level 4: Reporting facts. "It was 32o last night."
  - Level 3: Ideas and judgments. "I think you should....."
  - Level 2: Feelings and emotions. "These kids are driving me crazy."

Level 1: Open, truthful communication. "You did a good job on that before. I want you to do it again."

· Three persons involved in communication: God, my partner and me. A breakdown between God and either partner effects communication between partners. Doorways to communication: Christ accepts us; we accept Christ's love; we accept ourselves; we accept others; we communicate.

· Problem areas in communication: anger, anxiety, exaggeration, conflict, talking too much, not talking enough, blaming others.

#### Understanding:

Open permissive communication: Look at the positive aspects of openness [touch]; openly tell your mate about yourself; don't use openness as a means of attack; admit when a mistake is made; don't sit in judgment.

Seek to understand, not just to be understood. Go to what creates communication.

Communication guidelines: (Pr.18:21, 25; 25:11; Job 19:2; Ja.3:8-10; 1Pe.3:10)

- Be a listener (Pr.18:13; Ja.1:19). Hear what is implied.
- Be slow to speak, think first (Pr.15:23, 28; 21:23). Avoid unnecessary hurt.
- Speak the truth in love (Ep.4:15, 25; Co.3:9). Use frankness with caution.
- Do not use silence.
- Do not become involved in quarrels (Pr.17:14; 20:3; Ro.13:13; Ep.4:1).
- Do not respond in anger (Pr.14:29; 15:1; 25:15).
- When wrong, admit it and ask forgiveness (Ja.5:16; Pr.17:9; Ep.4:32).
- Avoid nagging (Pr.10:9; 17:9). "Anybody who has horse-sense will not be a nag."
- Do not blame, criticize nor ridicule (Ro.14:3; Ga.6:1; 1Th.5:11).
- Try to understand the other's opinion (Ph.2:1-4; Ep.4:2).

What creates communication: (1Co.13:1, 2; 1Pe.3:15; 3:1-4)

Ethos: [ethical]. Unquestionable integrity or the communicator loses credibility.

Pathos: [sympathy and empathy] - A caring person who shares with the listener his hopes, yearnings, longings.

Logia: [logos - words]. The communicator must have something to say. Character traits plus a meaningful message make the listener take the communicator seriously.

God speaks:

Through His Word: "Good seed."

Through His people: "Living epistles."

To communicate we need.....

- Time (Ec.3:1-8): Don't talk on the run. Important things need to be repeated. You can't rush things of importance. Sit down, look her in the eyes, open up.
- Honesty (Pr.19:5): "A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall not escape." Love will not remain without honesty. Never lie to your mate, your children, your brothers and sisters.
- Trust (Pr.25:9,10): Debate thy cause with thy neighbor himself, and discover not a secret to another: lest he that heareth it put thee to shame, and thine infamy not turn away." Keep confidences; be dependable; don't gossip.
- Patience (2Pe.1:5): "And beside this, give all diligence, add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience." Give your partners, children and others your time. Don't react too fast; don't answer too fast; don't push for answers too fast.
- Complete acceptance (Ro.15:7): "Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God." Don't talk down to people, partners, child, others. Accept differences in people.

· Love:

1. Produced by God and by knowing God (1Jn.4:7,8),
2. Real love does not need a response (1Jn.4:10).
3. Is best seen by what it does (1Jn.3:17, 18).
4. Is known by its ability to give (Jn.3:16).
5. Is developed by obedience (Jn.14:15).
6. Is hindered by sin in our lives (1Jn.3:11, 12).
7. Is based on commitments that can stand (S.of S.8:6, 7).

- When there is no response: Don't panic; look at the situation from the other person's view [tensions, sickness, fear of being judged, spiritual problems -- may hinder]. Love without response.

Communication: The way to avoid misunderstanding.

- Physical needs met: communicate the fact that parents want to meet children's needs as they arise.

- We do not base our love on behavior.

- Touch, facial expression. a glance say how we feel.

- Open discussion of problems will help a child to cope with the world around.

- Fun, games, sharing special meals are all communicators.

- Prayer, Bible reading, talking of spiritual truths are all important communication methods.

- Correction and discipline communicate the need for change.

Communicate values by.....

- Awareness: Identify the positive moment of behavior to encourage.

- Praise: Tell him what has pleased you. Be specific in what you praise.

- Teachable moment: Tell him why you are pleased and why this type of behavior is important to you.

- Enjoyable time: Do something he enjoys and it makes acceptable behavior worthwhile and confirms the praise just given.

How to praise:

- Tie it to events or actions we need to encourage. It will ultimately become part of the way a child thinks about himself when no one praises.

- Excessive praise creates dependence on words.

- Praise behavior, not non-behavior. Some praise children for doing nothing.

- Praise for honesty and respect, not just for tying shoes and using the bathroom.

- At first children need more sincere words for ordinary things.

