

A bilingual magazine for Christian families | Vol 2, No 4 • Winter 2017

Christian *family*

ESPAÑOL
A LA ESPALDA



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*Special
edition*

Tips from our families around the world on family growth.

and more ➤

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from the editors



Since the family is the most fundamental unit of a society, it is Satan's primary target. A society that degenerates into anarchy, is a society which submits to his influence. If he can sow chaos into the family structure, he is on his way to growing anarchy in a society.

This is one reason why the job of Mom and Dad is so important. The first line of defense against Satan in any society is the strength of the family. That is where we all learn how to live in a way that pleases God, honoring Christ, and respecting His Word.

This edition of *Christian Family* explores some of those challenges Satan throws into our path, but also presents some tools parents can use to strengthen their families. If the family is at the front-line of the battle against Satan, then Mom and Dad are leading the charge. We wish you well in that fight.

Paul Holland & Moisés Pinedo

Christianfamily

Helping families become stronger in the Lord

VOLUME 2 • NUMBER 4 • WINTER 2017

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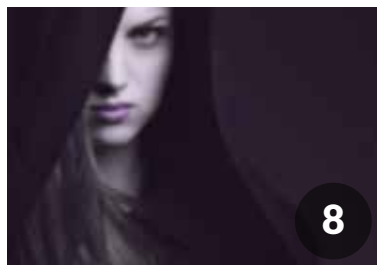
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3 concepts on family finances

by Anna Morris

family.

As the daughter of an entrepreneur, I was consistently involved in financial discussions. At the time, I did not understand how valuable those discussions were. As a married adult, I am now taking those discussions and combining them with the teachings of the Bible. When doing so, I found that there are some areas where I have learned valuable lessons over the years.

1 Budgeting

From Luke 14:28 (“For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it”), it is clear that the Bible encourages budgeting prior to spending. A lot of families find this to be a stressful task; however, it does not have to be. The trick to making any budget is to first start with your family’s priorities and commitments, not the money. Agree on an order from most to least important; then bring the money into the equation to determine what priorities fit in the budget and what gets cut.

It is also important to bring your children into these conversations at the appropriate age. Budgeting is a learned skill, and the more practice you have, the better your chances are for success. My parents started teaching me to budget with back-to-school shopping. I was given my budget for supplies and was coached how to manage my budget. My family also shared the family budget and priorities with me. This open communication allowed me to have an appropriate relationship with money, where I viewed money as a tool that could help me achieve my goals rather than a love that I needed to strive after.

2 Investing

One of my favorite lines from my father is, “You have to spend money to make money,” which in today’s world holds true. God has given us an example of this in the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30). In this parable, we see that the men had to invest their talents to grow their Lord’s kingdom.

As servants of God, we must invest more than just our money: it is our time, our talents, and our life. Concerning finances, there are many different ways we can “invest.” We can invest in tools that can help us in our careers. We can invest in our family, such as paying for our child’s music lessons. We can invest in our future such as in a 401k. The main lesson is to use the finances that God has given us in our pursuit to glorify Him. Having money hidden away is not a good use of the gifts God has given.

3 Giving

As a child, if I saw someone in need, I always wanted to do something to help, but I often found that I did not have a quarter to give. Most of this was due to lack of planning. As a Christian adult, I strongly believe that we need to plan our giving to the best of our abilities.

First Corinthians 16:2 reads, “On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper.” This verse should play into the family’s priorities conversation. Where does giving fall in your family’s priorities? If you arrive at “giving” on your priorities list, but there is not any income leftover to give, then most of the time either the family is living outside of its means, or the family has prioritized giving based on their will and not God’s will. ■



parenting.



WILL OUR FAITH HAVE CHILDREN?

by Stan Mitchell

I know... you are thinking I meant, "Will our children have faith?" It was Walter Brueggemann who turned this statement around and asked, "Will our faith have children?"¹ This has always been the proper concern of God's people.

The question implies the need to pass the faith from one generation to the next, a process of not only spreading the gospel geographically (to all nations) but from generation to generation. The Israelites were always conscious of teaching their children, grandchildren, and beyond.

Psalm 78:3-8 speaks of at least four generations who would be taught God's ways. There was the first generation, "our fathers" (78:5). The first generation was given the task of teaching the second: "That they should make them known to their children" (78:5). Then we have the following generation: "That the generation to come might know them" (78:6). Following that was the fourth generation: "That they may arise and declare them to their children" (78:6). But the Psalmist's vision plunged still deeper into the future: "The children who would be born" (78:6).

The Israelites were continually conscious of the need to pass their faith on to the next generation. At the Passover, the father was supposed to explain to his children the significance of the meal: "when your son asks you in time to come, saying, 'What is this?' that you shall say to him, 'By strength of hand the Lord brought

us out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage'" (Exodus 13:14). To this day Jewish homes read the *Haggadah* at Passover, a written account of the events of the Exodus.

God's words were to be on the parents' hearts, and these words they were to teach "diligently" to their children, talking of them "when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up" (Deuteronomy 6:6-9). The phrase "teach them diligently" suggests that this course of study needed to be intensive, detailed, and continual. Teaching was to be formal ("teach diligently") and informal ("in the house, on the way"). The home was to be permeated with God's words.

