

A bilingual magazine for Christian families | Vol 2, No 1 • Spring 2017

# Christian *family*

ESPAÑOL  
A LA ESPALDA

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on developing a  
positive family  
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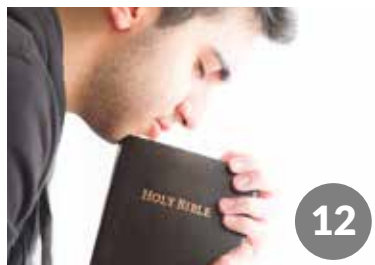
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Faithful Christians want their families to be spiritually successful. And the good news is that God also wants the same (Deuteronomy 6). But what makes a successful family?

It can be suggested that there are three vital elements for this: (1) Dependence on God (Psalm 127:1), (2) godly/moral example of parents (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:1), and (3) proper training of children (Ephesians 6:4). In this issue, we cover these three main areas, providing the readers with Scriptural advice to take their families closer to God and each other.

Take a few minutes of your time to learn how to develop a prayerful family life, a positive attitude in your home and for your home, and a good relationship with each member of your family. As Joshua gave example (24:15), make a commitment with the Lord to serve Him as a family.

May God bless you and your family,

Paul Holland & Moisés Pinedo

## Christianfamily

Helping families become stronger in the Lord

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# the family that **PRAYS** TOGETHER... **STAYS TOGETHER**

by **Jim Roberts**

*I*s there daily prayer in your family? How often do your family members pray together? Prayer is a blessing that too many families overlook and live without. Communication with God can be a powerful tool in the happiness and strength of your home. When families take time to praise and petition God, the benefits are many. Through prayer, tired and frustrated parents receive strength, wisdom, and encouragement. Prayer teaches our children that we are dependent upon God and that He deserves a special place in our hearts. Talking with God reinforces the loving relationship of commitment between husband/wife and parents/children. When family members pray for one another, they value one another more. Prayer also teaches families to look beyond their own lives to the needs of others.

Look for opportunities to pray with your family. Meal time is the perfect setting for teaching thanksgiving. Encourage your

children to take turns praying at the table. Likewise, bed time is a wonderful opportunity for family members to hear each other pray. No day should close without talking to God. Do not forget other obvious times such as when the family separates in the morning, when there is sickness or grief to deal with, when important family decisions must be made, at the beginning of road trips, and on birthdays, celebrations, or anniversaries. Use your imagination. What good opportunities for prayer may you be overlooking? Do not become too busy for prayer.

Parents need to become the role models of prayer for their children. On one occasion, the disciples asked Jesus, "teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1). Prayer is a taught behavior. There is nothing wrong with teaching our kids to ride a bike, throw a ball, swim, or drive a car, but let us make sure we teach them to pray! When they leave home, hopefully prayer will be as natural as breathing to them. Prayer will be a comforting and uplifting gift for them the rest of their lives. In our instruction, it is essential that we teach them to be in submission to

# *family.*

the will of God (read Matthew 26:36-46 and 2 Corinthians 12:7-10). Prayer is never demanding God to comply with our will, but rather a demonstration of our faith to do His will. Children need to know that God sometimes answers our prayers with "Yes," and other times with "No." On occasions, He answers with "Wait a while" or "I have something better for you." The crucial thing that they must understand is that we can trust God to always do the best thing for us even when we may not understand it. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths" (Proverbs 3:5-6). The apostle Paul reminded Christians, "And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19).

Start praying with your family members today if you have neglected to do so. It is too important to neglect in your circle of love. If you have been praying, continue to do so and be committed to growing in this area. Prayer is a privilege and a blessing for your family to enjoy together! ■



# parenting.

## Why counting is counterproductive *by Kathy Pollard*

“*I*m going to give you to the count of three to bring me that toy. 1...2...3...” The curly-headed little boy keeps playing with the dump truck. “4...5...6...” He moves the truck along the floor while making engine noises. “Toby, I’m serious! Don’t make me count to 10!”

The counting method is pretty common, but is it a good option? Even if some counting moms have found success, could they be teaching lessons they never intended to teach? Let us consider some reasons why we should think twice before counting to three.

**Counting undermines your authority.** Your child has learned not to take you at your word. He knows he does not have to take you seriously until you start counting. Children need to understand as early as possible that parents have authority. God commands, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right” (Ephesians 6:1).

**Counting hands the reigns to the child.** He gets to choose when to obey. The child is the one who controls the situation when he does not have to do what you say until he feels like it. Our society likes to portray parents as helpless, but God created an order in the home. He put parents in control, not children. “My son, hear the instruction of your father, and do not forsake the law of your mother” (Proverbs 1:8).