- Soon a person needs considerably less as praise isn't the goal.



1. Be specific: Not 'you were very good' but 'you were very good when you picked up your clothes and hung them up. That was thoughtful and grown up. I like that.'

2. Give 100% praise: Not "You've got four A's and a B on your report card. That's good but you've got to get that B up." But "I'm proud of you for getting four A's on your report card."

- When the occasion arises address both the good and bad parts of an issue.
- When a child tests you ["You don't love me."] don't spend a lot of time in discussion. Just ["You know that's not so. You know I love you."] give assurance when there is no real demand.
  - Don't praise as a response for feeling sorry.
  - Promote sibling-caring rather than sibling-rivalry.

#### Promoting vision and change:

Envision the goals you have for your children and lay out plans to reach them. Biblical examples of parental failure: Eli (1Sa.2:12-17; 3:11-14; 4:11-22), and Samuel (1Sa.8:3). They were too busy serving the Lord to build godliness into the lives of their sons.

Don't spend a lot of time correcting wrongs. Making waves is often what a child wants. Give them a reason to change their behavior such as an enjoyable time as opposed to conflict. Don't make contracts.

Some practical exercises to help you become more sensitive:

- Spend time at the dinner table listening to what others say.
  - Think before you speak.
- Think about the feelings of others before you give orders to them.
- Learn to enjoy being alone and it will help you to enjoy others.
- Get enthused or excited with people when good things happen to them.
  - Accept other's problems as seriously as you do your own.
  - Care about other's comforts as much as you do your own.
  - Do something special to or for those closest to you.

Positive communication: Communicate clearly; communicate personally [do not talk in the abstract - look in the eye]; notice what the other person is wearing, facial expression, concerns.

Developing communication begins with sensitivity....

- Learn to listen: Listen for first sounds.
- See what is around you: In the morning look for something you have never seen before. Notice things.
- Express how you feel: warm sunshine; touch a child; smile/
- Language of communicating: We use similar words but have different meaning. The language a person uses lets you know what he prefers.

1. Auditorially oriented person depends on the spoken word: "How does this sound to you?" "I hear what you say."
2. Visually oriented person depends on eyes and visual images: "Does this look alright to you?" "That looks good to me."
3. Kinetically oriented person feels his way through experiences: "I can't get a handle on this." "I've got a good feeling about this project." "I know how you feel." "Are you saying this to make me feel good?"

· Towards open communication ask your mate.....

1. If you could point out one thing about me that pleases you, what would it be?
2. What would you say is my greatest strength?
3. How can I help you to be a more fulfilled person?
4. What one thing in my personality or behavior pattern causes you the most difficulty?
5. If you could change one thing about me what would it be?

· Social communication tips.....

1. Put the person or persons you are communicating with at ease.
2. At the introduction, the other person is the important one. Don't try to be personality plus.
3. Communication is sharing, not entertainment.
4. People respond to people who respond to them.

Responsibilities:

- \* The Responsibility to train up the child, Pro.22:6
- \* The Responsibility to bring up the child, Eph.6:4.
- \* The Responsibility to lay up for the child, 2Cor.12:14.

#### The Home:

- \* The home is a nursery , 1Thes.2:17.
- \* The home is an academy , 2Tim.3:15.
- \* The Home is a sanctuary , 1Sam.2:27-28.

#### Children and their father:

- \* A father must deal individually, 1Thes.2:11.
  - \* A father rules admirably, 1Tim.3:4.
  - \* A father guides graciously, Col.3:21.
  - \* A father loves tenderly, Ps. 103:13.

#### Children and their mother:

- \* She lives a godly life before them, Ps.116:16; Ps.86:16.
  - \* She protects them, Mat.23:37.
- \* She is an example of industry to them, Pro.31:28

#### Examples of good parenthood:

- \* Preserving children from the world, Ex.2:2.
  - \* Providing for growth, 1Sam.2:19.
  - \* Praying for new life, 2Kgs.2:21-22.

#### The Response of children:

- \* The Responsibility to obey parents, Col.3:20.
- \* The Responsibility to honor parents, Ex.20:12.

## TAKING BACK CONTROL OF THE FAMILY.

Mandatory rules: Ones that must be obeyed. Parents 1] clearly state the rule, 2] effectively follow through to make sure it is obeyed, 3] enforce it consistently. Children were not born with knowledge of your rules, the desire to obey them, or an understanding that you expect your rules to be obeyed. In the early years of childhood, the children were controlled by your rules – when to eat, when to sleep, what to wear; “yes”, “no”, “don’t”, “stop.”

Which of these primary methods of control worked?

