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ESPAÑOL
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Welcome to the first issue of *Christian Family*—a new quarterly bilingual publication affiliated with the churches of Christ and devoted to family issues from a distinctive Biblical perspective.

As society's fabric continues to erode, there is a pressing need for sound family (Christian) values to be restored. *Christian Family* is an effort to help the reader view the family as God intended it to be (Genesis 1:26–28). Each article is designed to help the reader and his family grow spiritually and find fulfillment in the family unit.

We hope that you will enjoy this magazine and continue to read future issues. And since this magazine is bilingual, once you have finished reading it, you can pass it on to a Hispanic friend or to church mission teams to take it with them to Hispanic countries. They will greatly appreciate it!

May God bless you and your family,

Paul Holland & Moisés Pinedo

Christianfamily

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ESSENTIALS TO CREATING A DISTINCTLY CHRISTIAN FAMILY

by Glenn Colley

According to the Word of God, you and I do not have enough human ingenuity to build a successful home. Psalm 127:1, written centuries ago, is still true: “Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it.”

Here are five things the Lord can use to build a great family for you.

1. *Two married parents.*

True marriage has not crashed and crumbled in the last few years, but the culture relative to marriage has disintegrated. True marriage will always be honored in Scripture as an institution that remains pure and strong. In God’s church there are many devoted **single** parents who pray that their children will grow and marry so that their grandchildren will be reared in a wholesome environment—with all the emotional and spiritual benefits of having both a mother and a father present and involved. A boy needs a father to train him how to be a strong, sanctified man who is honest, who owns his mistakes and corrects them, who respects the values of the Scriptures. A girl needs a father to affirm her and hold the honor line in her character—a man who understands that outward beauty will always be worth far less than inward beauty (1 Peter 3:1-4). There is no getting around the fact that a devoted single Christian parent can successfully form her/his child into a Christian. It is just much harder.

2. *Two married parents who seriously want a Christian home.*

Many parents say they want a solid, Christian home, but fewer are willing to make the commitments necessary to succeed. It means being faithful to Bible class and worship. It means controlling entertainment choices to exclude anything of which Christ would disapprove. It means maintaining family scruples of morality, honesty, prayer, and commitment to our Lord which utterly define the identity of the family. It means involving the entire family in spiritual family projects to care for widows, orphans, the sick, and the helpless. It means creating an atmosphere in which the things of Jesus are discussed without hesitation throughout the day. It means holding each other accountable (Ephesians 5:21).

3. *Two married parents who consider child discipline a joint effort.*

Ignoring bad behavior in our children is a recipe for creating adults who refuse to control themselves and who will live unhappy, unproductive lives—lives which will one day be detrimental in influence on our grandchildren. Some parents prefer to postpone the correction of bad behavior (temper tantrums, refusal to obey parents, disrespect to adults, lying, bad attitudes, etc.) until their children are teenagers and the core issues are bigger—to sort of put their more serious child-rearing “on credit” until later. They will regret this. The prime time for training children is when they are young and pliable in their hearts (Proverbs 19:26; 29:15).

4. *Two married parents who are rock-solid in their determination to keep Satan out of their house.*

The road Satan travels into the living rooms and bedrooms of our homes is the road of mass-media. Be perfectly honest and ask yourself how much of television/movies today is counterproductive to parents rearing their children to love and serve the Lord. Parents must simply stop being cavalier toward family entertainment, imitating their worldly counterparts. Online devices can be beneficial in your children’s education but, with a couple of key strokes, they can unleash a tidal wave of mind-corrupting filth. Top music lyrics are cloaked in genres which parents have a hard time understanding, so they end up turning a deaf ear to soul-poisoning values which steal their children’s hearts away. Want to build a Christian home and instill healthy values of righteousness in your children? Put on your spiritual glasses and take another look at your family’s entire entertainment practices. Then radically remove any garbage you find.

5. *Two married parents who have a plan for educating their children in the Word of God.*

Begin tonight having sit-down family Bible time with your kids. Announce that it will be every night. Vary what you do each night: verse studies, games to learn the Bible, singing, acting out Bible narratives, encouragement-note writing, writing missionary notes, ethical problem-solving, etc. Be creative, and make this nightly event a habit. Dad should be the leader; but if Dad cannot or will not, Mom should do it. Your children will one day do the same with your grandchildren and, believe me, you will be glad you did it (Proverbs 22:6). ■

parenting.

No Ice Cream for You, Buddy! *by* Moisés Pinedo

*R*ecently, a Christian father was telling me about the time his youngest son (about eight years old) was disrespectful to him and his mother and did not want to apologize. The child shut himself up in his room and was mad with his parents all day long.