In his stirring speech at the end of his life, Joshua challenged his people to choose whom they would serve: "[C]hoose for yourselves this day whom you will serve," he called out; then pointed the way himself: "But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15). Ponder what would have happened had the Israelites not served God that day! We know that Joshua would have served the Lord, even if he did so alone. The term "my household" implies his children and grandchildren would serve the Lord as well. His faith had seeped into the lives of his children and grandchildren. Generations of Israelites did not live out their faith by accident! They were taught it.

What is at stake? When I am old and no longer able to preach, will there be a faithful congregation in which I can worship? Will my

grandchildren have a faithful church in which to grow up? **Beloved, this is serious!** It is the defining question of our generation! Will God's ways be passed on to succeeding generations or will it die with us?

It's easy to suffer from historical amnesia. It is not just a case of "those who do not learn the mistakes of history are doomed to repeat them." It is also a case of perspective and humility. In history, we can trace out trends and fads versus eternal truths.

You can hear the urgency in Paul's words to Timothy: "O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust" (1 Timothy 6:20). Paul was the older preacher, pleading with the younger man to carry the message on to the next generation.

What is your family heirloom? A diary of the Civil War? A necklace worn by succeeding generations of women in the family? **What about faith in God?**

At some point, it should dawn on us that we lead not only the generation sitting before us, but generations beyond that. We must preach the gospel to every creature, not just geographically, but to the next generation, and the next, and the next.

It's hard to think of a greater responsibility than to be the one in whose hands others have entrusted their very souls! "And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (2 Timothy 2:2).

If our faith was not passed down from our generation to the next, at what point did the ball drop, and who dropped it? I see two answers: Sometimes those of us who are older have failed to teach the next generation. Sometimes the next generation meets the message of faith with youthful immaturity, derision, and mockery. They do not appreciate what others worked so hard to build and preserve.

So, as one who is now an older brother in Christ, I beg you: Please, do not reshape the churches of Christ into a community church where we get to do "what we like." Please, continue to go back to the Bible, and the Bible alone, for our faith and practice. I am desperate for young people to develop the habit of involvement in their congregations early. If a teenager is mature enough, she should be placed in a classroom with a master teacher and learn how to teach. When she is ready, she should teach that class with the master teacher observing. Young men should be given opportunities to deliver short lessons. After all, at what age should a young person learn the habit of church involvement? Fourteen? Twenty? Thirty? Forty? **Ever?**

If a young person has grown up in the church, is in his twenties, and has not become involved in the church's activities, mark this, he has already developed a habit of **uninvolvement** for over a decade!

Church leaders should be conscious of the need to involve younger Christians. Shoulder tap. Encourage. Challenge. The task of young Christians is to grow, study and mature, search for their talents, and then hone and develop them. They need to be aware of the presence of mature saints, and to be "coachable"—humbly receptive to guidance. Remember Rehoboam who listened to the callow advice of his young friends rather than that of wiser Israelite leaders (1 Kings 12)? It takes time and tempering to become a mature church leader. Like an oak tree, the wood becomes hard and serviceable only over time; and how profoundly the church needs such people!

Christian young people can benefit from working with someone older and wiser. I think Jesus utilized this principle when he had twelve men follow him as He travelled (Mark 3:13-14), and as He sent them out to engage in ministry (Mark 6:7). Think for a moment, how staggering it is that these men spent three years with the greatest Teacher Who ever lived! Talk about attending an elite university!

It has often been said that the church is just one generation away from disappearing. All it takes, beloved, is for one generation in a long line of generations to fail to teach the next. The most important question of our age is this: Will there be a church, Christ-like and biblical, faithful, and evangelistic, in the next generation? Will our faith have children? ■

Dr. Mitchell also has a book on this same theme (*Will Our Faith Have Children? Developing Leadership in the Church of the Next Generation*) available from Hester Publications.

1. Walter Brueggeman, (1988), *Hope Within History* (Louisville, KY: John Knox), p. 92.



marriage.

