

A bilingual magazine for Christian families | Vol 3, No 1 • Spring 2018

# Christian *family*

ESPAÑOL  
A LA ESPALDA



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The Amayas share with us some family lessons from church leadership.

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**p.8** *Daughters of the King*

**p.12** *Blessings of Growing up in a Christian Home*

*and more* ➤



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## from the editors



Not only does society need the family, but the church also. Strong Christian families will raise the next generation of church leaders—elders, deacons, preachers, teachers, and song leaders. Strong

families will also promote active involvement of every member in the vineyard of the Lord. The Amaya family, featured in this issue, has been working to serve the Lord by doing exactly this. They share with us some things they have learned by having a father as a man who currently serves as an elder in the Lord's church.

This issue will also strengthen families by providing helpful insight concerning relationships between husband and wife and parents and children; it will reveal the proper value of every human being before the Lord; and it will answer some interesting questions about the home as designed by God. Get a cup of coffee and a comfortable chair, and enjoy this latest issue.

Paul Holland & Moisés Pinedo

# Christianfamily

*Helping families become stronger in the Lord*

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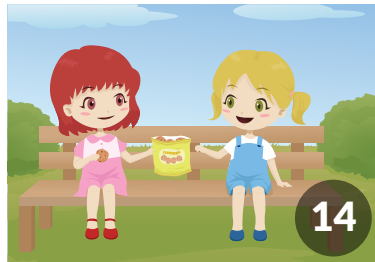
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# DISFUNCTIONAL FAMILIES IN GENESIS... Noah

by Eric Welch

# family.

**E**ven though death was the result of Adam and Eve's sin, God continued to show grace to mankind through the blessing of children (Genesis 1:28; cf. 1:22). Adam's godly lineage was interrupted by Cain's murder of Abel (4:8). After the loss of faithful Abel (Hebrews 11:4), God blessed them with another son, Seth, and a line of godly descendants (Genesis 4:26)—one of whom, Enoch, the seventh from Adam, "walked with God" and did not die (5:21-24). The blessing continued from one generation to the next. Then, in his son, Lamech saw in some sense rest from the painful curse (cf. Revelation 14:13): "And he called his name Noah, saying, 'This one will comfort us concerning our work and the toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord has cursed'" (5:29).

Just as Adam's godly lineage was interrupted by Cain's murder of Abel, the godly lineage of Genesis 4 was interrupted by another sad account of wickedness. God looked at the other side of humanity, the descendants of Cain who had married the descendants of Seth, and saw great darkness. Cain had been cursed for the murder of Abel and was left to wander the earth. As is often the case in history, wicked people tend to outpace godly people in material prosperity (cf. 36:31). Cain and his descendants began to fill the emptiness of wandering by inventing the city. They became inventors of animal husbandry, music and metal work (4:16-22). However, along with prosperity, wickedness increased. Cain's Lamech, also the seventh from Adam, "invented" polygamy and became even more barbaric than his ancestor had become (4:23-24). Eventually, cities became kingdoms and their kings became famous tyrants (6:4).

God "saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (6:5). He could no longer tolerate the world's wickedness (vs. 6) and decided to wipe it clean (vs. 7). Verses 8-9 tell of a glimmer of light in that dark world: "But Noah found grace in

the eyes of the Lord... Noah was a just man, perfect [blameless] in his generations. Noah walked with God." Noah was a "preacher of righteousness" (2 Peter 2:5). Hebrews 11:7 says, "By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith."

Just as the example of Noah gave the Jewish Christians a reason to keep pushing on (Hebrews 11:7), we, too, can persevere and emerge victorious because we have put complete faith in the Lord. Note how Genesis 6:22 sums up Noah's faith: "Thus Noah did; according to all that God commanded him, so he did." Now, replace Noah's name with your name.