The next day, the father thought of a plan to make his son apologize. He would take his two sons to the ice-cream shop and would use the “ice-cream tactic” to persuade his son. The “ice-cream tactic” is when you take your child to the ice-cream shop and tell him that if he does what you say, then you will buy ice cream for him; otherwise, there is no ice cream for him!

I asked the father if that had worked, and he informed me that things did not turn out as expected. His son determined not to apologize, the father did not buy him ice cream, and the situation continued the same until the next day—when, finally, the son decided to apologize. The father was relieved that the problem had come to an end.

I asked: “Do you think the problem was solved?” He answered: “Well, I believe so; didn’t my son ask for forgiveness at the end?” I pointed out: “Correct, but the **real** problem was not solved.” Then the conversation began again.

The Importance of Obedience

Throughout that process, there was a failure in teaching the child the importance of obedience. As the father had learned, this “ice-cream tactic” only “works” when the child wants ice cream **more** than he wants to persist in disobedience. This tactic (like other similar tactics) is inadequate since it gives a warm welcome to disobedience; that is, it provides a benefit for obedience (the ice cream), but lacks punishment for disobedience.

Imagine that our society only provided benefits for obedience but did not demand punishment for crimes. If the government offered a tax reduction to moral citizens, and tried to dissuade criminals by saying that they will not be given such reduction (the “ice cream”) if they continued in their crimes (but neither would they be punished), few criminals (or none) would choose the compensation instead of persisting in theft, rape, fraud, etc. The truth is that when punishment is not diligently administered, ungodliness abounds (Ecclesiastes 8:11).

Christian parents should teach their kids that, essentially, obedience is not an option; it is a commandment (Ephesians 6:1-3)! When parents do not teach obedience to their children, they teach them to sin. Although it is true that God does not impute sin to children (Matthew 18:3), early disobedience is the seed that will sprout as future sin.¹

But as the father objected, “is it not right to give our children options for them to learn to make good decisions?” Absolutely! However, Christian parents should not tolerate disobedience nor devalue obedience. When it comes to your children’s education, would you allow them to choose if they want to go to school or not? When it comes to your children’s nutrition, would you allow them to choose chocolates and candies as their daily diet? Then, when it comes to their spiritual and moral education, why would Christian parents allow their children, who are still learning to discern right from wrong (Deuteronomy 1:39), to choose disobedience as an acceptable option?

The Urgency of Obedience

Additionally, there was a failure in teaching the child the urgency of obedience. Yes, the child apologized to his parents, but he did so under his own terms and in his own time. He apologized when he “got tired of being mad”—not when he **needed** to apologize. Did he apologize because he had reflected on his bad attitude or because he had come to the conclusion that his parents had received enough punishment and disdain? Regardless of the reason, the fact is that a lesson the child had indirectly learned is that obedience is not urgent.

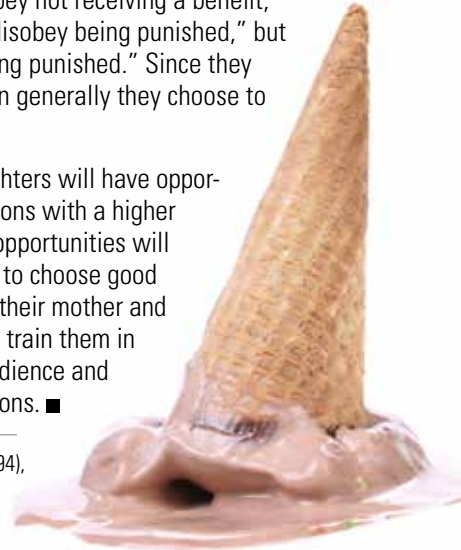
Are we to raise children who become adults who only decide to do good when they get tired of doing wrong? Should our children become Christians who, when confronted for their sins, accuse their brethren in Christ as hypocrites, stop attending church services, and close the doors of their hearts to God—until, finally, when resentment, anger, and pride no longer satisfy them, they decide to come back? Should we promote the habit of making due authority (paternal, maternal, spiritual, civil, heavenly) wait until they (our children) feel they want to obey?

From an early age, children need to learn that obedience is important and urgent. When one of our daughters does not want to do a house chore or does not have a right attitude when asked to do something, she knows that she will be given healthy options to

promote conscious and diligent decisions (not disobedience or delay.) She will be prompted to choose between (1) to do it, and do it with a right attitude and quickly and avoid punishment; or (2) to be punished and do it. Simply, once an adequate commandment has been given, there is no room for disobedience. Our daughters know that the wise decision is to obey the commandment diligently, avoiding disobedience that will only generate punishment without absolving them from responsibility. In other words, the choice is not between “to obey or to disobey not receiving a benefit,” neither between “to obey or to disobey being punished,” but between “to obey or to obey being punished.” Since they will have to obey in the end, then generally they choose to do it from the beginning.