**Counting gives the wrong impression of God.** While God is long-suffering (2 Peter 3:9), He also commands obedience. “Obey My voice...that it may be well with you” (Jeremiah 7:23). “If you love Me, keep My commandments” (John 14:15). Counting allows a child to put off obedience. Do you want your child to become someone who listens to God right away so it may be well with him? That kind of respectful obedience begins in the home.

**Counting causes confusion.** When does the child cross the line into disobedience? I literally heard a mom counting as far as 17! I wonder how far she was willing to count. To 25? To 50? Most likely her child had already figured out the magic number, but what a disservice to him! How many other situations/relationships in life will be as lenient? He will be surprised one day when his boss takes disciplinary action after one no-show instead of three (or 17).

**Counting can be dangerous.** If a child has learned that he does not have to obey until he has been warned several times, what happens when his very life depends on an immediate response? If he heads for a busy street and you yell, “Stop!”, you want him to obey right away. In the same way, you do not want your grown child to delay obeying the Lord. As the song pleads, “today is the day of salvation. Tomorrow may be too late.” We are not promised tomorrow. “[Y]ou do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away... Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin” (James 4:14,17).

Instead of counting, help your child understand that he must obey the first time. If he does not respond, discipline him. The next time he does not obey as soon as you speak, discipline him again. Be consistent for as long as it takes. Make sure he knows that “delayed obedience is disobedience.” This is not harsh at all. He will learn to respect authority. He will enjoy the security that comes from understanding defined boundaries and learning the importance of obedience. ■

# Counseling your TEENAGER

by Daren Schroeder

Counseling, as we are using it here, has to do with imparting wisdom, direction and help for healthy, productive and righteous living. (Incidentally, we should be aware that this is not necessarily the objective of many in the counseling profession.)

Counseling our teenagers actually begins before they arrive at their teen years. The best counseling we do will start years before then. The wise man said, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). Wise parents will give serious heed to this proverb. Early counsel, teaching, and training are so vital to the formation of healthy teenagers (see Deuteronomy 6:1-4)!

One of the greatest keys to counseling (perhaps even more so with teens) is in what many find to be the most difficult: listening. (Did you hear me?) James wrote, "So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath" (1:19). **Parents need to be just as willing to listen as they are to give instruction.**

Careful listening gives us insight as to what is going on in the life of our teens. This is especially significant with teens

because they can be reluctant to share personal information. We must also listen not just with our ears, but with our eyes and our heart. In order to help our teens, we have to know where they are and what is going on in their lives. We should listen carefully and with sincere empathy.

I would recommend great care with this, but accessing our teens through social media may give us great insight into their lives. Many of them are quite proficient at expressing themselves openly through this medium. The truth is that most teens want to be understood. Though this avenue may seem intrusive, some teens may actually welcome it.

Another very important (and often overlooked) aspect is the over-all relationship we have with our teenagers. Amongst the sometimes emotional and even turbulent teenage years, they must know that we have their best interest in mind. It is very easy for that to be lost in the shuffle on our end and theirs. A key word here is "**perception**". How do they **perceive** our advice and counsel? Do they think we are just nagging at them? Do they see us as

being **against** them? **One of the most vital tasks we have is to convince them with our words and actions that we love them and genuinely want the best for them.** If we can convince them of that, other doors will likely open rather easily.

Also, keep in mind as they go through the sometimes "rocky" teenage years, they need our stability. Do not think that you need to match their level of emotion or intensity. Sometimes that is easier said than done, but it can be! Remember, "A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger" (Proverbs 15:1).

What instruction and counsel should we be giving our teens? God's! The Bible is an instruction manual for them and for all of us (see 2 Peter 1:3 and 2 Timothy 3:16-17). Jesus came that we might enjoy an abundant life (John 10:10; see also 6:68). He can direct teens to successful living for Him through the guidance of His Word (see Psalm 119:105; John 14:6). The book of Proverbs alone contains remarkable insight into successful living that both teens and parents need to tap into.

It is also vital for us to fervently pray for them and with them (James 5:16). In the end, it is also important to know our own limitations. There is no shame in seeking help for them in a trusted preacher, elder, friend or Christian counselor. May God bless our teens as He raises up the next generation of servants in His kingdom. ■





*marriage.*

# MULTICULTURAL MARRIAGES *and* GOD

by Olga Pahom

*I* was watching as the clock was ticking. It was just a few minutes before 6 p.m. and we were not out of the house yet. In fact, my husband had not even started getting ready. “We are going to be late,” I thought. As I grew more nervous about our tardiness, my husband was puzzled about why I was so fidgety. We were living in Mexico and this was one of our earliest realizations that our cultural expectations about time were different.