THE NEED FOR FINANCIAL SECURITY

by Rachel Holland

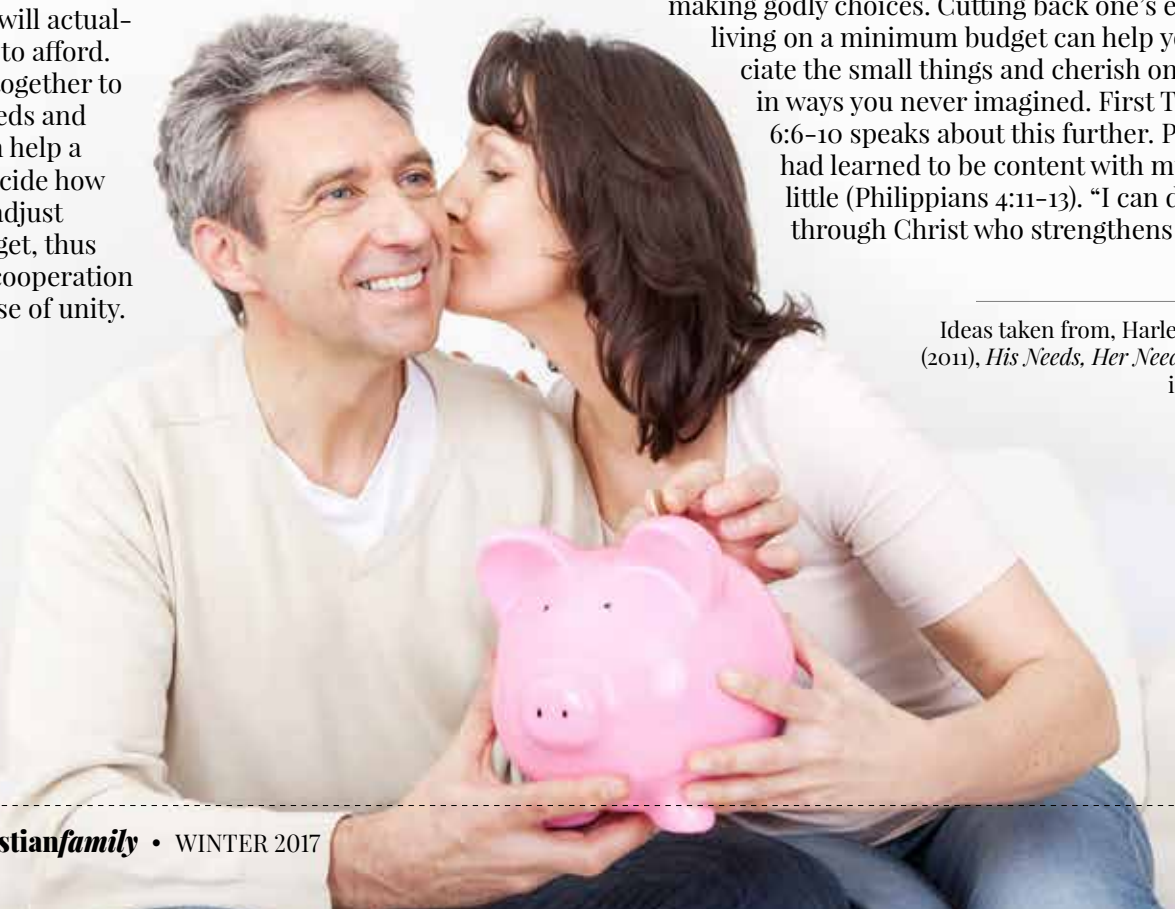
Even in today's cultural shift toward women's equal rights and more women working outside the home, women still need their husbands to work to support the family financially. Most women want the option to be open for them to work outside the home, but they also want to be good wives and mothers (which takes more time and effort than many realize). "Women's rights" may be seen as a woman having a career so she can be all she can be, but think about it as a woman's right to choose to be a full-time homemaker and mother.

When women must work outside the home to help pay the bills, this can put a strain on a marriage and cause resentment. Dr. Willard F. Harley, Jr., in his marriage counseling, uses a budget system to help couples assess needs, wants, and what they can afford. First, the "needs budget" should include the monthly cost of paying for the basic necessities, items you would be uncomfortable without. Next, the "wants budget" would be those extra things you like to have, but are not totally necessary. Lastly, the "affordable budget" is where you align the previous two budgets to decide what you will actually be able to afford. Working together to assess needs and wants can help a couple decide how they can adjust their budget, thus building cooperation and a sense of unity.

The husband's income should be used in the needs budget first, then spill over to the extras. If the wife works and they see their incomes together cover more than they need for the "affordable budget," they may evaluate if they want her to work outside the home or stay home. Some couples think they cannot survive on one income but, in reality, if the wife stays home, many expenses can be shaved off because she is actually saving money (gas, food, work expenses, babysitting, etc.). When a woman is free to be a homemaker as instructed by God (Titus 2:4-5), she is allowed to use skills of creative problem-solving, make more healthy meals for the family, watch over the ways of her household (Proverbs 31:27), raise her children in godly ways (Deuteronomy 6:4-8), and focus more time on the needs of her husband (1 Corinthians 7:34). These all make for a happier marriage, and less stress and guilt over unfulfilled responsibilities.

Many couples go through periods of stressful work schedules, extra demands, and family changes and adjustments; but finding creative ways to alleviate that stress can contribute to peace and marital harmony. This should be the goal of all marriages, along with helping one another get to heaven—our ultimate goal. Women have an emotional need for financial support provided mainly by the husband's income. If necessary, women may need to work while the husband is searching for a better job or even going back to college for higher education. As long as it is not long-term, most marriages can survive the extra strain to reach a higher goal. The idea of lowering one's standard of living is hard to come to terms with, but most of the world lives on less than \$1,000 per month. If there is a will, there is a way, and the Lord will bless you for making godly choices. Cutting back one's expenses and living on a minimum budget can help you appreciate the small things and cherish one another in ways you never imagined. First Timothy 6:6-10 speaks about this further. Paul said he had learned to be content with much or with little (Philippians 4:11-13). "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." ■

Ideas taken from, Harley, Willard F. Jr. (2011), *His Needs, Her Needs* [Grand Rapids, MI: Revell].



Since Adam and Eve were cursed in the garden, it has fallen man's lot to toil all the days of his life despite thorns and thistles, by the sweat of his face (Genesis 3:18-19). While women have not always stayed at home, they are the ones who give birth to the babies and are largely tasked with seeing to the baby's needs, especially when the baby is little. Men almost always work outside the home. That forces the management of the home onto the shoulders of the wife. If the wife works too, then the management of the home must be more evenly distributed.