When they are older, my daughters will have opportunities to make their own decisions with a higher level of responsibility, and such opportunities will demand their personal decisions to choose good or evil. But as they grow, and as their mother and I have the direct responsibility to train them in their way (Proverbs 22:6), disobedience and delay will not be acceptable options. ■

1. See also Pearl, Michael and Debi (1994), *To Train Up a Child* (Pleasantville, TN: No Greater Joy), pp. 18-20.



Commandments for Parents



1. You shall teach your children to honor their parents by honoring their heavenly Father (cf. John 8:29).
2. You shall guide them by godly example (1 Corinthians 11:1).
3. You shall give them proper spiritual instruction (Deuteronomy 6:6-9).
4. You shall not ridicule them, but build them up (Colossians 3:21).
5. You shall give them time and attention (cf. Matthew 19:14).
6. You shall keep what you promise to them (Matthew 5:37).
7. You shall not refuse to discipline them (Proverbs 19:18).
8. You shall have reasonable expectations for them (cf. 1 Corinthians 10:13).
9. You shall communicate with them with kind words and actions (1 Corinthians 13:5).
10. You shall teach them not to steal, but to work for their needs and the needy (Ephesians 4:28).

marriage.

Loving Him/Her as God Loves *by Paul & Rachel Holland*

Love is an emotion that comes from the nature of God (1 John 4:8). God put love into the heart of each person. When we begin life as small children, we do not understand love but we sure understand what we need! Food. Sleep. Clean clothes. As we grow older, we begin experiencing love—we love our toys, our brothers and sisters, our parents, our TV shows. We love these things for what they do **for us**. At some point, we have to learn that love is to be directed **toward** others.

We should also learn that love has to be directed toward others **despite** how they respond to us. Again, God shows us the way. When the first husband and wife, Adam and Eve, sinned in the garden (Genesis 3), they separated themselves from God (Isaiah 59:1-2). But God loved them anyway. He promised to send Jesus to crush the head of Satan who had deceived them (Genesis 3:15).

So, love is also a choice. Love is a decision to follow through with what is the best for the other person, despite the consequences that choice may have on us. God sent His only unique Son to the earth to die for Adam and Eve (and all of us). He made a choice, and that choice led Him to give up His Son.

Now, let us consider that concept of love in a marriage relationship. In 1 Corinthians 7:1-5, the apostle Paul wrote:

Now concerning the things of which you wrote to me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

The context of this discussion is the physical/sexual relationship between husband and wife: “It is good for a man not to touch a wom-

an.” (“Touch” here is used as a figure of speech for having an intimate relationship with her.) In light of the urges, drives, and desires that are a natural part of being human, though, Paul wrote that “each” man should have his **own** wife and “each” woman should have her **own** husband. God’s plan, then, is for marriage to consist of one man and one woman.

But the responsibility does not just end there. Observe that the husband “must fulfill his duty to his wife.” That shows that a husband has a “duty” toward his wife that **he** must fulfill. What does **your** wife need? Have you ever asked her? Have you ever asked her what she needs from **you** as her husband and the head of your family?

Husbands, Christian counselors will recommend that you ask her about her most important needs. They will likely be these, or something very similar to these: Affection (non-sexual), intimate conversation, honesty and openness, financial support, and family commitment. You will notice that these “needs” are not your needs. You would make a different list (see below). It is important to recognize that she has these needs (and others), but you cannot fulfill these needs until you talk with her about **her** needs and how you can fulfill those needs.

Wives, you are also responsible to fulfill the needs of your husband. Have you asked **him** how you can fulfill his needs? The list above is your needs (or something similar), but they are not **his** needs. Christian counselors will suggest that the man’s most important needs are: Sexual fulfillment, recreational companionship, physical attractiveness (of his wife), domestic support (making your house a home and haven), and admiration (of his accomplishments, work, and leadership of the home). You will have to ask **him** what his personal, unique needs are and how they relate to this list.

We are giving some suggestions on how you can relate to your spouse and show your love for him or her. It begins with loving him/her as God loves us—unconditionally and sacrificially. Then, you have to communicate that love by seeing how you can meet the needs and expectations your spouse has in the marriage.

As you communicate your love to your spouse, keep in mind the broad Christian principles given to us in the New Testament that regulate all of our communication, not just between husbands and wives: “Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection” (Colossians 3:12-14).

Compassion. Kindness. Humility. Gentleness. Patience. Toleration. Forgiveness. Love. If you work on those concepts in your marriage, you will have a spouse who will (likely) not go anywhere else in search of love, affection, companionship, etc.

God wants you to have a happy and successful marriage. He created it for your needs and your enjoyment. You will likely get **out** of the marriage what you put **into** the marriage. Give it your all! ■

1. From Harley, Willard, Jr. (2011), *His Needs, Her Needs: Building an Affair-Proof Marriage* (Grand Rapids, MI: Revell).