Such moments are not unique to Moldovan-Mexican marriages like ours. Spouses in other multicultural marriages have to negotiate many differences on a daily basis: What language(s) will we speak and teach our children? How will we handle different cultural expectations about men’s and women’s roles, conflict, parenting, discipline, birthday celebrations, holidays?

All marriages deal with some of these issues, but they are amplified when more than one culture is involved. Dealing with differences can be hard and exhausting, but it also has the potential to draw us closer together. Over the last ten years of marriage, we learned many things about God and cross-cultural relationships. If I were asked what makes our multicultural marriage thrive, I would share these five practices:

### **1. Seek and serve God together.**

After being married for a while, we came to realize that we are more similar than different. Deep inside every human heart there is a desire to belong, to love, to be loved, and to know God. He is before and above all cultures, and He can breathe life into families of all backgrounds when we turn to Him. Seeking and serving God together as we strive to imitate Christ (Ephesians 5:1-2) has helped us draw closer both to Him and to each other.

### **2. Communicate honestly and kindly.**

Cultural expectations vary when it comes to communication. Some cultures value factual information and are more direct while others place a high value on politeness and are more indirect. The Bible has quite a bit to say about using our words in ways that are both honest and encouraging to others, and honoring to God (Proverbs 12:18,25; 15:1; 25:11; Ephesians 4:15,29; Philippians 4:5; James 1:26).

### **3. Listen to understand, not to reply.**

We can often fall into the trap of listening to our spouses just so that we can reply and convince them that we are right. This is not true listening. Listening to understand means being open, humble, and patient, not defensive or prideful. Opening our heart and our ears to our spouse will help us build a better relationship with them and with God (Proverbs 1:5; 15:31; 19:20; James 1:19).

### **4. Forgive and forgive (and then forgive).**

No close relationship can survive without forgiveness, especially marriage. Yes, we will hurt each other with our words and actions, but it is important to release our spouses from the wrong they may have committed against us. This does not mean not talking about our concerns and feelings (see points 2 and 3), but it means that once we released them in forgiveness, we need to stop thinking they owe us something (Colossians 3:13; Ephesians 4:32; Matthew 18:21-22).

### **5. Have fun learning about each other's culture.**

Finally, the differences do not have to always be stressful. Many of them make our lives richer and more enjoyable: we like watching our children learn three languages from a young age; we enjoy Moldovan, Mexican, and American meals on a regular basis; and we love traveling and learning about each other and about the God Who created our world with all its delightful colors, flavors, sights, languages, and people.

In the end, multicultural marriages are both hard and beautiful, and they point us to a God Who brings people together for good and holy purposes, and despite our differences, makes His dwelling in our midst. ■

For more on faith and multicultural relationships, visit Olga's blog at [www.olgapahom.com](http://www.olgapahom.com).

## **And 5 Fun Tips for Your Multicultural Marriage**

- 1. When you don't understand something, just smile.** You don't have to understand every "weird" detail from each other's culture. If it doesn't matter, just smile a little bit, and you will be happier.
- 2. Being loud doesn't help understanding.** Remember that your spouse isn't deaf; he/she just can't understand some things due to cultural/language differences, so raising your voice won't help. Keep calm; explain.
- 3. Just make lemonade.** You can't have your cultural way every day. Don't like the sweet tea? Take the lemons and make lemonade (literally!). Don't like the tortillas? Pass it on to your hungry spouse! Be flexible.
- 4. Think "backwards" just a little bit.** Americans have "fast cars;" Hispanics have "cars fast." Americans drink "cold milk and tea;" Hispanics drink "hot milk and tea." Americans usually have "more money than time;" Hispanics usually have "more time than money." Of course, this reflects how culture affects us. When you can't understand something your spouse does or says, maybe it is time to think "backwards" just a little bit.
- 5. Be willing to be "weird."** We clap when our airplane lands...weird!!! But your football players wear funny pants! Just clap for our plane when it lands and we will clap for your team when it scores. Yes, your marriage is doomed to be different and, sometimes, "weird," but you can decide to clap with your spouse and enjoy your cultural differences!

Moisés Pinedo (in a Peruvian-American marriage of 15 years)

# women.

## Making Your House a Home

by Kimberley Pinedo

Making your house a home is not as easy as just deciding **where** you are going to live; it is more about deciding **how** you are going to live in that space! We want to surround our spouse and our children with an inviting, comfortable place that all consider one of the best places to be on earth! How do we make our space an inviting space?