1. From the time they were old enough to \_\_\_\_\_, I consistently told them to \_\_\_\_\_ whether they wanted to or not, and effectively followed through to see that they did.
  2. I prayed a lot.
  3. I took them to an expert.
4. I gave them “freedom to fail”. After repeatedly making fools of themselves in front of friends and relatives, they started to \_\_\_\_\_.
  5. I reasoned with them.
6. I didn’t do anything. They were born knowing \_\_\_\_\_.
  7. I bargained, negotiated, or compromised with them.
  8. I rewarded or punished them.
9. I was tough. I told them to \_\_\_\_\_ or get out of the house.

If you were successful at getting your children to obey any of these mandates you 1] clearly stated your rules, 2] effectively followed through to demonstrate that rules must be obeyed, 3] were consistent. The problems come as children grow older and more capable of rational reasoning. Parents often adjust their parenting to fit the child rather than keeping a steady course. Adopting popular “new” approaches and taking early successes for granted, allow mandatory rules to become optional.

Optional Rules: ones that parents want obeyed, but children find ways to evade. Problems 1] rules not clearly stated, 2] parents haven’t effectively followed through making sure of obedience, 3] parents haven’t been consistent.

Generally these are flawed in design where children make their own options. If you have spent months or years trying to change your children’s behavior, answer these –

1. Rewards and punishments: if kids are willing to put up with punishments, who is in control?
2. Problem solving (bargain, negotiate, compromise): if your children are good negotiators or don't live up to agreements, who is in control?
3. Freedom to fail: if the children don't learn the lesson you hoped they would learn, who is in control?
  4. Reasoning: if your children don't agree with your reasoning, who is in control?
  5. Experts: if the experts aren't able to motivate your children to change, who is in control?
  6. Inherited insight: if your children instincts don't agree with your rules, who is in control?
  7. Praying: if God doesn't choose to make your children obey your rules, who is in control?
8. Getting tough: if your children are willing to leave the house instead of obeying your rules, who is in control?

Children will not go out of their way to obey rules they don't believe in. If you don't clearly state the rules, whose interpretation of those rules will children use, yours or theirs? If you don't follow through effectively and enforce your rules, are your children likely to follow through and enforce them on their own? Are your children likely to be consistent in obeying rules that you are not consistent in enforcing?

Discretionary Rules: the child has parental permission to set rules for themselves. This is always better than optional rules. These are not necessarily wrong depending on age, maturity and experience. Human beings (including children) prefer doing things in their own way, in their own time, and given an option, will usually do as they please. If you are a parent, you know that if your children are given an option, they will do as they please. They may not be defiant, just preferring to do things in their own way like the rest of us. Unless parents make mandatory rules, kids will do as they please.

#### AVOID UNCLEAR DIRECTIONS:

- \* Clichés and worn-out expressions: "shape up"; "your attitude stinks."
- \* Unspecific directions: "be home on time"; "be nice."
- \* Requests and favors: "please pick up your clothes; I'd like the lawn mowed."
  - \* Just giving advice: "If I were you, I'd study more."
- \* Making predictions: "If you don't study, you won't graduate and get a decent job."
  - \* Wants, desires, expectations: "I want you to...; I'd like you to...; I expect..."
- \* Threats, rewards, consequences: "Just wait until your father comes; if you come home late...; you may go out if..."
  - \* Pleading, begging: "Please, just this once; I'm only asking for some cooperation."
  - \* Sarcastic encouragement: "Here, let me help you pack; you know it all, go ahead and try it."
- \* Observations and opinions: "Your room is a mess; you're late again; this report card is horrible."
  - \* Questions: "Where were you? Why did you...? What made you think...?"
  - \* Reasons: You dump a whole lot of words in their ears.
  - \* Challenges: "You will be home at 7:00; you aren't going to leave this house."
- \* Conflicting directions/rules: "Be home at 6:00 – there is no need for him to be home before 7:00."
  - \* Timeless directions: "Take out the trash; sit up straight."

With a firm, resolute voice that sounds like you mean what you say, tell them what to do, when to do it, and how often it is to be done. "Now, never/always; stop/start, quit, don't, be, take, make, do." The fewer the words the better. Use "please" as long as they obey the rule.

To take control of things, start using directions that most clearly state the rule. If your standards and the child's are the same, then you know the task when completed will be mutually acceptable. If you have different standards (of cleanness etc.), be specific; "This morning, and every morning....." After awhile it is hoped the child will enforce the rule on his own.

#### INEFFECTIVE FOLLOW-THROUGH.

Children spend years learning how to manipulate parents to get their way. Kids use what works to get their own way. These are common manipulations children use:

\* Arguing: arguments are a challenge of the will. Four reasons for a child to argue 1] delay: a thing is put off for at least the length of the argument, 2] cooling off: they stalk out of the room in anger instead of doing what they were supposed to do, 3]wearing the parent down: repeatedly, tenaciously arguing until the parent gives in, 4]power: who is in control.

The solution is, "never argue with a kid." You can't win.

\* Deflecting arguments: whenever there is an argument – the kid has the right to defend himself. To focus on mandatory behavior, learn these words – "nevertheless;" "regardless;" "be that as it may;" "nonetheless;" "that is not the issue." Discuss, share and talk but never argue with your child.