5 Tips for Him

1. If your wife asks you if a dress makes her look “fat,” don’t answer until your lawyer is present, or better yet, fall on the floor and fake a heart attack.
2. Remember that day when you said, “I do”? Write it 100 times on a piece of paper and you will feel better in the end.
3. Whenever you’re wrong, admit it; whenever you’re right, keep quiet (Ogden Nash).
4. Remember that the way to preserve a wife is usually the same way you get one in the first place.
5. Thank your wife daily; if it wasn’t for her, you would spend all your life thinking you are perfect.

And 5 Tips for Her

1. Don’t treat your husband as one of your children. I know, sometimes he acts like one of them, but “look beyond the obvious.”
2. Remember that your husband doesn’t eat the same amount as you do, and that he doesn’t typically like to go on a diet.
3. Don’t ask your husband to always do every repair in the house; do it yourself, and do it wrong—he will come to stop you and teach you how to do it. He will think he is the hero, the work will get done, and you will be able to take a nap.
4. Remember that “a good wife always forgives her husband when she’s wrong” (Milton Berle).
5. It is about time to leave the past in the past! In the end, making a list of all of your husband’s defects can be an exhausting task.

Some tips adapted from the Internet

women.

What **Kids** Really Need

by Kimberley Pinedo




Love also translates into time; kids everywhere in the world equate time with love... Spending time with your children shows so much more love than anything that you can buy them.

In a “give me, give me” world, it is easy to get confused what kids really need from their parents. As parents, we want to give our kids many things, and sometimes we want to give them all the things we might have never had. Physically speaking, we know that kids need air to breathe, food, water, and shelter. But, spiritually speaking, what do our kids **really** need from us?

Kids need love.

From the time children are born into this world, they are totally dependent on others. They need a lot of love from their parents. It is proven that human touch is so very important to a baby. Babies need love in the form of touch, care, and attention. God told us that He is love (1 John 4:8). As a baby grows, he will need to be showered with unconditional love from his parents! He will need to learn about God through his parents. Love also translates into time; kids everywhere in the world equate time with love. Economical status really is of little matter concerning this. Our time does not always cost a certain dollar amount, but it is a precious thing! Spending time with your children shows so much more love than anything that you can buy them. Think about two scenarios. You can buy a child a toy for one dollar and then sit and play with him for an hour. Or you can buy a child a toy that is \$100 and think to yourself, “I have done my part; he needs to go play now.” Most likely, the child will feel more true love with the hour spent than receiving the expensive toy.

Kids need godly parents.



And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up (Deuteronomy 6:6-7).

Parents need to teach their children any and every opportunity they can! We as parents cannot expect the church to teach our children everything they need to know about God and the Bible. It has to start at home. It needs to be a way of life. It needs to be integrated in our daily life...when we sit in our houses, when we walk by the way, when we lie down, and when we rise up. We must seize the moments that we have with our children! This may mean waking up earlier if the child goes to school. Most parents feed their children in the morning before they are sent off to school. However, the “spiritual food” is often neglected because of the rush of the morning. It only takes about 5-10 minutes to read a chapter of the Bible. It only takes about one minute or two to read one verse, talk about it, and pray together.

Kids need the Bible. If they are small, it is our job as parents to teach them. Try to develop a true love for God’s Word. This will be in the form of singing and holding or loving their Bibles when they are as young as babies. Then, when they are in the toddler years, make the Bible come alive for them! Act out stories, color pictures, etc. when you are teaching the Bible. Make an effort! Their love for

God’s Word is not going to come naturally if you do not encourage it! When they begin to learn to read, let them read some to you, and you can help explain words or meanings. It is also beneficial for children to listen to an audio Bible on their tablets or other devices. Even if they do not understand everything, they are learning to listen to God’s Word, and you will be surprised at how much they can learn! Be joyful and intentional about your “Bible times” with your children. Be excited to gather around the table and study God’s Word; be excited to have family Bible devotionals together! They will see your joyful attitude and imitate that love for God’s Word! Try to be as consistent as you can with these “Bible times.” We are creatures of habit, and a habit may take about two months to form.¹ Therefore, what better habit could you have than creating time for teaching the Bible to your children!

Kids need play time.

This is not too hard for most kids. Let us make sure that we allow them this important part of their growing life. Kids learn things through play, and we can be near them and help them to be able to get along with their siblings or other children. During free play, there are lots of opportunities to observe their attitudes. Also, be interested in your children and take time to play what they would like for you to play with them! Kids feel loved when you take the time to sit down and ask questions about what they are interested in and show how you care about it!

Kids need discipline.

He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him promptly (Proverbs 13:24). Chasten your son while there is hope, and do not set your heart on his destruction (Proverbs 19:18).