However, just when we might imagine that Noah was a near-perfect man, not even he deserved the Lord's grace and deliverance from the flood. Moses did not spare us from reading about one of Noah's dysfunctions in Genesis 9:20-21: "And Noah...planted a vineyard. Then he drank of the wine and was drunk, and became uncovered in his tent." Yes, he was imperfect, but the difference between him and his world was his "walk with God." Noah's imperfect life reassures us that we, too, can "walk with God" and "become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world" (Philippians 2:15). We are all dysfunctional because of our sin. May our prayer be that God will use us, despite those dysfunctions, to bring honor and glory to Him (cf. Luke 17:10). ■





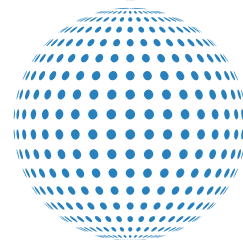
# parenting.

## WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT

by Melvin Otey

## DANCING?

The verb “dance” can refer to leaping or skipping about excitedly, and the Bible certainly makes reference to such celebratory dancing (e.g., Exodus 15:20; Judges 11:34; Ecclesiastes 3:1-4). However, the term is most commonly used in modern society with regard to rhythmically moving according to prescribed or improvised steps and gestures, usually to music. At least in American culture, these steps and gestures typically entail moving or thrusting of the pelvis and torso in ways that approximate sex acts and is often accompanied with close physical embraces. According to scholar Merrill Tenney, while the mode of dancing in Bible times is not known in detail, “it is clear that men and women did not generally dance together, and there is no real evidence that they ever did. Social amusement was hardly a major purpose of dancing, and the modern method of dancing by couples is unknown.”<sup>1</sup>



Some attempt to justify contemporary dancing because, in their words, “the Bible doesn’t say you can’t dance,” but this is a dangerous, and perhaps even a dishonest, approach to the matter. While the Bible contains rules, it is not a rule book. Consequently, it often sets forth principles without listing every specific activity that is forbidden by the principle. For example, “You shall not steal” (Exodus 20:15) does not enumerate every imaginative way a person might conceive to take something that is not his by right or every specific item (some yet to be discovered or invented) that can potentially be stolen. The general injunction against stealing requires that nothing be stolen in any manner. In a similar way, clear biblical precepts address the impropriety of dancing.

### THE BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES

The Bible generally condemns “lasciviousness” (e.g., Mark 7:21-23; Galatians 5:19; 1 Peter 4:3). According to Vine, the underlying Greek term, *aselgeia*, “denotes excess, licentiousness, absence of restraint, indecency, wantonness... The prominent idea is shameless conduct.”<sup>2</sup> The word “licentious” means lacking moral discipline or ignoring legal restraint, especially in sexual conduct, and the word “wanton” means lewd, immoral or unchaste. Shameless conduct is behavior that suggests that there is no need for privacy, that there is no need to cover or “hide” certain parts of one’s physical body from public consumption. Clearly, most of the public, mixed-gender dancing that occurs in our society is lascivious because it involves gyrating, thrusting, swaying the hips, close embraces, erogenous contact, and other conduct that suggests a lack of sexual restraint and discipline.

While the Bible prohibits lasciviousness, which largely emphasizes the message that is communicated by our behavior, it also imposes the affirmative responsibility to avoid things




that will incite lust within us. When Paul told Timothy to flee “youthful lusts” (2 Timothy 2:22) and Peter told the churches to “abstain from fleshly lusts” (1 Peter 2:11), they did not list specific lusts to avoid. The principle required that Christians avoid them all. We ought not to watch others engage in lewd conduct (cf. Job 31:1; Matthew 5:28), much less join in it ourselves; and it is unrealistic to believe that males who are attracted to females can watch girls and women rhythmically shake, bounce, bend, and twist without thinking unchaste thoughts. Some have said, and it may be, that females are typically less visually stimulated than males but, even if that were true, it does not mean that females are blind. Girls and women who are attracted to men are also likely to be aroused when they see men dancing. Moreover, it is absolutely unrealistic to believe that men and women can fondle and embrace one another while dancing without being stirred to lust. The attractions are natural for both males and females (cf. 1 Corinthians 7:2–3), particularly for those who have entered puberty, but when they are fostered outside of a lawful marriage relationship, they are sinful.