If you read the description of the "virtuous wife" in Proverbs 31, you see that the woman whose children and husband praise her (vs. 28) is someone who manages well the household. She sees to the children's needs as well as her husband's needs. She also has a unique ability, due to her nature, to oversee the household itself: cooking, cleaning, organizing, etc. Speaking in general, men love to have wives who can manage their households well.

In Titus 2:3-5, Paul told Titus that older women should teach younger women to "love their husbands, to love their children,

to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed" (see also 1 Timothy 5:14). The word "homemaker" is a compound word that means "home-worker." The word in 1 Timothy 5:14 is different but also a compound word that means "home-master." She works in the home and she manages the home.

Among the needs that men, in general, have is for the home to be run and overseen as efficiently and economically as possible. Men enjoy coming home to peace and quiet and not having to worry about conflict at home. Certainly, if the wife works outside the home, she too wants to come home to a house that is peaceful and quiet and void of conflict!

If you are a stay at home mom, keep in mind how important this is for your husband. Disorganization and clutter are signs of chaos and are too similar to what he sees and experiences at work. To meet this important need of your husband, do your best to keep the house at the level of organization and efficiency that meets his expectations. If his expectations are unreachable, then you must communicate! If you are not a stay at home mom, or if you work part-time outside the home, then the two of you have to communicate even more.

Either way, you need to identify those responsibilities around the house that have to be met. How frequently does it need to be done? How important is it that it be done? Here, it might be beneficial to have a scale (0-5) so that you can ask your husband, "How important is it that the kitchen be clean when you come home from work?" He might give you a "1" or he might give you a "5." That gives you an idea of how important that job is to him.

Take oversight of some of those tasks. Assign some age-appropriate tasks to your children. Husbands also might need to assume the completion of some jobs. If you **need** help in a task, feel free to **ask** for it. If you enjoy his company/help while washing dishes, let him know. Showing and expressing appreciation go a long way in strengthening the relationship.

Keeping the home fires burning will also keep your love burning bright! ■

KEEPING THE HOME-FIRES BURNING

by Paul Holland



IF I WAGED A **WAR** ON WOMEN...

by Cindy Colley

There is a cultural war on women occurring today. It is ideological in nature and it is stripping women of respect and integrity. It is not born of traditional Biblical values, as some believe, but, in fact, it is the mentality of feminism with which the devil and the world is successfully denigrating women. If I were the devil and I wanted to win this cultural war on women, here is what I would do:

1. First, I would make her believe that she is just another rung on the evolutionary ladder; just another link in the Darwinian chain.

No soul. No higher purpose. Just another animal. But the kicker for women, in this Darwinian scenario, is that there is no explanation for her existence. Unlike the account she has believed for millennia about the fact that she crowned God's creation, I would make her believe she was just a fluke somewhere in the billions of years of coincidences and mistakes that made life what it is today. Right off the bat, I would rip away that notion that she has eternal significance.

2. I would make sure I started early to make her "look" cheap.

I would put little outfits in the stores that were composed of mini-skirts and halter tops, and I would start in size 2T. I would make it expensive to dress a little girl like a little girl. I would make the transition, in apparel, from little girl to worldly woman a very short leap.

3. I would get her used to hearing demeaning terms and sexual innuendos about women even in childhood.

I would get her in front of the television as often as possible. I would make her think that drinking and partying were the real "stuff" of happiness. I would want her to play video games where the cartoon women are always scantily clad, provocative and brash.

Then, I would play all this up in her real world the first chance I got. I would want her to think wearing a tiny cheer uniform and moving her body provocatively was cool—even respectable. I would want her to have dance lessons, play volleyball in her panties or be on a running team or a swim team where the expected dress was almost nothing. I would want her to have holes in her jeans in the places where cheap attention could be drawn to her body. This is an important

part of what I would do to make her forget the intrinsic value of her soul.

4. I would target her heroines.

I would make the most important women in the country the rudest and the most immoral. I would make the heroines of the entertainment and political world trashy. I would make the top songs that women hear on the radio tout fornication, homosexuality, and masturbation. This would help me drain the very souls of younger women of purpose and positive influence.

5. I would make her believe she is dispensable by telling her that you do not even need a woman anymore to have a marriage and a family.

Based on that lie, I would tell her that, in fact, womanhood is not even reserved for those who are born as girls. The female identity is easily taken by anyone who wants it... It is easy for Bruce to be Katelyn. All it takes is a change of wardrobe and a few hormones. Gender is not really a sacred assignment after all.

6. I would make her unashamed of the objectification of womanhood that is the largest entertainment venue in the world today.

In fact, I would want her to go on and join the ranks of those who objectify people. I would want her to enjoy pornographic movies and books. What better way to take away the dignity of women in our culture than to have them clamoring by the millions to the vile and cheap?

7. I would try to legalize the killing of life within her womb.

I would so mix up her sense of logic that I would make her believe it is emancipating to let doctors come inside her womb and suction out the life that is dependent on her for survival. I would take her sense of values to the very lowest possible point and convince her to be okay with selling the life that has her chromosomes, her hair color, her skin pigmentation and, yes, his or her own beating

heart. I would get her to have no conscience at all about the person who is being ripped apart. I would somehow make her think she is becoming more of a woman when she allows a violation of that magnitude to occur in her womb.