\* Parent vs. parent: parental arguments; good guy/bad guy game; taking sides – never let it happen.

\* Lying: never demand a confession from the child; ask for the truth, and if the child doesn't give it, go looking for it. Demand the rules be followed.

\* Swearing: sometimes bad words are used to throw you off the main issue. Deal with the immediate issue first. Deal with the bad words after the first task is finished.

\* Leaving: try to stop them, and let them know if they leave without your permission, someone will be coming after them to bring them home.

\* Violence: never allow your child to get physically violent with you. Stop them immediately.

\* Punishment: physical punishment in older children rarely changes behavior. It is much more important to follow through effectively with the rules.

#### INCONSISTENCY.

Children whose experience says, "I don't have to obey that rule yet," persistently push the limits to the "wire" and get their way. The best way to encourage misbehavior is to inconsistently give them the option to do so. Repeating instructions often only lead to irritation and ultimately anger.

## TAKE CONTROL IN WORD AND DEED.

Use as few words as possible to keep directions clear. Do not nag, punish, manipulate or beg to get children to obey a rule you aren't willing to enforce. Either it is your rule – mandatory, or your children's rule discretionary, and you leave the enforcement of rules to them. Either way you can bring peace to your home.

- \* Bedwetting: directions – “get up at.... Follow through – get them up till they are used to it. Consistent – do it every night.
- \* Chores/home responsibilities: directions – “take the trash out now.” Follow through – make sure it is done when you want it done. If they are too slow, do it with them even if you have to put your hands on their. Consistent – every time a chore is to be done, tell the child specifically what to do, when to do it until the child does it properly on his own.
- \* Curfew/punctuality: directions – specific time. Follow through – 1] if you can't trust them to come home at the right time say, “No, you can't go out,” 2]phone and tell them to come home or go get them, 3] if you know from experience they may not go where they are permitted to be, go with them. Consistent – follow through each time.
- \* Drugs and alcohol abuse: directions – never. Follow through – know your school; know what's in your child's room; never let children attend parties unless you have full confidence in the sponsor or go yourself. Consistent – know who your children are with and enforce your rules.
- \* Fighting with siblings: directions – “stop, quit, don't, don't ever.” Follow through – step in; “don't ever call your sister that.” Consistent – repeat the process.
- \* Peer pressure: directions – “never associate with \_\_\_”; you may be with only \_\_\_\_.” Follow through – know where your children are, who they are with, what they are doing. Consistent – make your demands every time and demonstrate you will enforce the rules until the child does it on his own.
- \* Running away: directions – “don't ever leave without permission, ever!” Follow through –go after them. Consistent – track him down every time.
  - \* School performance in class: directions – do everything the teacher assigns every day; don't do (wrong behavior). Follow through – go to the class immediately if something is wrong and stay there until the child does what is required. Consistent – get a daily or weekly progress report.
- \* School performance in homework: directions – do it; do it now. Follow through – same time of day; same place; make them do what is required. Consistent – make them know they must do the homework.
  - \* Stealing: directions – don't steal ever. Follow through – know what the child has and how he got it. Consistent – demand stolen items be returned and necessary consequences faced.
- \* Temper: directions – “calm down now!” follow through – send them to some private place until they are through; remain calm; stop the behavior. Consistent – never let a temper tantrum pay off; don't give in.

## SHARE YOUR LOVE.

- \* Express appreciation: after children comply with your mandatory rules, thank them; acknowledge the pleasure of cooperation; act as if the child were doing it on his own.
- \* Atmosphere: set a tone of love and caring by starting the day and ending it by saying good things to one another. Keep reaching out.
  - \* Be together: spend time together working, playing, talking. Bring the hostile, angry ones into the circle.
  - \* No isolation: all need some privacy but not isolation. Allow private times but reduce them if necessary.
  - \* Touching:

## DISTINCTIVES OF RESPONSIBLE DISCIPLINE

1. Parents never seek to punish: they seek to discipline, teach and train
2. If “punishment,” pain or some kind of consequence is involved; the parent is not causing it – reality is!
3. Reality discipline is the best system to avoid inconsistency.
4. Reality is the best way to teach accountability and responsibility.
5. Avoid being the Super Parent:

- \* I own my children
- \* I am judge and jury
- \* My children can never fail
- \* I am boss, what I say goes – no matter what happens.

## REALITY DISCIPLINE

- \* Teach accountability: children know what the limits are and why they are there.
  - \* Teach forgiveness: give children opportunity to express remorse.
  - \* Consider differences: discipline can be different for different children.
  - \* Have a strategy: allowances give a sense of worth and responsibility.
  - \* Assign responsibilities: encourage; for lack of responsibility, have a cost.
  - \* Allow variety: the older they get, decrease the assigned responsibilities.
    - \* Provide opportunities for accountability:
- \* Pull the rug out from under them: irresponsibility has consequences; lack of permission brings the result of their choice.
  - \* Spank for rebellion: control your emotions; follow up with a clear explanation.
    - \* Earn respect: listen to them; take your time.
- \* Give choices: give opportunities to make good and bad choices (do this when the child is young).