One must also consider the environment in which dancing usually occurs. Of course, it occurs in health clubs as a form of “exercise” and in various performances as a form of “entertainment” (which does not make it less sinful). However, in America, much dancing occurs in youth social gatherings like school dances and proms or in adult social gatherings like night clubs, bars and parties. Oftentimes, the activities occur at night, with dimmed lighting, and feature alcoholic beverages, unsavory speech in musical lyrics and immodest dress. It is no coincidence that fornication and sexual assaults are often associated with such events. They are properly described as “revelries,” which the Bible condemns as a work of the flesh which Christians are expected to avoid completely (see Galatians 5:21; 1 Peter 4:3; cf. Exodus 32:19).

## THE BOTTOM LINE

It is natural for some to wonder whether all dancing is wrong. All dancing is not wrong, because dancing is not inherently sinful. It is wrong when it involves the wrong parties or audiences because of the improper attitudes and effects that accompany it. However, it is possible to dance under circumstances that do not encourage unlawful thoughts and feelings. For example, a person might dance alone in the privacy of his or her own home for exercise or entertainment without experiencing lust or encouraging it in others. Also, a married couple could dance together privately and lawfully enjoy the attendant feelings and touching. However, the same conduct would violate several biblical precepts if it occurred publicly, that is before an audience.



It is important that Christians, parents and young people are honest with themselves about what dancing actually entails. It is not harmless behavior. There is a reason that heterosexuals do not typically participate in same-sex dancing: the activity is sexual in nature and designed to stir up lustful feelings in the dancers and the audience. Christians should be too modest and bashful to publicly engage in such behavior (cf. 1 Timothy 2:9; Jeremiah 6:15; 8:12). Remember, we are not to engage in questionable behavior (Romans 14:23) and are to “provide things honest [or morally excellent] in the sight of all men” (Romans 12:17, KJV). These mandates do not diminish when the weekend comes or when prom season rolls around.

In discerning the appropriateness of dancing in a given circumstance, one should consider, among others, the following simple questions:

- (1) If my potential dance partner is a member of the opposite sex, are we married?
- (2) Will there be touching?
- (3) Will others see me?
- (4) Would others potentially consider the movements I am contemplating indecent?
- (5) What body parts will I be moving?
- (6) Will others potentially be aroused by my conduct?
- (7) Will I potentially be aroused by the activity?
- (8) Is the atmosphere (e.g., alcohol, music, attire) ungodly?
- (9) Would I dance this way if Jesus were observing (because He is!)? ■

1. Tenney, Merrill, ed. (1976), “Dancing,” *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan).

2. Vine, W.E. (1997), *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson).



# marriage.

by Rachel Holland

*Greatest job on earth!*

In the beginning, God made Adam and then He formed Eve from one of Adam's ribs. He gave them no instruction manual on how to be a good spouse. We do have the entire Bible today to rely on for help, but the fact remains that we must take godly principles and apply them to ourselves in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. What do women really need from their husbands? One of the most important aspects of a marriage is the raising of the children. God gives us a great responsibility in the souls of our children.

A woman needs her husband to be committed to the family unit and the raising of the children as a major aspect of his identity. He can find fulfillment in his work, hobbies, and relationships with others, but his primary focus should be the training of his own children (Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:4). If you, as the father and leader of your home, do not provide the structure of the training of your children, your wife may seek other men to fill that role (which could also pull her heart away from you). This may shock some of you. If she sees other men filling your role as father, that could endanger your marriage. Your wife needs you to take your God-given role seriously.

Parenting is a job! True, most men have jobs that require 40 or more hours a week. Consider how you use the time you are given to strengthen your family. What are some things you want to intentionally instill in your children before they grow up and leave home? Make a list of ways you can spend time doing things together as a family that will instruct your children and teach them to serve the Lord. These have proven to be bonding for our family: playing board games, sharing meals and laughter, reading before bedtime, attending worship as a family, family projects that require cooperation (gardening, washing the car, raking leaves or shoveling snow for your family and for others). By serving others as a family, we often are blessed with a double reward: (1) our children see us humbly serving someone else, and (2) our children come to love helping others and learn that it "is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

Remember, no one is born knowing how to care for children. The skills can be learned and improved upon.



No one is perfect, but we all have room for growth. The husband and wife need to have a mutual understanding of how to handle their children with consistency and fairness. Children learn how to handle anger from their parents' example, so largely how you raise your children will flow from how self-controlled you have become. It is true that having children helps you come to terms with how you were raised and then make changes if needed. Everyone can learn something from being a parent: humility.