### *Focus on God*

My husband and I love to watch home remodeling shows and see how the people on a certain show can turn a space into an amazing place to live. That is obviously about the physical things that we can see in a house. Making a house your home is not about the things or the riches that you have in your house; it is about making the people in your house feel loved, wanted, needed, and comforted. Any space can be turned into a home when one or more people decide to live there. As Christians, our house becomes a “true home” when we put the Lord first. Joshua stood up for his family and pledged, “...as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord” (24:15). Making a house a home starts with the decision of the parents to





be committed to the Lord! A godly home will not happen by accident; it has to be intentional! Psalm 127:1 tells us, “Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it.” So, no matter how much work we put into the interior or exterior of our homes, unless God is put first in that home, nothing else matters!

One way of putting God first in your home is by having regular Bible times/studies with your family. It really helps guide your day by beginning the morning with Scripture. Maybe you read a verse with your children, possibly work on Scripture memorization, or you may have more time to read a longer passage and study deeper on that passage. If you try this regularly, I promise that you will have a better day and your thoughts will fall into place more easily (Matthew 6:33) as you are in your home or going about your day! Also, we really enjoy having nightly family Bible time with our family. Each night this might look different in the forms of singing, acting out, playing a Bible game, or focusing on certain subjects.

### *Focus on Protection*

Our houses provide us with physical protection from the weather. We, as Christians, need to provide even more important protection—that is the protection of the soul! Is your home a place where it is less tempting to sin? Are you taking advantage of certain safeguards in protecting your souls (internet filters, etc.)? Are the music, television, and language used in your home bringing you closer to God or driving you away from Him? Our homes should be a refuge from worldliness and unnecessary temptations!

### *Focus on Contentment*

We need to learn to be content with whatever house or space we call home right now. It might be big, small, old, new, etc. However, it is important to focus on being content in the place that you currently are. There is a Dr. Seuss saying, “Be happy with the things you have, and the things you have will make you happy!” It is true! We need to find contentment in the here and now. We will never have the perfect house here on earth, but our attitudes and gratefulness toward God for giving us a place to live is important! I have found that in every house I have lived in (which is about ten different houses), I have always been able to find the shortcomings: “Oh, how I wish this house had more bedrooms,” “Oh, how I wish this house was bigger,” or “Oh, how I wish our basement did not flood” (true stories of houses I have lived in). We can all find the negatives in each house or place we live in, but it is very important not to dwell on the negatives because it will affect our happiness. Simply, do what you can with what you have and look for the blessings of your current situation.

The mood or the environment of our home is very important. So many times, we hear, “If Momma ain’t

happy, ain’t nobody happy!” This is pretty accurate. We, as mommas, can create a nice, peaceful atmosphere in our homes, or one of constant nagging and complaining. Some ways to help with this would be maintaining a calm voice (even though you might want to be screaming), calming background music, candles or oils burning. Try to keep your mood lifted and it will be contagious to the rest of the household. Have you ever noticed when you are in a sour mood, that it does not take long to contaminate the rest of the family members with your bad mood? The same is true with a positive one! As women, we need to try to create a nice tone for our homes. We need to try to keep a calm voice and not be running around yelling all day and fussing at everyone and everything!

### *Focus on Hospitality*

We also need to use our houses for the glory of God. It is really not “our” houses in the end; God owns it all. He is just allowing us to be temporary possessors of a place. Let us make sure that we are using our houses to His glory. This includes being hospitable! Hospitality is not just an option for a Christian (Romans 12:13; 1 Peter 4:9; Titus 1:8). It is necessary to show our love to others that we open our houses to friends and/or family and have an unselfish spirit about sharing our home with them. “¡Mi casa es tu casa!” (“My house is your house!”) I have learned a lot about hospitality from spending time with people in Latin America. Living there for three years, I learned that hospitality does not have to come in the form of the “best” home offering the “best” food to others. I have knocked many doors in which the people were very receptive to invite me in to their humble abode, giving me the best that they had to offer. This might have looked like a nearly broken chair and a tangerine! However, I could feel their hospitality through them taking their time to pay attention to me and giving their best to me. Here in North America, we often feel that we must have everything perfectly in place and have the “perfect” food prepared in order to invite others into our homes. Again, hospitality is not about “having the best,” but simply “sharing your best” with others. It is about taking time for other people. It involves being considerate of others.

All of us can make our house a home by focusing on God, protection, contentment, and hospitality!

*Making a house your home is not about the things or the riches that you have in your house; it is about making the people in your house feel loved, wanted, needed, and comforted.*

# featured.



# M

## What would you want us to know about each member of your family?

**Brian** is a leader, easy to follow, encouraging, patient, loving, funny, takes care of Austin and Dakota 24/7 and makes their lives normal and enjoyable. **Tammie** is full of energy, loves to make others laugh, hard working, talented, cherishes family and is thankful for all God's blessings. **Austin** is happy, loves to sing, likes to tease people, loves to be with other Christians, and is very content. **Dakota** is a strong Christian who always looks for the best in people. He is very concerned about others, prayerful, very

smart in technology and always looks for ways he can help in the church. **Brennan** is loving, has made parenting easy and life normal for his brothers by finding ways to include them in activities, protecting them, always ready to help others and cherishes his wife, Mollie. **Mollie** is a patient, loving Christian wife who loves animals and is a great addition to our Christian family.