## FIVE PRINCIPLES TO PREVENT CRISIS

1. Take time to relax and enjoy each other.
2. Discipline with consistency.
3. Express affection.
4. Build up a shaky self-image.
5. Love each other.



## STEPS TOWARD HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS IN FAMILY LIFE

- \* Talk openly with your children (be honest).
  - \* Build trust (keep your word).
  - \* Look for help if you need it.
- \* Set parental standards (make boundaries).
- \* Encourage your children to be involved in positive activities.
  - \* Encourage positive peer influence.
- \* Promote sexual, drug, alcohol restraint (ask questions all the time).
  - \* Help foster a spiritual life
  - \* Make a sexual purity challenge.
  - \* Be willing to talk about difficult subjects.

## INFLUENCE SPIRITUAL VALUES IN YOUNG PEOPLE

- \* Do not panic over questions or questioning.
  - \* Parents set the pace.
  - \* Make a difference.
  - \* It is never too late to change.

## YOUNG CHILDREN

Relationships: the most effective method for teaching Christian concepts to a young child is for a positive relationship to exist between that child and adults who have faith that makes a difference in their lives.

The attitude of the child is of greater consequence than his factual knowledge. A child reasons from the real-life experiences. Everyday experiences provide opportunities for meaningful conversations. The Lord Jesus often tailored His teaching and discussions on questions asked by His listeners. A child doesn't always bring an interest to a conclusion. His interest is only satisfied a little bit at a time.

Repetitions: an essential ingredient in a child's learning process. When a thing is fun, they ask, "Do it again." Adults often get tired of childish interests. In order to teach a child, we need to learn more from the child than the child learns from us.

- \* The Bible commands that children be taught faith
- \* Isolating a child from God (the idea of God) is not right.
- \* A child acts as a total person – mentally, emotionally, physically, socially, spiritually.
- \* A child's thinking depends on experiences that encourage spiritual growth and broaden his understanding.
- \* Christian teaching helps meet the needs of young children.

2.

The child and self: De.5:29; 1Chr.29:19; Pr.23:7; Ps.37:11

- Thought patterns
- Security of belonging
- Satisfaction of achievement
- Joy of feeling valued
- Establish and enforce reasonable rules
  - Specific instructions
  - Accept honest emotions
  - Provide healthy activity
  - Praise for accomplishment
  - Focused attention
- Conversation that is personal
- Music, physical skills, games
- Training for independence

1. The child and others: Mat.22:39; Jn.13:35

- Other things: answering early questions about God
- Other people: parents/siblings – the influence of family relationships

Right and wrong are judged by the consequences as far as children are concerned.

Right and wrong have no middle ground to a child.

How do the children react towards each other.

How do people behave toward me.

Punishment for wrong-doing is expected by a child.

Disobedience creates misfortune.

· Consistency on the part of adults

· Attitudes toward other children

1. The child and the church

· Why do we go

· What do we do at church

· How do we behave in church

· What do we feel about church

1. The child: the Bible and prayer

· Learning Bible words

· Memorizing verses of scripture

· Symbols used in the church and in the Bible

· Miracles: are they true?

· How do adults act toward the Bible and prayer

· Bible stories: telling stories; visuals; questions.

1. The child and Jesus: His life

· Who is He

· His death and resurrection

· Salvation through the Lord Jesus

1. The child and God

- Attitude towards God
- Thoughts about God
- Love of God and God's love
- Discipline by God

#### TEENAGERS

#### PARENTS

Marital dissatisfaction is greater when kids are teens than when they are infants or adults. Many parents may be going through a mid-life crises; economic burdens increase; many parents feel their physical attractiveness declines at this age. Caring for aging parents becomes a major responsibility.

#### TEENAGERS

- \* Friends become very important
- \* Dating relationships develop
  - \* Acne develops
  - \* They get jobs
- \* Rebellion may happen
- \* Concern about what they wear
  - \* They like loud music
- \* They want more independence
- \* Peer pressure is a major influence
  - \* Premarital sex is a temptation
- \* They are becoming separate individuals
- \* Unreasonable optimism about the future
- \* Reached or nearly reached the peak of their physical attractiveness
  - \* Identity crises are common

#### HONOR

Honor: deciding to place high value, worth, and importance on another person, by viewing him or her as a priceless gift and granting him or her, a position in our lives worthy of great respect. It is perhaps the greatest principle of life. This principle is – God 1 st ; others 2 nd ; self “I am 3 rd .”

Ways to get teenagers to “close down.”