8. I would make her believe her value lies in some numerical figure on a pay stub.

I would make her believe that true success can be counted in dollars and cents and that her intrinsic value is dependent on her ability to bring home the bacon. I would not forget to build short maternity leave into job benefits and to build lots of day cares near, or in, her work sites. I would try to normalize career pursuits in all situations. In fact, I might try and make women who were not career-minded seem lazy and worthless by comparison.

9. I would try to remove from her psyche any maternal tugs.

If she ever starts to cry when she has to leave that tiny baby for the first day back at work, I would make her think, "Ah, this is just normal. All moms go through this healthy week of detaching from children. I need to get past this post-birth weepiness and be productive." If her kids are getting sick a lot at daycare, I would want her to justify her choices by thinking, "Oh, this will be good for them in the long run...you know...build up their immunities." In this step-by-step rationalization of dissonance in the plan, I would slowly get her to stop feeling the tugs. Further, I would get her to make investments and mortgages—I would get her to buy things. I would get her in debt to the plan that is silencing her maternal nature. I would do this until she could not answer the cries even if she heard them.

10. Finally, I would give her applause for superficial things.

I would give her pats on the back and I would make good, but deceived, women go, with a vengeance, after those who would call women back

to the heart of womanhood. I would make the cheapening, the immodesty, the override of the maternal impulses—all that—very politically correct. I would make any reference to Scriptures about submission or keeping the home seem terribly antiquated. In fact, I would make the phrase "role of women" sound very oppressive and shockingly outdated.

The current war on women is not from the political right or from the religions of the Middle East. The war on women today is from hell.

So, this is how I would wage a war on women. I would take away the legacy of faith. If I wanted to rob women of dignity, I would make them set, as their standards, the cheap, the undressed, the immoral. I would dirty their minds with pornography and their hands with deceit. I would make them say "abortion" when they mean "murder"; "tolerance" when they mean "approval"; "love" when they mean "lust." I would mix up their terminology and then tempt them into thinking that the primary purpose of life is self-fulfillment. I would make them believe that truth for their lives and homes is not objective but "lies within themselves". All in all, I would go for their hearts.

The current war on women is not from the political right or from the religions of the Middle East. The war on women today is from hell. The devil is taking the spoils. He offers a mess of pottage that is temporarily filling in exchange for the goodness that has characterized great women from the dawn of time. May we look to the Word of God for value and for the power to resist the devil's relentless attack on women.

featured.

From Our Families Around the World:

1

As a family, we feel it is important to be involved with church activities. However, we also feel it is just as important to participate in activities outside of the “church” setting to let our lights shine. Some of these activities we participate in as a family are helping the elderly with tasks they cannot complete on their own. We shovel snow, rake leaves, and do simple repairs around their houses. During family Bible time, we have “pop quizzes” when the boys have to recite the apostles, books of the Bible, or a favorite Bible verse. We also try to vary the times we have the quizzes to keep them on guard.

THE PULLEY FAMILY

Clio, Michigan

Elizabethton, Tennessee

3

In our family, we choose a scripture every day to memorize it and meditate on it. We study it until we can draw practical lessons from it. One of our goals is to use what we learn daily to share it with others who do not know God.

THE SALGADO FAMILY

3

Toluca, Mexico

5

San Miguel Petapa, Guatemala

6

Alajuela, Costa Rica

7

Medellín, Colombia

4

La Romana, Dominican Republic

8

San Martín, Peru

4

We have an open Bible study every Monday at home where we share God’s Word with others. This is helping our children to strengthen their faith and keep firm in God’s ways.

THE ALCÁNTARA FAMILY

9

Buenos Aires, Argentina

2

One of our favorite ways to bond as a family is to have traditions that are unique to us. For instance, every April we have an Opening Day party when baseball season starts, and we eat hot dogs, cracker jacks, and ice cream while we watch a game. Every Saturday night we play a Bible game. Sometimes this is a store-bought board game, but more often, it is a game my husband creates to get the kids involved in reviewing Bible topics we have recently been studying. Sundays are “movie rest” day where everyone piles on the couches and watches movies (except Mom, who gets to nap!), and Sunday nights are mom and dad’s dinner night without kids. We wait until after the kids’ bedtime and then eat together just the two of us. The day after Thanksgiving we go “shopping in the dark” to buy a gingerbread kit and eat breakfast out on Black Friday, and we decorate the gingerbread house mid-December. The traditions don’t have to be fancy or elaborate, but they are just ours.

THE EPLING FAMILY

What Do You Do to Grow As a Family?

5

As a family, we are going through difficult times. However, these times have been beneficial to us. We are developing a life of prayer and Bible study. This also has taught us to show love and compassion toward others, and to grow spiritually.

THE PÉREZ FAMILY

10

Sibiu, Romania

8

To grow our relationship, we frequently go places together to serve Jesus or to spend time as a family. We may eat or have ice cream, or just do other things together. At home, we have a special place where we pray together each night before bed.

THE MENDOZA FAMILY

9

Every day, in the morning and at night, we read the Bible and pray for our family, our neighbors, the local church and the church worldwide, and our authorities. Once or twice a month, we have other Christians in our home to study the Bible, sing, pray to God, and enjoy their fellowship. This has helped us to grow stronger and keep in the narrow way.