## If I became part of your family, what lesson would I be taught first, and why?

Always make everyone in the family feel good about themselves by encouraging each other to do and be their best for the Lord. Help each one to find their talents and help them to improve those talents. If you feel good about

## the McCains

...are a family of six: Brian and Tammie, their three sons, Brennan, Austin, Dakota, and Mollie (Brennan's wife). They are a loving, caring, and happy family who serve God, each other, and others with unsurpassable enthusiasm. They worship with the Elizabethton church of Christ in East Tennessee. Here Brian and Tammie tell us some about their family, and give us some tips for developing a positive family attitude.

what you are doing, you will strive to do your best and be pleasing to the Lord.

## When you knew your twins (Austin and Dakota) had cerebral palsy, what was your reaction?

We cried while we were in the doctor's office because doctors had never suggested to us that they could be disabled. We learned from the time they were born that they were developing differently from other babies. They were ten months old when they were diagnosed. Then we were relieved to finally know and moved forward with our lives knowing that this was God's will and He would be glorified by what they would become to us and to others. We are all here for a reason.

## What has the limitations of your twins taught you over time?

They have taught us to look beyond what this life has to offer, to be content with the way things are and be joyful. We wish everyone could be as happy as they make us. We cannot imagine any other way than the way God has made for us. God does not give you more than you can handle. They have made us stronger Christians.

## In view of your obvious family challenges, how do you manage to be on time

## for services and involved in church activities?

We always allow enough time to get ready. Just like planning on being at services on time, we plan to be involved in church activities. We strive to help other church members to become close, as a family should be. We want our family to always be faithful, and in order to make being faithful easier, we stay involved with church activities.

## What is the greatest aspiration you have for your three children?

We want our children to be faithful Christians, help others come to God, and put God first, then family. If God comes first to everyone in the family, they will also have a wonderful family life.

## What would you say God's family has done for you and your life?

God's family should be a reflection of God. The church has always been ready and has always searched for ways to help. Before we can ask, someone is always there, ready to do all that he/she can. Members show their love to us in too many ways to list here. That is why we love them so much and want to do what we can to encourage all to endure to the end, to strive for the prize. ■



**Remember that we are all blessed:** Things happen in our lives that others may not consider to be a blessing. Those may be the things that make you stronger as a Christian. They mold us. Just remember that God is the Sculptor.



**Use the talents that God has blessed you with:** Everyone is different. We all have talents. You may consider the things that you can do to be small, but to someone else it is a big encouragement. Find your talent and use it to encourage each other. We are all God's tools and useful in His kingdom.



**Always consider each other's feelings:** We are all different even though we live in the same home. Laugh with each other and cry with each other. But, be there for one another. God will not put more on us than we can bear (cf. 1 Corinthians 10:13). Our attitude in the way we handle crisis in our lives will strengthen others and bring glory to God.



**Encourage one another:** Everyone wants to be useful and can be. Find the best in each other and complement each other daily. Always use kind words. You cannot take words back. How you talk to each other will affect the way they feel about themselves.



**Fellowship with other Christians:** Encourage your family to surround themselves with friends who have the same goal in life (getting to heaven), who will encourage you instead of discouraging you. We, of all people, should be happy!



**Do not engage in negativity toward others:** Teach your children that, when someone comes to them speaking negatively about someone else, not to participate in the conversation and change the subject. They will come to know that you will not engage in negativity and will not approach you with it. Negativity can rub off on you.



**Enjoy the little things in life:** Enjoy the laughs, the smiles, and the hugs. Give them freely to your family. Make life fun and enjoyable. You have control of your life and can choose to be happy because life is short.

# 7 TIPS TO DEVELOPING A POSITIVE FAMILY ATTITUDE

Photos: Courtesy of Cindy Davis-Peterson





*youth.*

# “YOUR WORD I HAVE HIDDEN IN MY HEART, THAT I MIGHT NOT SIN AGAINST YOU”

by **Moisés Pinedo**

Dealing with temptation? I would say so; every person deals with it—especially young people like you! In fact, the devil will not leave you alone since he knows that young Christians like you have always had great potential to defeat him (1 John 2:13).

“How can someone overcome temptation?” That is a great question! There is a wonderful portion of Scripture right in the middle of the Bible, Psalm 119, that can help you (and any Christian) overcome temptation. This whole Psalm is a tribute to the Word, and verse 11 shows us how important God’s Word is in dealing with temptation. Let’s break the verse down.