Being a good father is important, but do not neglect your relationship with your wife. She needs you to lead with loving hands, a strong heart, and a dedication to her and your family. These things will bind you as husband and wife. As Ecclesiastes 4:12 states, "a threefold cord is not quickly broken." You, your wife, and God are the three elements necessary to your marriage. Even after the children leave home, you will still have each other. Keep God as your focus in your relationship and you will grow closer as you age together. Heaven is the goal: for you, your wife, and those precious children that God has allowed you to raise to send back to Him. ■

# YOUR HUSBAND'S BIGGEST FAN *by Paul Holland*

**A**s a preacher, I often ask my wife on the way home, "What did you think of my lesson?" My wife takes good notes on my sermons. Sometimes she has a lot to say about the lesson, and sometimes, she does not say much. But I am always interested in her feedback because I know she will tell it to me "like it is." She is not blunt so that her words hurt, but she will give helpful criticism if she thinks I need it.

A man's biggest fan needs to be his wife. Paul wrote the Christians in Rome: "Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another" (Romans 14:19). Those words are as relevant in the marriage relationship as they are in the church context. Words of encouragement, especially from the wife, inspire the husband to achieve more and to improve his skills. Your words of helpful critique can also help him be better at his fathering, his work, his service in the church, and his role as a husband.

Wives, do not compare your husband against other men, not physically, intellectually, spiritually, or otherwise. That can do dramatic damage to his self-esteem and to your relationship. Besides, it is not fair. His strength might be in auto-mechanics and not public speaking. If he is not comfortable in public speaking, he might not lead in worship in public. That is not to say that he can never do it, but be careful that you do not ignore his strength (auto-mechanics) while you are encouraging him in his area of weakness (public speaking).

Criticism causes us, as humans, to become defensive. If we are defensive, we do not have the motivation to improve. But through words of encouragement, we feel energized and motivated to do more and to improve. The word translated "edify" in Romans 14:19 is used 18 times in the New Testament and has as its root word "house." It means to "build up." The verb is found **40** times in the New Testament. It is clearly important to God that we **build each other up** and, again, that "building up" starts in the home.

With every other article we have written in this series, being your husband's biggest fan comes back to the subject of communication. **Ask** your husband where he would like encouragement. Obviously, if **he asks** (as in my case with my sermons), then that is one area **he needs** helpful and positive feedback. Ask him if there are ways that you have given inappropriate or negative feedback so that you can make corrections.

Encouragement is certainly a two-way street. Let him know in what areas and through what avenues you need encouragement as well. A husband-wife relationship that is healthy is going to be a "mutual admiration society!" He appreciates her strengths and lets her know. She appreciates his strengths and lets him know.

Do not be afraid to form new, good habits. We can change how we **think** about matters. We can change how we **behave** in different contexts. Then, once we have changed how we think and how we behave, we will also have changed how we **feel** about one another. Do not think that you are "set in your ways." That is a cop-out to avoid changing yourself. If we truly love our spouse, then we will do what we need to do to help him/her live more like Christ.

The goal of our marriage is to help each other get to heaven. An important aspect of that effort is to be one another's biggest fan! ■

# 1





# women.

## DAUGHTERS OF THE

by Stephanie Welch



**B**oth the Bible and the Lord's church are under intense scrutiny. Hot news topics include race, religion, and sexual orientation or gender identity. Many radical feminists claim that the Bible, Jesus, Paul, etc. are biased against women. Is this accusation true? How do we help our children, especially our daughters, distinguish the truth from the lies being told today?

In Genesis 1, we read that God created the world in six days. Each created thing was made by a perfect and holy God, and God deemed everything that He had made very good (vs. 31). On the sixth day, God made mankind in His image. Genesis 1:27 notes: "So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." Eve was created in God's image as surely as Adam was. In chapter 2, Moses focuses on the sixth day when God created Adam and his helper, Eve. Was Eve an afterthought of God to remedy Adam's need for companionship? Certainly not! God made Eve from Adam, a helper fit, comparable, to him (2:20). Adam saw Eve and remarked, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" (2:23). After naming the animals, Adam was elated to find someone just like him. Is it possible that Eve was the last thing God created? She made the man and creation complete.