THE MEIJOMIL FAMILY

6

To teach our daughters about the importance of God's Word, we read the Bible after breakfast and draw a practical application. We also watch related videos and sing songs. We keep a board in their room where they paste biblical materials or memory verses they are to learn.

THE VEGA FAMILY

7

Every morning before going to work, I give my children a passage from Scripture for them to read, study, and write about. At night, when I come back home, we get together as a family to study God's Word, when they share with us what they have learned from the passage.

THE ARRUBLA FAMILY

10

We strive every day to put Christ in the center of our family and to allow His Word to guide us in all of our decisions. Prayer is such a vital part of our strength as a family. We encourage our children to pray for our family, the church, the lost, and the needy. Reading the Bible together and looking for opportunities to put it in practice is also very important. We read the Scriptures, we talk about it, we pray about it, and then we go out and find ways to do what we learned.

THE MURTAZA FAMILY

youth.

Some time ago, I had to transfer some money. The company I was using had an office in a nearby market. I entered and found the office, which was close to the cigarettes section! While standing there, I became amazed at the extensive selection of cigarettes this particular store carried. There was the interesting sign on a wall: "Warning: Smoking can cause cancer." The attendant who was helping me also was in charge of selling cigarettes. I decided to ask a couple of questions.

"Ma'am, why do you think people spend money on cigarettes knowing that smoking kills people?" I asked the woman. She looked at me with surprise and said, "Well, they are crazy!" Then she quickly added, "But I don't smoke." I smiled and asked: "And why do you think this store sells so many cigarettes knowing that smoking kills people?" The woman took a deep breath and said: "Because people buy them."

You don't have to ask, but it is obvious that both groups—those who buy cigarettes and those who sell them—know that smoking is harmful. On one hand, dealers know this, but they also know **too**

well that cigarettes are a "smoking business." (A pack of Marlboro® costs \$5 - \$10, and the average user smokes a pack per day¹—spending \$1,800 - \$3,600 in cigarettes every year.) No matter how many people die every year, these unscrupulous sellers will continue to take advantage of the user to fill their pockets (cf. Deuteronomy 27:18; Proverbs 10:9; 28:6,20; Matthew 6:24; 7:12).

On the other hand, as the woman in the market suggested, dealers sell cigarettes because there are people who, despite knowing smoking harms, are "crazy" enough to pay the price! Of course, neither she nor I knew for sure what every establishment selling cigarettes thought about smokers, but the proposition made sense: If there are people who know that a product can harm their bodies and even cause their death and still spend large amounts of money to buy that product, then those people are acting, at least in part, based on some kind of "madness."

SMOKING "MADNESS"

But why will some catalogue those who smoke as "crazy"? Although this description may not be adequate, some facts about smoking will guide any impartial reader to conclude that there is some "craziness" going on.

- Globally, tobacco causes more than 7 million deaths every year, and it ends up killing about half of all users.² Despite this, thousands of people start smoking every day; only in the U.S., each day more than 3,200 people younger than 18 smoke their first cigarette.³

"THOSE WHO SMOKE ARE CRAZY!"

by Moisés Pinedo



- Tobacco killed 100 million people in the 20th century. If this pattern continues, deaths will number around 1 billion in the 21st century.⁴ This is equivalent to killing the entire U.S. population in only 30 years!
- “Cigarette smoke contains more than 7,000 chemicals, at least 69 of which are known to cause cancer. Smoking harms nearly every organ in the body, and is a main cause of lung cancer and COPD. It also is a cause of coronary heart disease, stroke and a host of other cancers and diseases.”⁵
- “On average, smokers die 10 years earlier than nonsmokers.”⁶
- Although cigarettes have a high price, the percentage of smokers, at least in the U.S., is higher among those below poverty level (26.1% compared to 13.9% of people at or above poverty level.)⁷

This list could be extended, but it is enough to conclude that smoking involves terrible risks and consequences—not only for the smokers but also for those who are exposed to second-hand smoking. (It is estimated that “600,000 non-smokers die each year from second-hand smoke worldwide,” and one-third of that number are children.)⁸

Think about this: If I told you that you can pay me \$5 - \$10 daily for a product that can cause you health problems, prematurely kill you, and potentially kill those around you, would you hurry to give me money to buy the product, and then would you do the same every day until you die? This is exactly what millions are doing today when buying cigarettes!

CONCLUSION

Sadly, we live in a confused world which aims to satisfy personal desire. If you have never tasted cigarette’s enslaving flavor, do not start today. Even “a single cigarette produces enough smoke to alter genes in the lungs.”⁹

If you are part of the group who has taken the wrong step and became entrapped by cigarette’s addictive force, or are using smokeless

tobacco, know that there is hope. Quitting is hard, but not impossible with God’s help (cf. Philippians 4:13). Look for help from faithful Christians and your family. Read biblical passages that teach to take care of your body (e.g., 1 Corinthians 6:12-20), suppress the search of sinful desires (e.g., 1 John 2:16), keep your mind’s sobriety (e.g., Titus 2:12), and pursue your well-being and of others (e.g., John 10:10; Matthew 22:39); meditate on these things (Philippians 4:8). Look for professional help. Identify patterns and circumstances that causes you to want to smoke. Find additional information about smoking risks and follow the good advice of experts. Clean your room and car from any tobacco products. Drink enough water; eat healthy. Get involved in activities that clear your mind and keep you busy; exercise. Avoid “friends” who smoke and places where people smoke or tobacco is sold. Finally, don’t buy into the devil’s lie that “moderation” is acceptable; strive for total abstinence! ■