It is clearly spoken in the Bible that we are to train our children in the Lord and to administer discipline in order to teach them. Children need to know boundaries, and parents need to be consistent in their discipline. They need to know that they are expected to obey the first time. They need to know that the family is a unit or a team in which all work together with a common purpose. The children are not in competition with each other to see who is the “best” at being a child! Their household chores are meant to be a collaboration to help the family because Mom and/or Dad does not need to be doing every chore for them! They can be contributing members of the family as they grow older, resulting in mutual respect for one another.

As you give kids many things, do not forget to give them what they really need!

1. Lally, Phillippa, et al. (2010). “How Are Habits Formed,” *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 40(6),998-1009, October.

featured.



B

What single word would define your family and why?

“Committed.” We are far from perfect but we strive to be committed to the Lord, His Word, our roles in our family, and to each other.

How would you define each member of your family in a single sentence?

Rob is a fun, creative, hardworking, and talented Christian father. **Mallory** is a wonderful wife and mother who is witty, caring, loving, virtuous, compassionate, and very conscientious in regard to her soul and the souls of our family. **Emma** is great with kids, selfless, friendly,

and a peacemaker. **Anna** is very funny, loves animals, caring, takes pride in her work, and is very organized. **Olivia** is spunky, full of energy, and can always put a smile on your face. **Grant** is all boy (high energy, loves the outdoors, wrestle), yet he has a servant heart and a desire to help and work.

Why did you start homeschooling your kids?

For us, it was the opportunity to make Deuteronomy 6 parenting easier. We wanted more time with them throughout the day to teach and influence them and to help keep them from some negative aspects that arise at a young age. We as parents, are responsible for the training of their souls, and our goal is that they will grow up to become faithful Christians

the Bakers

...are a family of six: Rob and Mallory and their four children, Emma (13), Anna (10), Olivia (7), and Grant (5). They have a great love for God and family values. Rob works at Apologetics Press as the graphic designer as well as the youth minister for the Wetumpka church of Christ, in Wetumpka, AL where he and his family worship. Here Rob and Mallory share their thoughts on homeschooling and give us their 10 best tips for family Bible study.

and go to heaven. So having more time with them was a good way to help in attaining this goal.

What are some of the benefits of homeschooling your kids?

The most important is more time with them to instill love, knowledge, and God's Word. It is great being able to integrate the Bible throughout their academic subjects. There is also more flexibility for family time, picking a curriculum that works well for each child, and a strong bond between siblings.

How do you manage to homeschool four kids and still have time for anything else?

You have to organize and prioritize activities and time, but if our four kids were in school, we would still be really busy with homework and school activities. As the children grow, they help with lots of chores and the older children also help with the younger ones. Mallory does not have lots of time for other things, but we both realize that the time that we have with our kids at home is going fast and we will not be able to get it back. Needless to say, Mallory loves what she is doing, but some days are hard.

Some people have the idea that homeschooled kids are “socially challenged.” What would you say about it?

We believe that kids learn their social skills from their parents. There are children in the school system that are not “very sociable.” We feel homeschooled children many times relate well with older people, kids their age, and younger children because they are around different ages all day and not just their peers. We do make sure our kids are with other children through church activities, sports, and homeschool co-op groups etc. Our children are very social, and making friends has never been a problem.

What is your advice for parents who want to homeschool but live in places where it is not an option?

We as parents are responsible for the training and teaching of our children; so make sure you have open communication with your kids and be involved with their school (what they are learning, who their friends are, and what extra curricula activities they are involved in). When they are at home, make the time to teach them. This can be done by having a set time of the day for a family Bible study; include a morning Bible time before they go to school. You may have to work harder at utilizing your time for teaching, but constantly look for teachable moments where you can apply God's Word in all of life's situations. ■