If Eve was created in God's image as a helper comparable to Adam and equal to her husband in her spiritual worth to the Lord, what happened? Both secular and Biblical history reveal that the status of women throughout time has been low. Why? It certainly was not God's plan or purpose but rather the result of Adam and Eve's sin in Eden. After her sin, God told Eve, "I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; in pain you shall bring forth children; your desire shall be for your

husband, and he shall rule over you" (Genesis 3:16). Bearing children was not Eve's punishment but rather the birth process would become much more difficult. Also, God had already made man the head of the home because of the creation order; God created Adam first (1 Timothy 2:13). Perhaps one of the consequences of Eve's sin would be that the relationship between men and women would change for the worse. Men would begin to treat women not as God had created them to be treated but as second-class citizens with a lower social status.

In many ancient cultures, women were not treated with the dignity and respect that men received. Girls did not attend school. Women did not usually go out in public alone, nor did they speak publicly. Remember the story of Pandora and her box? Greek poets attributed the world's troubles to the antics of a woman. Men often had complete control over their women, had ownership of all their possessions and could divorce their wives for any reason. Women were considered in many cultures not worth much more than slaves.

Sadly, such was even the case for many Jewish women. While some of God's "chosen people" may have deserted His plan for the home and family, God, "who cannot lie... [and] who is the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Titus 1:2, Hebrews 13:8), continued to care for and bless women.

For example, in the Old Testament God required that husbands give their wives a certificate of divorce (Deuteronomy 24:1-4). The husband could not cast her out of his home and leave her destitute. The certificate protected an innocent wife from harm. God blessed women who chose to serve Him. He gave the brave Hebrew midwives

families of their own (Exodus 1:21). He saved Rahab from Jericho and blessed her with a place in David and Jesus's genealogy (Matthew 1:5ff). God blessed women such as Sarah, Rebekah, Leah, Rachel, Ruth, and Hannah with children. He permitted five daughters to inherit their deceased father's property in Canaan (Numbers 27:1-11). God used strong women such as Deborah and Jael to lead His people in their conquest of Canaan (Judges 4), and He blessed the women who cared for His prophets Elijah and Elisha (1 Kings 17; 2 Kings 4).

What about the New Testament? It is true that some Jewish leaders did not view women highly. A common morning Jewish prayer included thanking God that a person was not born a Gentile or a woman. Jewish tradition did not permit men to talk with women in public. Jewish rabbis did not accept female students. Jesus was not the typical Jewish man. He was the Christ, the Son of God. He always did the things that pleased His Father (John 8:29), including treating women with respect and kindness. Jesus had close female friends like Mary and Martha (John 11:5). Jesus had female disciples: Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna, and others, who traveled with him, providing for the Lord with their own money (Luke 8:1-3). Jesus healed sick women, cast demons out of women, and raised women and/or their family members from death (Luke 7:8). He allowed a sinful woman to talk with Him and touch Him (Luke 7:36-38), and He had no problem talking with women in public. Jesus's conversation with



a Samaritan woman in John 4 is a powerful example of His view of women. He talked to her, drank from her water jar, and revealed to her that He was the Christ. Jesus loved His mother and made sure she would be cared for after His death (John 19:26-27). It was a small group of women who saw the Lord first after His resurrection (Luke 23:55-24:10).

Women played a vital role in the early church. They were among the 120 meeting with the apostles in Jerusalem (Acts 1:14). The book of Acts lists women such as Lydia, Priscilla, and Mary, mother of John Mark, who were faithful Christians. Philip, the evangelist, had four prophesying daughters. Paul, the so-called anti-female apostle, commended many women in his epistles who were faithful servants of the Lord (e.g., Romans 16). He encouraged husbands to love their wives as they love their own bodies, and to cherish their wives as Christ loves and cherishes His church. He commanded husbands to leave their parents and cling to their wives as they become one flesh (Ephesians 5:25-31). Paul brought his readers back to God's original intent and purpose for men and women from creation.