## “YOUR WORD...”

In this chapter, the psalmist refers to the Scriptures with several reverent terms: the law of the Lord (vs. 1), the ways of the Lord (vs. 15), the judgments of the Lord (vs. 30), the testimony of the Lord’s mouth (vs. 88), the ordinances of the Lord (vs. 91), the commandments of his God (vs. 115), and the righteous Word of God (vs. 123).

These terms show that his loyalty was not to human philosophy, worldly advice, modern science, family religion, majority’s opinion, political correctness, cry for tolerance, clergy interpretation, ancient tradition, latest fashion, or even his own desires and thoughts. Only the Word flowing from the Divine Mind enjoyed his complete trust (vs. 160). What about you?

## “I HAVE HIDDEN...”

The psalmist’s heart was a permanent storage place for God’s Word. He read and listened to it with discernment, received it with joy, kept it with perseverance, defended it with boldness, and cherished it selflessly (cf. Matthew 13:18-23).

Note the statements that reveal the constant presence of the Word in his life: “I will not forget Your word” (vss. 16,141,153); “shall I keep Your law continually, forever and ever” (vs. 44); “I seek Your precepts” (vs. 45); “I do not turn aside from Your law” (vss. 51,157,102); “I believe Your commandments” (vs. 66); “Your commandments... are ever with me” (vs. 98); “I have inclined my heart to perform Your statutes forever, to the very end” (vs. 112); and “I do Your commandments” (vs. 166).

As Spurgeon pointed out, the psalmist’s heart “would be kept by the word because he kept the word in his heart.”<sup>1</sup> What about you?

## “IN MY HEART...”

The psalmist mentioned his “heart”—the deepest part of his being. Note everything God’s Word was for him: his joy (vss. 14,47,70,111,117,162), his meditation (vss. 15,78,99,148), his delight (vss. 24,77,92,103,143), his life (vss. 25,40,93,156), his hope (vss. 43,81,114,147), his love (vss. 47-48,97,113,140,167), his comfort (vss. 50,52), his treasure (vss. 72,127), his light (vs. 105), his fear (vss. 120,161), his desire (vss. 131,174), his praise (vss. 164,171), his priority (vs. 173), and his help (vs. 175).

All of this shows that God’s Word had a special, constant, and secure part in his life. It was not just in his hands, under a pillow, on a coffee table, or in a forgotten place of his mind. He loved God’s Word with all his heart (vss. 34,58,69) and made it the reason for the main activities of his life. What about you?

## “THAT I MIGHT NOT SIN...”

What was the psalmist’s fundamental purpose for keeping the Word? To avoid sinning. Sin is humanity’s perennial problem; it is an ungodly action (vs. 3), an impure way (vs. 9), a wandering path (vs. 10), a proud look and a cursed direction (vs. 21), a worthless thing (vs. 37), a slavery condition (vs. 45), a communion of wickedness

(vs. 61), a hypocritical attitude (vs. 113), an evil thought (vs. 115), a state of oppression (vss. 121,134), a false way (vs. 128), and a life with no hope (vs. 155).

This shows that his constant spiritual exercise and love for the Word were not just an effort to please his parents, a search for a healthy lifestyle, a dream to make a difference, or just a desire to receive personal honor. The psalmist had filled his heart with God’s Word in order for sin not to penetrate or contaminate it (cf. Proverbs 4:23; Mark 7:20-22). What about you?

## “AGAINST YOU”

Sinnyng against a neighbor certainly is a serious matter, but sinning against the God of heaven is an indescribable tragedy (cf. Hebrews 10:31). While others wanted to please men and themselves, the psalmist’s goal was to please the Lord (vss. 61,70,113,141). He would not deflect his eyes from God to delight in unrighteousness (Psalm 101:3); he would not leave God for his family’s sake (Matthew 10:37); he would not disobey God to respect men (Acts 5:29); he would not give up God to

give in to the world (Matthew 16:26; James 4:14); and he would not ignore God to keep his own will (Matthew 26:42).

The psalmist kept the Word of God in order not to sin **against God**. What about you?