10 OF THEIR BEST TIPS FOR

Family Bible Time

- 1 Make it a priority to have a family Bible time everyday:** Some days it may be in the car or in a hotel room. Make it a priority and do not miss it. When you travel or when you have company, always have your Bible time together. Some days it may be longer or shorter, but make sure it is a priority.
- 2 Make it fun and enjoyable for your children:** Play games with Bible facts, sing songs, act out a Bible story. We used puppets when our kids were babies and toddlers to sing or even to ask Bible questions.
- 3 Make it age appropriate:** When the children get older, ask them questions and have them show and tell you the answers (with Scriptures). Older children still can enjoy Bible trivia games, but the questions will be deeper. When you are studying passages, help them learn how to apply what you are studying to their lives. With multiple children, some nights will be geared toward the older kids and some adjusted for the younger.
- 4 Make a schedule to add variety:** When deciding what to cover, make a schedule for each day. For example, Sunday: Apologetics Press' Christian evidence material (Discovery, AP readers, AP Bible curriculum, etc.) Monday: Bible games with Bible facts. Tuesday: Character studies.
- 5 Pray together:** Always pray together and teach your children to pray for others during this time. Have each child draw a picture or write a letter of encouragement to mail to those that you pray for.
- 6 Set goals:** This year we will read through the New Testament together and learn the theme for each book of the Bible (older ones). For the younger ones, they will learn the books of the Bible, the judges, the apostles, etc.
- 7 Make these times together meaningful:** Sit down together with your spouse and think of what you want your children to know before they leave your home. Plan a way to teach your kids during family Bible time these things, so hopefully when it is time for them to leave the home, their personal faith will be strong.
- 8 Look for teachable moments:** Look for things during the day that you can use to teach your kids a biblical lesson. Talk to your kids about God's promise to Noah when you see a rainbow. Talk to kids about how God needs workers to teach others when you see a field of crops waiting to be harvested. Stop and pray for individuals that are in need (stop whatever you are doing and have the family come together and pray).
- 9 Let your kids teach you:** Ask your kids to tell you what they learned in Bible class. Test their knowledge of the subject. Ask questions that make them think of the lesson and its application. Make them accountable for listening and learning God's Word.
- 10 Enjoy the time together:** Most of us only get about 18 years with our kids at home. Sometimes our lives are very hectic. Set aside this time to just enjoy learning God's Word and His life lessons together. Children are a blessing from God and we are the stewards of their souls. Enjoy the time God has given you to protect, nurture, and teach their pure hearts the love of God. God wants our kids' souls to be with Him. So, let's do our best to present them pure and holy!





teens.

THE LASTING TREASURE by Jewell Holland

I remember when I was small that I prayed to God, “Please don’t send Jesus back to the earth soon. There are too many things I want to do! I don’t want Jesus to come back yet.” I was five or six when I prayed that prayer, and I look back on it and think, “How could I not have wanted Jesus to come back?” It was because at that age, I just focused on my physical future. I can also remember the first time I prayed, “Jesus, come quickly! I don’t want to deal with temptations any more. I want to be with you.” I finally understood what heaven is worth, so I longed to be there, and I understood that my physical future won’t give me eternal joy.

Earthly riches Proverbs 27:24 reads: “For riches are not forever, nor does a crown endure to all generations.” We know this is true: clothes get dirty; houses need repair. Even our own bodies are decaying; some day we will all die. Not only does time destroy riches, but riches can also be taken from us. The rich farmer in Luke 12 gained many crops and had to build bigger barns to store them all in, yet in the end God said to him: “Fool! This night your soul will be required of you” (vs. 20). Jesus said, “So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God” (vs. 21). Clearly we can’t trust in things so transient.

Heavenly riches But we also see that riches in heaven do last: “But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal” (Matthew 6:20). Our home is not on this earth, as 2 Corinthians 5:1 tells us: “For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”

Obtaining heavenly riches But how can we lay up those heavenly treasures? It is through Jesus’ sacrifice: “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich” (2 Corinthians 8:9). Christ gave up heaven, where every angel worshiped Him, to experience the humiliation of humanity and to die an agonizing death for us. But His sacrifice for us is useless if we don’t respond properly to it. Jesus said in John 15:10, “If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love.”

We need to make sure our lives match the life of Jesus. There are also some practical points we can take from 1 Timothy 6:17–19: “Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. Let them do good that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.”

Earthly treasures will not last; they are perishable. There is only one reward that will last: **heaven**. If we lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven and obey the commands Jesus Christ lays out for us, we will go to that eternal home. Christ gave up His own riches and His very life so that we could have that opportunity. Will you follow Him? ■

3 Dangers of Popular Music

by Moisés Pinedo



Do you like music? I do! I like to listen to music when I drive, draw, and design; I like to listen to my wife and daughters play the piano; and I like when I go to a restaurant and there is soft music playing in the background. If you are a “regular teenager,” then, most likely, you love music! But here is a word of caution: as much as you may like music, you must be careful with it. “Why?” Good question! Here is why:

1 Popular music can be addictive.

Today, ease and personal access to music is very common; you may own an iPod or other MP3 device. If not properly limited, music can become like a drug that is hard to control. The truth is that the ear never gets “filled with hearing” (Ecclesiastes 1:8).

Since your time is not really “yours” (cf. Ephesians 5:16; James 4:13-16), you must use it wisely. According to some studies, teens spend about three hours per day listening to music.¹ On the other hand, more than 60% of teens and young adults never open their Bibles in a single week.²

Music can be good in its proper time (cf. Ecclesiastes 3:1), but you should make sure that it does not take your time to listen to God’s “music” in the Bible (1 Timothy 4:13). You also should not let music rob you the time to serve God and enjoy the abundant life in Christ (John 10:10).