Everywhere that Christ has been preached, the lives of women have been enriched, not suppressed. Simply compare New Testament Christianity to religions such as Islam which still oppresses women today. Paul wrote to the Galatian Christians, "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians, 3:27-28). Imagine the joy and sense of worth first century women must have felt knowing that they were precious to the Lord. Ladies, if we are Christians, we are indeed special. We are daughters of the King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Timothy 6:15)! That is not oppression; that is liberty!

Some ideas for this article were taken from "Christianity: The Best Thing That Ever Happened to Women" by Sue Bohlin, <http://probe.org/christianity-the-best-thing-that-ever-happened-to-women/>.

# featured.

## the Amayas

...are a family of five: Jesús and Tensy, their two daughters Tensy and Emily, and Daniel (Tensy's husband). They live in Torreón, Mexico, and worship with the church of Christ on the Francisco I Madero Street. They have always served the Lord together.

Jesús Amaya has been a Bible school teacher for 26 years and has also served as an elder in their home congregation for eight years. He has also composed many Spanish hymns and songs for the Lord's church.

### Would you briefly define each member of your family?

**Jesús** is a dedicated Christian who likes to preach God's Word and write hymns for His church. **Tensy** is a humble mother, very sensitive to other's needs. **Tensy** is a well-behaved daughter who likes to teach children at church. **Emily** is happy, cooperative, and very involved in the church's youth activities.

### What word would best convey your commitment to the Lord's church, and why?

**"Vision."** The church needs men and women with vision to serve, give their talents for the church's development, and determine needs to find ways to fulfill those needs. The great men and women of the Bible provided a great example for the people of God by their vision and their trust in God to implement that vision.

**You have raised two Christian daughters. What are some of the main lessons you made sure they learned very early in life?**

We have instilled in them that God is always present in their lives. He is always by our side, and we are not alone. This ensures His help and protection. But this also means that He witnesses everything we do; therefore, we are to live accordingly.

### Brother Jesús Amaya has been an elder of the church for about eight years. What family benefits have you gained from this work?

The eldership is a ministry so encompassing and pressing that can evoke further family unity. If this ministry is viewed as honorable, then the family will join forces to assist in the father's performance as an elder in the church. They will walk together, knowing that they work for God. The family will also grow in their trust in God, since they will see the way God always provides light for the problems that arise.

**There are few organized congregations in Latin**



### America. Why do you think that is the case?

The desire is not instilled in the brethren to become part of the eldership (and other ministries in the church, as the deaconship and teaching). There is no vision to have the church as an organized body; and when that vision is present, some harmful attitudes and discouragement arise from members who suggest that "there can never be capable brothers" to assume this office. It is very comfortable to be part of a congregation where the preacher does everything.

### What can Christian families do to change this situation?

They are to teach boys and young men to have the desire

to be elders and deacons. We are to teach them that, if "a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work" (1 Timothy 3:1). They are to grow knowing that being an elder or deacon of the church is a worthy desire.

### What are some of the challenges you have faced as a family due to brother Jesús being an elder in the church?

Learning to manage time—dealing with commitments in the Lord's work so that it does not become a reason to neglect the family. If this happens, this problem is to be addressed promptly. We have learned that, if the father does not have the family's understanding and help, then his ministry will not be efficient. ■



# 5 THINGS I HAVE LEARNED ABOUT THE FAMILY BY BEING AN ELDER OF THE LORD'S CHURCH



**I have learned that, to grow and mature as God's son, it is necessary to be committed to the Lord and His church:** In the Bible, every servant of the Lord needed to be committed. Sadly, we live in a society that promotes lack of commitment. This is why many young people do not desire to be joined in marriage; there is fear of commitment.



**I have learned to wait on the Lord; wait with patience:** A great part of the eldership's fruit is not reaped immediately. Many of the fires threatening the church are not quenched easily, but we still need to fight them. After doing everything we need to do, we are to wait for God to manifest His power. Someone plants, another waters, but God gives the increase (1 Corinthians 3:6).



**Above all, I have learned that everything must be done in love—love for God, the church, the family, and self.** Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies. I can do great things, but without love, I am sounding brass or a clanging cymbal (1 Corinthians 13).