Although it is true that no Christian is completely perfect (cf. 1 John 1:5-10), there is no way to please God and avoid sin without treasuring His Word in the deepest part of our minds and hearts. Psalm 119:11 is a verse on which all of us, including young people like you, should meditate if we want to find God’s favor and spiritual holiness. This is a great and constant reminder to keep the best thing (the Word), in the best place (the heart), with the best purpose (not to sin), before the best Being (God). ■

1. Spurgeon, Charles (1869), *The Treasure of David* (London: Marshall Brothers), 5:159.

# Storing Up the WORD

by Jewell Holland

*When temptation approaches,  
Enticing me with excuses until my resolve wavers,  
Hope emerges from my chest with the words of my Lord.*

*Temptation says: “You are too weak;”  
God says: “I will not give you more than you can handle.”  
Temptation says: “You know you want to give in;”  
God says: “Delight yourself in me and I will give you what you need.”*

*And the comfort of the Lord strengthens me  
To turn from the darkness toward the light—  
For His Word is hidden in my heart,  
So that I will not sin against Him.*

# children.

## Have You Learned to Pray?

by Kevin Williams

Christianity is a learned religion. Not one of us is born with the knowledge that it takes to be a Christian. That knowledge comes from being taught, whether it is gained from hearing someone teach the Bible or our reading the Bible for ourselves. That being said, one aspect of the Christian life is prayer. Prayer is to be learned from an early age.

According to Luke 11, John had taught his disciples how to pray, and the disciples of Jesus asked Him, "Lord, teach us to pray" (verse 1). That requires the question, "What should we learn about prayer?" We will answer that question based on what Jesus taught His disciples about prayer.

- **Jesus said that we should pray, "Our Father in heaven."**

That shows our relationship to Him. He is our Father and we are His children. Just as a good father will always listen to his children and fulfill their requests for specific needs, so our Father in heaven will do the same for us.

- **Jesus said that we should pray, "Hallowed be Your name."**

That God's name is "hallowed" means that it is "holy." We should never use His name in any way that is disrespectful or irreverent. We need to remember to Whom we are praying and live in such a way that honors His name.

- **Jesus said that we should pray, "Your kingdom come."**

The kingdom is the church. The disciples were to pray for the church to come because it had not been established. It came shortly and has existed for nearly 2,000 years. Therefore, our prayer should not be for the church to come, but a prayer of thanks that it did come.

- **Jesus said that we should pray, "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."**

We should always have that attitude both in prayer and in life in general. It makes sense for us to pray that God's will would be done because we are here for that purpose, to do the Father's will. And, as His will is always done in heaven, we should pray that it would be done here on earth as well.

- **Jesus said that we should pray, "Give us day by day our daily bread."**

God provides all that we need to live on a daily basis. He does that because He created us, loves us, and cares for us. Our praying this to Him shows our dependence upon Him for the most basic needs of life. We should never take this basic blessing for granted.

- **Jesus said that we should pray, "forgive us our sins."**

Only God can truly forgive sins. He does that on the basis that we, ourselves, are continually forgiving those who need it from us. Therefore, the way that we live will have a great impact on whether or not God will forgive us.

- **Jesus said that we should pray, "do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."**

While God, Himself, does not tempt us, He does allow Satan to do it. However, it is God Who can deliver us from him. He gives us a way of escape from every single temptation we face (1 Corinthians 10:13). We should pray to God for His help.

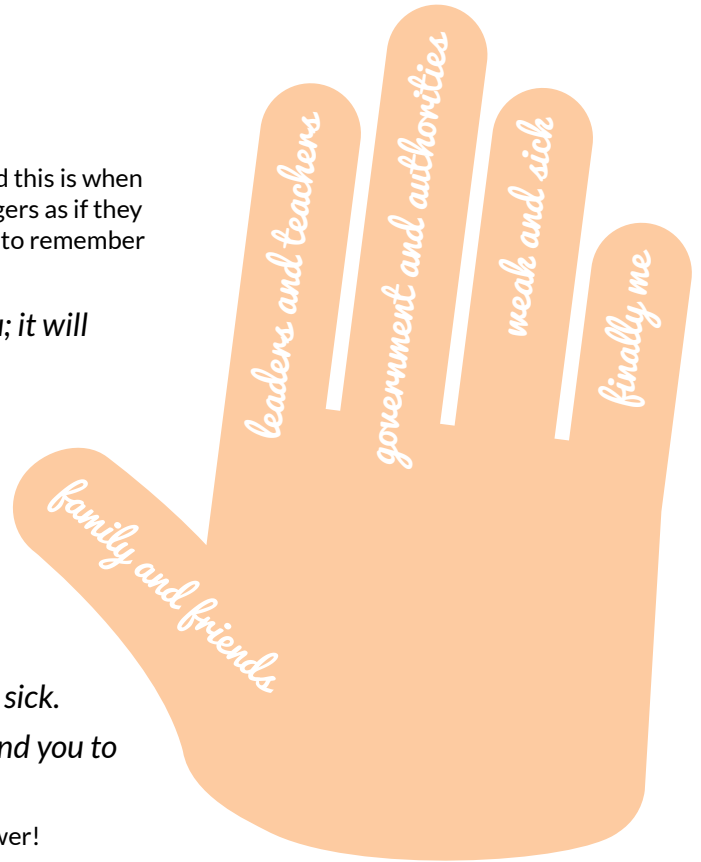
Learn how to pray, pray often, and live so that He will hear and grant your prayer! ■