2 Popular music can be subtle.

Music is an expression of the human heart. God created humans with the ability to make and enjoy music (Genesis 4:21). But since the time man created an instrument to compose a melody or raised

his voice to sing a song, the devil has also used music to negatively influence man’s mind.

Satan’s devices are very subtle (2 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 4:14), and he frequently allures young people through contagious rhythm, pleasant melody, and provocative style. A great portion of today’s music is a tribute to excess, rebellion, sexual promiscuity, and other youthful passions (2 Timothy 2:22). Therefore, you should listen to popular music having in mind that the devil is usually the one “writing” the lyrics.

3 Popular music can be destructive.

Many Christian teens have spiritually died on the battlefield of ungodly music. There are music genres that are more destructive than others. For example, a study found that girls with greater exposure to **gangsta** rap music videos were more likely to be violent, and to engage in criminal acts, sexual relationships with multiple partners, and drug and alcohol use.³

Negative messages in popular songs have the potential to also literally extinguish teens’ lives. There are so many songs out there with lyrics that bluntly promote suicide or harm to others—specially in metal, rock, and rap genres. There is no need to say that no one should listen to those messages, much less those facing family problems, depression, loneliness, or disappointment.

As you listen to your favorite music, do not forget to watch your watch and watch the words. Remember that God will judge you for the way you use your time and the things you put in your mind. And finally, remember that there is a wonderful and exciting world beyond the earphones if you are willing to use your time and talents to glorify God (Matthew 5:16; Colossians 3:17). ■



1. Hallan, Susan (2006), *Music Psychology in Education* (London: London University) p. 184.

2. Gallup, Alec and Wendy Simmons (2000), “Six in Ten Americans Read Bible at Least Occasionally,” Gal-

lup, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/2416/six-ten-americans-read-bible-least-occasionally.aspx>.

3. Research from Wingood, et.al., in See, Letha (2007), *Human Behavior in the Social Environment*

from an African-American Perspective (New York: Haworth), p. 267.

children.

What **GOD** Says about Obeying Your Parents

[This article is courtesy of Apologetics Press: www.apologeticspress.org]

“Take out the trash.” “Turn off the television.” “Clean up your room.” “Get your homework done.” “Study your Bible lesson.” Likely you have heard statements like these many times in your life. Yet, how often do you disobey the instructions your parents give you? How many times have you neglected to clean up your room after being told by your parents to do so? Unfortunately, young people often break the rules that their parents have made.



You may not think that obeying your parents really is all that important. You may think that “forgetting” to take out the trash or failing to get your Bible lesson completed before Sunday is a minor offense. Other than possibly being punished by your parents, you just don’t see what the big deal is. If this is the way you feel (and many young people think this way), you need to consider what God says about obeying your parents.

Although as a young person you should be frightened by the punishment you receive for breaking your parents’ rules (whether it is by getting a spanking, being grounded, etc.), you should be much more fearful of disobeying **God’s** commands. According to the Bible, God “has appointed a day on which He will judge the world” (Acts 17:31)—“those who have done good, to the resurrection of life (heaven), and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation (hell)” (John 5:29).

God has filled the Bible with statements about the need for children to obey their parents. The apostle Paul, in writing his letter to the church at Colosse, specifically targeted children with these words: “Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord” (Colossians 3:20). Paul believed that this message was so important that he also repeated it when writing to the church at Ephesus. He instructed young people, saying:

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother,” which is the first commandment with promise: “that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth” (Ephesians 6:1-3).

Notice that this passage is a quotation from the fifth law in the Ten Commandments that God gave Moses on Mount Sinai (“Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you”—Exodus 20:12).

The reason that Paul said this is “the first commandment **with promise**” is because this commandment was the first one with a **special** promise attached to it. Generally, a person who obeys and honors his or her parents will have a longer, happier, and more useful life on this Earth than those who do not. Granted, sometimes an obedient child may die in a tragic accident, but that child will not die for many of the reasons that disobedient young people die. Since respectful children do not take illegal drugs, steal from individuals or businesses, or hang out with people who are involved with such sins, they will not be harmed like many disobedient children. Also, young people who obey their parents will form good habits (like studying the Bible and using good speech), which contribute to a happy life. The simple truth is, if you want to be happy, both in this life and the next one, then you need to make sure that you obey your parents.

Respecting and obeying parents has always been a serious matter to God. In the Old Testament, it was an extremely serious thing for a young person to dishonor his parents with disrespectful speech, and this behavior was severely punished (Exodus 21:17; Leviticus 20:9). Sadly, because so many young people today see worldly teenagers frequently disobeying and cursing their parents, they begin to think that disobeying

parents is not very serious. You would do well to remember this the next time you are tempted to dishonor your mother or father.