1. Don't let them think on their own
2. Don't let them speak their mind
3. Don't consider their feelings are important
4. Don't respect their individuality
5. Don't spend time with them

Ways to get teenagers to “open up.”

1. Reflect tenderness
  - \* The teen is valuable and important
    - \* Care genuinely
    - \* Know when something is wrong
    - \* Be open to listening
2. Increase your own understanding of them
  - \* Be attentive when you listen
    - \* Don't rush them
  - \* Focus on the person speaking
    - \* Do not interrupt
    - \* Maintain contact
    - \* Speak clearly
3. Admit the offense when you are wrong
4. Seek forgiveness

Wise decisions during conflicts

1. Clearly define the problem issue
2. Don't be impulsive

3. Seek wise counsel
4. Create solutions by agreeing on an “pro” vs “con” solutions list
5. Agree on one or more of the solutions
6. Write down the agreement
7. Make sure the anger is dealt with after the conflict has ended.

#### Turning beliefs into convictions

1. Remember the relationship always comes first
2. Sharpen our own convictions so we can be effective models
3. Once we are aware of what we are modeling, we can provide formal instruction to our teens
4. After providing instruction, allow teenagers to find their own answers.
5. Provide encouragement during times of belief questioning
  - \* They may completely walk away from the faith
  - \* They may remain dependent on their parents beliefs
  - \* They may develop independent beliefs based on all or parts of parents values
6. Monitor teenagers during the belief questioning process
7. Conviction building is a process, not a quick fix

#### Mentors: those that can help your teenager

1. Begin asking God to bring someone into the teenager’s life.
2. Model the importance of learning from another person.
3. Understand which character qualities are important for a mentor to possess
  - \* Can meet needs
  - \* Cultivates relationships
  - \* Willing to take a chance helping
  - \* Respected by other Christians
  - \* Has resources

- \* Is consulted by others
  - \* Talks and listens
  - \* Consistent in lifestyle
- \* Can identify the needs of a teenager
  - \* Is concerned with them

4. Know where mentors can be located

5. Make contact with the person

6. Set up a meeting so the teenager can bond with this person

7. Teach the teen to ask questions

8. Keep a watchful eye – but don't intrude

#### SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF LIBERTY

1. The principle of power and form

2. God's principle of individuality

3. The Christian principle of self-government

4. The principle of Christian character

5. The principle of Christian union

6. The principle of Christian education

7. The principle of private property

#### BIBLICAL METHOD EDUCATION

Biblical reasoning: a principle is the lowest form in which an element can exist; truth reduced to its most basic form.

The principle approach: how we implant principles

1. Research: subjects and topics of interest

2. Reason: what is God's perspective and purpose for the subject and what does it reveal to me

3. Relate: relate the truths uncovered to our own lives or to the situation at hand
4. Record: write them down to accurately and permanently preserve them. Essays and notes implement the educational process

#### Three essentials of Christian education

1. Teacher
2. Content
3. Method

Education is the responsibility of parents

The principles of Christian government: the preamble to the constitution defines the purpose of civil government

1. Establish judgment [1Pe.2:14]
2. Insure domestic tranquility [1Tim.2:1-2]
3. Provide for the common defense [Rom.13:4]
4. Promote the general welfare [Rom.13:4]
5. Secure the blessing of liberty [2Cor.3:17]

#### The principles of Christian economics

God-given natural resources, plus ideas and energy, times the tools, equal man's material welfare.

$$NR + HE < T = MMW$$

#### Seven principles of liberty

1. Power and form
  - \* Order
  - \* Guidelines



- \* Parameters

## 2. Individuality

- \* Bent
- \* Personality
- \* Capacity

## 3. Self-Government

- \* Responsibility
- \* Accountability
- \* Standards

## 4. Character

- \* What it is
- \* How it is built
- \* How it can be changed

## 5. Union

- \* Participation
- \* Fellowship
- \* Sharing

## 6. Education

- \* Parents as teachers
- \* Educational systems
- \* Continuing

## 7. Property

- \* Respect

GOD-GIVEN LIBERTY (lawful enterprise) is the result of...

- Free enterprise
- Honest enterprise
- Individual enterprise
- Private enterprise
- Local enterprise
- Free market
- Law
- Good stewardship

#### RECOGNIZE YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

AFFIRMATION: give youth a sense of authenticity [Ephesians 4:1 – without anger; Zephaniah 3:17 – with joy]

ACCEPTANCE: give youth a sense of security [Proverbs 22:6 – accept their uniqueness; Romans 15:7 – accept them as they are]

APPRECIATION: give youth a sense of significance [Matthew 3:17 – for who they are; Romans 2:18 – for the choices they make; 2Timothy 1:3-5 – for the attitudes they have]

AFFECTION: give youth a sense of lovability [1st John 4:7 – love without qualifications]

AVAILABILITY: give youth a sense of importance [Matthew 19:14 – access without partiality]

ACCOUNTABILITY: give youth a sense of responsibility [Ephesians 6:4 – aware of authority]

I have a conviction that a soul is transmitted from God to personhood at conception. The heart begins to function within two weeks of conception. Every organ has begun to form in the first month. Movement of arms and legs begins in six weeks. Brain activity can be detected at 43 days. So when we are talking about families, that means we recognize life as God sees it and learn to plan for multi-person groups, not just a group of individuals living under the same roof.