1. Gardner, Amanda (2011), “Pack-a-day Smokers Declining,” CNN, <http://www.cnn.com/2011/HEALTH/03/15/pack.smokers.now.rare/index.html>.
2. “Tobacco” (2017), World Health Organization, <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs339/en/>.
3. “Fast Facts,” Center for Disease Control and Prevention, http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/fast_facts/, access date: October 24th, 2017.
4. “Smoking’s Death Toll,” The Tobacco Atlas, <http://www.tobaccoatlas.org/topic/smokings-death-toll/>, access date: October 24th, 2017.
5. “Smoking Facts,” American Lung Association, <http://www.lung.org/stop-smoking/about-smoking/health-effects/smoking.html>, access date: October 24th, 2017.
6. *Ibid*, “Fast Facts.”
7. “Burden of Tobacco Use in the U.S.,” Center for Disease Control and Prevention, <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/campaign/tips/resources/data/cigarette-smoking-in-united-states.html>, access date: October 24th, 2017.
8. “Tobacco Statistics & Facts,” ASH, <http://ash.org/resources/tobacco-statistics-facts/>, access date: October 24th, 2017.
9. Kaplan, Karen (2010), “How Many Cigarettes Is It Safe to Smoke?,” *Los Angeles Times*, <http://articles.latimes.com/2010/aug/20/news/la-heb-smoking-20100820>.

WHAT ABOUT VAPING?



When avoiding or quitting an old addiction, don’t become trapped by the devil’s new one. Vaping is not “safer” than smoking regular cigarettes since there is nothing “safe” in either activity. New studies are revealing serious health concerns about this trend.¹⁰ The only safe road to a healthy lifestyle and spiritual clarity is complete abstinence.

10. Konkel, Lindsey (2017), “Concerns Explode Over New Health Risks of Vaping,” *Science News for Students*, <https://www.sciencenewsforstudents.org/article/concerns-explode-over-new-health-risks-vaping>.

children.



What I Have Learned from Jesus about Money

by Melanie Pinedo

made money appear miraculously, but He made Peter “work” for it. As a child, you may not have much or any money. But there are probably ways for you to earn money, such as doing extra chores or helping other people. Don’t take allowance for granted either. If you learn to work at an early age, you will benefit from it.

“Money” is better saved in heaven.

We don’t need to be too focused on possessions or the things of this world, such as money. Matthew 6:19 says: “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal.” In the end, it will not matter to God if you had the nicest things or the most money; all that will matter is that you were obedient to Him. God wants you to enjoy life on earth, but not to get distracted by the things in it. He wants you to be focused on the goal of getting to heaven. As you do the things God wants you to do, you lay up for yourself treasures in heaven (Matthew 6:20).

Money doesn’t make a good master.

We cannot serve God and money (Matthew 6:24). We are not supposed to love money more than we love God or as we love God. First Timothy 6:10 says that “the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil.” Money in itself is not bad, but we should not put our confidence in it or let it rule our lives.

There was a rich young man who came to Jesus in Matthew 19:16-30 and asked Him what he needed to do to be saved. When Jesus answered that he needed to sell his possessions to follow Him, he was not ready to do it. He lost the opportunity to find what he came to look for in Jesus: salvation! Our possessions are not more important than following God. In the end, we will not take our possessions with us to the next life.

Don’t owe money.

In Matthew 17:24-27, we see that, although Jesus, as the Son of God, did not have to pay taxes for the temple, He did it not to “offend” those who still were to believe in Him (verse 27). In Matthew 22:15-21, He taught that it was right to pay due taxes.

Have you ever been in a store and picked something out and told your mom or dad you would pay them back? Ideally, you should pay them back as soon as possible; it is important to keep your word. You may not owe money, but you may have borrowed something from a friend. Don’t forget to give back the things you borrow. Owing money can cause you a lot of trouble later in life. So, always make sure you pay your debts.

I don’t know much about money, but what I know I learned from Jesus.

Jesus cares about money.

Many of Jesus’ parables relate to money (for example, the parables of the Rich Fool, the Lost Coin, the Talents.) He cares about money because money, as any other good gifts, comes from God (James 1:17).

On one occasion during His ministry, Jesus was near the temple’s treasury and watched as many of the rich people tossed lots of money inside. Then He watched as a poor widow tossed in two mites. He told His disciples: “this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury; for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood” (Mark 12:43-44). God appreciated the widow’s money as much as He did the rich people’s money; in fact, she gave “more” than the others. When you give back to God, it shows that you care about Him and what He does for you. God cares about what you give, and He cares about how you use what He gives to you.

If you don’t have money, go fish for it!

When Peter came to Jesus to ask for the temple’s tax money, Jesus told him to go to the sea and fish for it! Peter went to the sea and caught a fish, and when he opened its mouth, he found a coin inside (Matthew 17:24-27)! Being God, Jesus could have



You don't need lots of money to serve the Lord.