The only time to disobey your parents is if they tell you to do something different than what the Bible says. Although most Christian mothers and fathers want their children to obey God's Word, there are some parents in this world who do not like the teachings in the Bible. In this case, you must remember what Peter and John said nearly 2,000 years ago: "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). ■

Find the following words that will help you remember to obey your parents.

- CHILDREN
- OBEY
- HONOR
- PARENTS
- COMMANDMENT
- PROMISE
- GOD
- JUDGE



C	O	M	M	A	N	D	M	E	N	T	O	E	A	J	M
A	R	E	P	O	I	C	T	G	S	Q	D	U	O	U	L
B	N	F	R	J	G	Y	U	O	B	E	Y	A	C	D	R
U	C	K	O	M	B	J	R	D	O	R	S	I	G	G	N
J	S	A	M	T	H	S	F	A	E	I	C	T	Y	E	V
L	C	H	I	L	D	R	E	N	T	D	N	P	B	I	U
Z	Q	I	S	E	W	C	P	K	M	A	H	O	N	O	R
P	A	R	E	N	T	S	E	H	X	V	A	H	U	L	P

For more children's materials, we recommend the Discovery website at:

www.apologeticspress.org/discovery

How Do **YOU** Obey Your Parents?

I obey my parents by obeying God's Word.

VALERIA (5), MEXICO

Doing what they ask me to do, and doing it soon, so I will not forget.

GIOVANNA (12), VENEZUELA

Being a good boy and seating still.

DANIEL (5) COLOMBIA

Studying and getting good grades.

ELÍAS (10), UNITED STATES

With respect, love, and fast—without them having to ask twice.

SAMUEL (10), PERU



questions.

Q&A

Q How can we, as a family, develop confidence to show the world that we are servants of God?

—COLIMA, MEXICO

There was an ad campaign sponsored by the company that makes many athletic shoes—Nike. In the ad campaign, the phrase that appeared over and over again was: “Just do it.”

In showing the world that “we are servants of God,” just do it. Put your faith into practice, without being ostentatious. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus’ first effort to publicly explain to His followers what it means to be a Christian (Matthew 5:13-16), He said to let your light shine before men.

In the first part of Matthew 6 (vss. 1-18), He used several examples: giving, praying, and fasting. You bring up an important concept: serve Christ as a family. It makes a tremendous impact on other people when they see you serving as a family. Do not draw attention to yourself as you serve Christ. Just do it! The world will see it and glorify Christ! —PH

Q When Jesus said in Matthew 19:9 that the only cause of divorce is sexual immorality, was he referring to Deuteronomy 22:13-21?

—TRUJILLO, HONDURAS

Deuteronomy 22 deals with a woman who has had illicit sexual relationships **before** marriage. A man has already taken that woman as a wife. On the other hand,

Matthew 19 deals with a man and woman who are **already** married. No, it is not appropriate to divorce a spouse for what he/she did **before** marriage. Ideally, you would talk about those types of issues **before** you get married. Be honest with him/her and encourage your friend to be honest with you. Then, based on that knowledge, you will have to decide if it is appropriate to proceed with the marriage. —PH

Q When should parents with adopted children inform them that they are adopted? —SANTIAGO, CHILE

Adoption is a wonderful thing that has prevented many babies from losing their precious lives and has provided countless families the opportunity to enjoy the blessings of paternity. Moses and Esther were adopted children who became great servants of God (Exodus; Esther).

To answer the question, first, parents should understand that lying is not an option (Leviticus 19:11). Although they can choose silence in the early years, there will come the day that adopted children will know the truth; they should hear it first from their parents. Second, parents should understand that there is not a time frame to let their children know about this. My advice is to let them know early, so this truth will be part of their growing life. Adoption, then, will become a familiar concept that will not shake their world and their love for God and their parents. —MP

Q Considering 1 Timothy 5:8, does a husband sin when he cannot provide for his family due to sickness? Can the wife provide for the family in that case?

—USULUTÁN, EL SALVADOR

First Timothy 5:8 describes the one who willingly fails to provide for his family as “worse than an unbeliever”—who, although rejecting God’s law of love (Galatians 5:14), is compelled by nature’s law to take care of his own. The direct context is responsibility of children and grandchildren to provide for their needy parents/grandparents

(vs. 4), but it is certainly a Biblical principle that parents are to provide for their children (Luke 15:31; Proverbs 31:10-31).

However, there are circumstances that may limit a father’s ability to provide—a serious accident, a terrible illness that confines him to bed, a slander that unjustly sends him to jail. (Peter’s mother was not able to serve visitors until Jesus healed her—Matthew 8:14-15.) When such circumstances arise and a father is no longer able to hold a job, then the wife and capable children can take over to provide for the family needs. —MP

To ask a family-related question to the editors, go to:

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