In the 60s and 70s a new line of thinking began to be accepted. First, it is acceptable to look out for me first. Second, somehow my actions are separate from the consequences of those actions. Science, technology, money, or knowing people higher up in the social strata will take care of my problems.

God established the social order of families for very good reasons: to perpetuate the race; to propagate the race; to preserve life; to prepare each succeeding generation; to promote harmony and respect among all humanity and to protect the young. It is essential that a child learn to recognize and bow to authority. The first place to learn this is at home. It is also necessary that the nature and ways of discipline and authority be carried out properly. Proverbs 25:15 speaks of the "rod" and "foolishness". The "rod" refers to a scepter, authority or a tribal leader, teaching us that authority and standards are to be practiced in homes. "Foolishness" is not boyishness, but self-will, refusal, rebellion, disobedience. Why do you bow to God's authority? Is it because you are afraid of His discipline or because you love and trust the One who has the hand of authority? You may have children who obey because of punishment, but they will not be mature. Because we love them, we discipline them and correct wrong behavior.

To stop the erosion and disintegration of families we need wisdom, understanding and knowledge. Who is in charge in your home? In many homes the child is boss and knows it. Right from the beginning of family life, there is a battle of wills as to whether the child bends the parents to his way or not. When we marry, we choose to forfeit our personal right for the sake of our spouse and children. The father who even jokingly lies to his child, will find it hard to be respected. A whining, complaining mother will find the same. We all have defined roles in a blended culture. For the 20 years our children are in our home, our responsibility is to lead the family, teach them, and prepare them to go on their own way. We will never become fully equipped in our parenting roles, because just when we think we have learned what to do, the child has moved way beyond to a different phase in life. Our priorities are to live honorably and responsibly before our children; leads our children and leave a legacy behind of honor for God, confidence in God, and service for God. God does not hold us responsible for what our grown-up children do, but for what we have taught them.

In a proper and biblical relationship between parents and children there is:

- \* Love, gentleness, provision and caring on the part of parents.
- \* Honor, obedience and love toward parents on the part of the children.

As Christian parents we begin from a base of confidence:

- \* God gave us these children; they were His choice for us and we were His choice for them.
- \* There are no perfect parents, no perfect kids and this is not a perfect world.
- \* We do not automatically know "the right way". We are learning.

The contrasts between what the Word of God teaches and modern thought are clear:

- \* The Word of God teaches parental authority; modern thought is that controlling parents are tyrants.
- \* The Word – authority, control, obedience is desirable; modern – children have all the rights grown-ups have.
  - \* Love and discipline go together versus love children enough and they won't need discipline.
- \* Training in obedience and respect for authority will help children achieve their potential versus feed, clothe and shelter them and give them all the benefits and then stay out of their way so "natural goodness" emerges.
- \* God has appointed parents to teach and prepare our children for life versus learn from the "professionals" because it is out of date to live biblically under grace.
- \* Obedience will likely give a child a wholesome self-image versus insisting on obedience will destroy self-esteem.
- \* Insist children choose right instead of wrong versus imposed standards will damage a child's ability to learn about right and wrong (moral relativism).
  - \* I do not need my children's approval all the time; I do need their honor and obedience versus prevent negative feelings to be a good parent.
  - \* Correction is necessary to a child's behavior versus only use positive methods to train children.
  - \* Children are not faultless and sinless versus there are no bad children, only bad parents.

We have a natural duty to train our children, and a natural right to require obedience of children. The home is God's classroom. The rules we make and enforce together, will teach them the knowledge of God, right and wrong, cultural heritage, awareness of the world we live in, honor to God, to parents, to church and to country. They should learn the value of effortful work. Play reinforces work well done. Play is not the reason for existence and the right of destiny for us all. They should learn to eat right, give love and respect to family, friends and strangers, help neighbors and those in need, and consider others.

"Unconditional love" does not mean we disregard a child's behavior and give approval regardless of their actions. It is like God's love that is not sentimental, but cares enough to insist on right behavior, even when a child resents it. We are to love in a way that teaches and trains our children. Parents have control over consequences: we control all a child needs to live – food, clothes, shelter, games, money. Also we control the intangibles of love, attention, affection and approval. We apply rewards or correction dependent on the child's behavior. Children find it hard to pass up the behavior exchange for something they want. Rewards for behavior are given to us by God. Discipline is to control behavior. Punishment for wrong-doing is a natural consequence. Punishment is the payment for misbehavior.