Going back to the widow's story (Mark 12:41-44), she was not rich like those around her, but she still offered what she had. There are many ways, besides giving money, that you can give to God. For example, you can give your time and focus in worship. Also, helping those in need and visiting the sick and shut ins may not require you to have money. Another thing you could do is simply read and study the Bible, and pray for others. Maybe in the mornings or evenings your family has a family Bible time; this is a good opportunity to show God you care about Him and want to know more about Him. Also, you need to learn to share what you have with others, no matter how little it is (Matthew 10:42).



Use your money wisely.

The prodigal son is a good example of how you should **not** waste your money (Luke 15:11-32). He asked for his inheritance early. After his father had given it to him, he left his father's house. When he had spent all his money, a famine arose in the land and he began to be in want (verse 14). You need to be careful with the money you are given and use it wisely. You need to learn to set aside money for God, save some, and then use some for yourself. You should understand that your money is really God's, and if you spend it on bad things, then you will be using God's money in a wrong way. Also, you need to learn that, even though you may go to the store every week, it does not mean you need to always buy something.

Jesus taught much about money; learn from Him early in life and you will not have problems with it! ■



The Widow's Offering by Hannah Welch (13), Jeffersonville, IN



Money in the Bible

The Bible mentions different kinds of money. Below is provided every other letter of some of them. If you have problems guessing the names, look at the verses (NKJV).

- Ⓞ Abraham bought a land for 400 s__e__e__s of silver as a burial place (Genesis 23:16).
- Ⓞ In Jesus' time, two sparrows were sold for a c__p__e__ coin (Matthew 10:29).
- Ⓞ The good Samaritan gave the innkeeper two d__n__r__i to take care of the wounded man (Luke 10:35).
- Ⓞ In Jesus' parable of the Lost Coin, the woman lost one s__l__e__ coin (Luke 15:8).
- Ⓞ The poor widow threw two m__t__s in the treasury (Mark 12:42).
- Ⓞ The widow's offering was equivalent to a q__a__r__n__ (Mark 12:42).
- Ⓞ In one of Jesus' parables, a servant hid his master's t__l__n__ in the ground (Matthew 25:25).

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questions.

Q&A

Q: Who is to teach doctrinal issues to the children? The father? Can the mother do it?

—SAN SALVADOR, EL SALVADOR

The father is the leader of the home (Ephesians 5:23), and, therefore, should also be the spiritual leader. He should have a main role in guiding his family in the way of the Lord (Genesis 18:19). However, godly instruction was **never** limited to the father only (cf. Proverbs 31:1-9). In the New Testament, Timothy was instructed in the faith by the women in the family (2 Timothy 1:5). This instruction allowed him to know the Holy Scriptures from childhood (2 Timothy 3:15). Surely, this included not only moral instruction, but also doctrinal.

Children need to be instructed in the whole truth of God. A Christian father should lead in this instruction, but if he does not, then a godly mother should still provide this vital teaching. Obviously, in homes where the father is not a Christian, the mother may be the only source of godly instruction for children. —MP

Q: As Christians, how are we to deal with incest in the family circle?

—MEXICO CITY, MEXICO

The word “incest” is not found in the Bible, but the practice and prohibitions are outlined in Leviticus 18. The New Testament uses the word *porneia* to refer to general unlawful sexual acts, including incest, and condemns

incest in passages like 1 Corinthians 5. Although the specific relationships/acts catalogued as “incest” are not outlined in the New Testament, it is obvious that the Old Testament understanding based on Leviticus 18 was carried over to the New Testament in the word *porneia*—as the understanding of other known sexual acts were (e.g., bestiality, Leviticus 20:15-16).

Using 1 Corinthians 5 as a principle for dealing with incest today, we can say that we are to lament the occurrence, expose the sin, and correct the sinner. This is to be done with diligence and love (cf. Galatians 6:1). If there is true repentance, we are to forgive the offender (2 Corinthians 2:5-11). —MP

Q: Could we apply the expression “provide for his own” in 1 Timothy 5:8 in a broader sense? If so, in what ways, besides economically, are we to provide for our family? —TOLUCA, MEXICO

The context of 1 Timothy 5 is discussing the care of widows. In this context, Paul does not get very specific about the type of care he is discussing. Yet, the care is in the context of “showing piety” (5:4). We might suggest, then, that in **every** way in which we can practice the golden rule (Matthew 7:12), we should be providing for those who are dependent on us. That would include economic, spiritual, emotional, and physical

support. In this context, Paul has in mind children and grandchildren providing for their parents and grandparents. But in 2 Corinthians 12:14, he writes that parents are to provide for their children. Yes, the kind of care in 1 Timothy 5:8 is very broad. —PH

Q: What are some main things that are destroying our families today?

—ALAJUELA, COSTA RICA

Everything that originates with Satan destroys families in **every** age. In one word, our greatest enemy is “selfishness.” What destroys

our families? Not focusing our family life on Christ and His Word, not taking our family to worship regularly, parents not living the Christian life humbly and honestly before their children. These behaviors destroy families from within.

From without, we face illegal drug use and other addictions, like pornography and the internet in general. We face the coarse and crude culture in which we live that makes it acceptable to walk in darkness. Parents must stay vigilant in every aspect of their family’s lives. —PH

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