# The Prayer Hand

For **whom** are you to pray? Sometimes it is difficult to remember, and this is when the fingers of your hand can really help you. "How?" Look at your fingers as if they represent different people (as in the image) and it will be a lot easier to remember them. Here is an explanation:

- **Your thumb:** This is the finger that is the closest to you; it will remind you to pray for your family and friends.
- **Your index finger:** This is the finger that points the way; it will remind you to pray for your leaders and teachers.
- **Your middle finger:** This is the tallest finger; it will remind you to pray for your government and authorities.
- **Your ring finger:** This is the finger with most limited movement; it will remind you to pray for the weak and sick.
- **And your pinky:** This is the smallest finger; it will remind you to pray for yourself.



When you forget for whom to pray, look at your hand; it has the answer!

# The Prayer Code

Now, for **what** are you to pray? Use the code on the right and write the letters in the blanks to find out three things for which you are to pray regularly.

☑

6	15	15	4		
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☑

8	5	1	12	20	8
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19	1	6	5	20	25
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Online and Printed Spanish Materials for Children at:

[www.ebherencia.org](http://www.ebherencia.org)

A = 1	O = 15
B = 2	P = 16
C = 3	Q = 17
D = 4	R = 18
E = 5	S = 19
F = 6	T = 20
G = 7	U = 21
H = 8	V = 22
I = 9	W = 23
J = 10	X = 24
K = 11	Y = 25
L = 12	Z = 26
M = 13	
N = 14	

For what else should you pray?

# questions.

## Q&A

### **Q** Why are there so many divorces among Christians? And how to overcome pain caused by divorce?

—BOGOTÁ, COLOMBIA

A main reason is lack of proper teaching and reverence for God's Word. We are becoming more concerned with our society's standards than God's Word on the matter (Matthew 19:9).

A segment of the church has taken the position that the world is not subject to the Divine precept on divorce and therefore it is okay for them to do it for any reason—not realizing that their sanction of the world's degradation has paved the way for the church's digression. We have tolerated feminism in the world and now some have women in their pulpits. We are starting to tolerate homosexuality in society and now it is making its way to the pews. In the same way, we have tolerated Hollywood's adultery/divorce on our TVs and now we have it in our homes. If we want to fight the divorce malady in the church, we will start to teach the sacredness of marriage, turn off our TVs and open our Bibles, renew our commitment to God and our spouses, and share the unadulterated Gospel with the world.

As for divorce pain, Christians overcome it the same way they overcome any other suffering in life: relying on the strength of the Lord and His Word (Philippians 4:13). God urges Christians to love and forgive (Matthew 22:37-39; Colossians 3:13), so this is necessary, even in divorce, for

healing of the soul. God urges Christians to rely on one another (Galatians 6:2), so divorced people can find comfort and advice in their Christian family; pain is easier to bear when more people support our hands (cf. Exodus 17:12). God urges Christians to pray at all times, so a time of divorce is also a time to bring our anxieties before Him (Philippians 4:6). God urges Christians to dwell in the Word, so divorced people can find hope through the "comfort of the Scriptures" (Romans 15:4). In all this, divorced people are to "wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen [their] heart" (Psalm 27:14). —MP

### **Q** What is the church to do when a preacher's children leave the Lord?

—PUERTO VARAS, CHILE

### **Q** Should a man preach when his family, even though being a Christian family, is not submissive to him?

—SAN MIGUEL PETAPA, GUATEMALA

Children were created by God with their own will. At a very early age, they learn to develop and express that will. When children are young, parents can "force" them to do certain things through various means. But becoming a Christian and following Jesus must be a decision that is made freely, without any type of manipulation or intimidation.

Children, then, might reject their parents' upbringing. They may reject their upbringing because

they reject their parents' lifestyle. Maybe their parents are hypocritical at home. Or, maybe they saw that serving the church dominated too much their family life. Or, they may have decided that living in the world was more appealing than living in Christ. God will not stop one from making free choices. Even Adam and Eve sinned (Genesis 3).

Unfaithful children can even be found in a preacher's family. What should the church do? It depends on whether the children's behavior would negatively impact the preacher's influence and ability to

share the Gospel with others. The church should not hold him to a higher standard than he can meet.

The same principle would be true if a preacher's family is not submissive to him. In what way are they not submissive? Is it because he is too authoritative and demanding? Can they see hypocrisy in their father? Or is it because they are not truly committed to Christ themselves? That particular man should be honest, asking himself if his ability to share Christ is weakened through his family's behavior. If it is, perhaps he should step down from the pulpit. —PH

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

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