Reinforcement of a child's behavior by regular, consistent responses from a parent or adult, really does promote the changes that we want to see. When it is done immediately and consistently, it is usually effective. The main obstacle to this method working, is parental indulgence and unwillingness to displease their child. At first, reinforce every time, consistently with tangible reinforcement. As right behavior is learned, replace them with social reinforcers (praise, etc.). God loves people even when they sin [Rom.5:8], and He also chastises them with that same love [Heb.12:6]. Show your approval with praise, attention and recognition for good behavior. Smile, hug, touch and enthusiasm in the voice are great reinforcers. Don't ignore good behavior and focus on the bad. However, do not aid the bad behavior by ignoring it or being manipulated or intimidated by a child's demands. We actually create problems in this way rather than solve them. Avoid generalizing problems. Specifically define problems and solutions.

Why do children choose to obey or disobey? At the lowest level of motivation, children want their own way. They are self-centered and consider differences as personal attacks. They have a very short attention span and may lie to keep from being corrected. They can't understand opinions different from their own.

#### LEVELS OF MOTIVATION...

##### The direct approach :

- \* They need four or five main rules delivered and enforced with a firm, loving voice while maintaining eye contact. Be assertive.
- \* Correction/discipline should be done immediately and deliberately; as short as possible with positive statements as to why they should be doing right.
  - \* Discipline may not provide direct guidance, and does not necessarily have long-term effects.
- \* Tangible rewards have significant impact. Reward for positive behavior to correct behavior, lets the child know ahead of time what to do or not to do. A cough, tap on the table, eye contact, frown, shake of the head a pause in mid-sentence can be enough at times. Combine rewards with praise.

##### The approval approach:

The second level of motivation is when self-pleasing is tempered with a desire for approval. They may fake an interest to gain acceptance or strive for recognition. They need to be accepted and are motivated when they can be in the spotlight. They will often direct a conversation to themselves as opportunities to be recognized. Keep the rules short, clear and positive and give reasons for them. Praise tasks that are well-done and encourage effort more than results. Make clear that mistakes are opportunities to learn.

- \* Praise is a reward rather than tangible rewards. Praise is better given in private when siblings are not there.
- \* Encourage your child by letting him/her know you have faith in him/her within the boundaries you have established. Make sure he doesn't like the consequences of misbehavior.
- \* Help your child learn new kinds of behavior by observing someone else acting in that way and being praised. Don't give up when there is no response.

##### Relational approach:

At level three they want approval and respect for accomplishments and good behavior. They want adult relationships and want to do what is right. They want to be competent and will accept responsibility. They will praise others and stand up for family and friends. They can make decisions based on reality.

\* Rules that are necessary can be made with input from the child. You can be open and frank in your relationship. Parents must be the leaders but with firmness because of respect for yourself, and kindness demonstrating respect for the child. Discuss wrong behavior and its natural consequences. Specify your expectations and the outcome of behavior.

Level four motivation is when there is concern for others, helping others, right actions even when criticized, optimism,

praise for others, outward focus wanting to reach full potential. Correction by suggestion and observation works.

## THE CHRISTIAN AND THE FAMILY

INCEPTION: God's family portrait. (Psa.127)

"The Lord (Jehovah) build (a process)..." We need God in this work.

· House: rest, love, personal safety.

· Walled city: protection; safety from enemies.

Attitudes: impressions are being made for good or bad -- anxious toil, covetousness, undue concern.

· Children make a family: love has an earthly object.

· The weight of a parent: arrows reach beyond us, children's attitudes reflect home training. Our strength can be put into our children.

To help solve our problems, God gives us.....

1. The courage to face our problems honestly.

2. The wisdom to understand what's happening.

3. The strength to do what we must.

4. The faith to trust Him to do what we cannot do.

· A properly guided family will subdue enemies: put to shame adversaries.

INFLUENCE: God's value center (2Ti.1:3-5; 3:14-17; 1Pe.3:1)

· Unfeigned faith: without deceit; grandmother, mother, then an impressionable son. This home may have been a divided home.

The cause of faith: the scriptures; knew them from childhood. Create a desire for God's Word. Do not treat the Bible as a dull book. We create excitement by being excited.

· Family Devotions: the family altar.

INSTRUCTION: God's training school (De.6:5-9; Pr.22:6; De.11:18-21).

- Cherish it myself (v.5).
- Teach it to your children (v.7). Why we attend meetings; the Lord's supper etc.
- Talk of it in all conditions (v.7). On a vacation why go to meetings.
- Bind it in all we see and do (v.8). Business; ethics.
- Make it obvious to others. Write it.

IMPACT: God's security force. (Ps.78:6-8).

- The Generation to come might know God's truth (v.6).
- Assure the continuation of God's truth (v.6).
- Might have a positive hope (v.7).
- Might be willing to do God's will. Able to resist evil.
- Take a spiritual physical of your family...