**I have learned that preparation is necessary for a better service:** When I was in the university, I thought I was preparing myself to be a good professional, a better citizen, and a better Christian. But God is Who really prepares us. I am clay in the hands of the Potter. Sometimes I have asked myself: "What does God want me to learn by allowing me to face a particular situation?" In beautiful times of happiness, or in difficult times of sadness, God is molding us with His hands.



**I have learned to know my limits, so I do not succumb to frustration:** Frustration can be positive when it guides us to analyze ourselves to see our faults and correct them. But becoming frustrated people is harmful. Knowing my limits helps me to understand which things are out of my hands—what challenges are not mine. Moses had to understand that guiding God's people through the desert was his task. But he also had to understand that, after much work and suffering, he was not the person who would take them into the Promise Land; that was Joshua's work.



# youth.

## Blessings of GROWING UP in a by Amelia Rogers Christian Home

Several years ago, a young Christian woman made a life-changing decision: she resolved that her husband would be a Gospel preacher. She found and married that preacher, and today this family has two sons with faithful wives, four faithful grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren. That young woman was my grandmother!

I was raised in a Christian home and I thank God for the blessings of that home every day. But regardless of how we grew up, a Christian home is now something that we must all strive to create for the future. A Christian home certainly does not happen by accident; it takes time, sacrifice, and purposeful decision making. But like all of God's plans for us, when we choose to do things His way, the sacrifice today is infinitely worth the blessings He gives in eternity.

**What makes God's design for the Christian home so special?**

### 1. The Blessing of Love

God designed the Christian home so that we can understand how much He loves us. When a Christian father and mother love their children, they offer them a glimpse of how much God loves them. The love that comes from Christian parents is exactly like the love of God; it's a love that **does**. Christian parents make sacrifices to place their children's needs above their own. I have watched my parents do it for 19 years.

### 2. The Blessing of Trust

From birth, my parents demanded respect and obedience. There was no question who was in charge at

our house—and that was a wonderful thing. I quickly learned that if I would follow their rules, they always turned out to be in my best interest. I know I can trust my parents with everything.

### 3. The Blessing of a Church Family

One of the greatest gifts my parents ever gave me was when they brought me to worship at just five days old. From then on, our family has been present at every available worship service during the week. It was just the expectation in our home, and it taught me how important worshiping God is. My parents also made sure our family was involved with every activity of the local church. That involvement blessed me with some of the best friends and closest extended family I could ever have.

### 4. The Blessing of Knowing Jesus

Not only did my family bring me to the church where I could learn about Jesus, but they also made Jesus a regular and welcome Guest in our home. Every night, my parents read me a Bible story and sang Bible songs as I went to sleep. We talked about God. We prayed together daily. The same was always true at my grandparent's house. When I started thinking about becoming a Christian, my parents were the ones I went to talk to. My daddy was the one who baptized me into Christ. My relationship with Jesus Christ is thanks to a foundation laid by my parents.

A Christian family is not just special; it is life-changing! The blessings of love, trust, a church family, and ultimately getting to have a relationship with God are all wonderful blessings that flow from it; and a powerful thing is just how great the impact of a Christian family can be. When a young Christian couple makes the choice to build a Christian home (just like my grandparents did), God will change so many lives because of it—both those who grow up in that family and those who are touched by it, and the results will only truly be known in eternity. ■





# HARMONIZING with Our Parents

by Jacob July

I have never considered myself to be a good writer; the SAT removed all doubt. The writing portion is scored in three separate categories: reading, analysis, and writing. Each category is evaluated on a scale of 2-8. Upon receiving my results in the mail, I opened up the envelope and peered to see my writing score. Now, I have never been a superstitious person, but someone was trying to tell me something. My score was 666.

Musicianship, on the other hand, is one of my strong suits. I play the trumpet and sing (not at the same time), but my favorite thing to do is to compose music. My English teacher once said, "If you have to write about something, write about something you love. The paper will always turn out better that way." So, in this article, we are going to look at how music composition, our relationship with our parents, and our relationship with God all fit together.

Before we begin, we need to establish that music is a relationship. A song, simply put, is a relationship between different notes, chords, tempos, and rhythms. The slightest change of any of these things can result in increased musical tension. Great compositions have great tension that then seek resolution. This concept applies to the relationships that we have with our parents. We can all admit that tension between parent and child is a reality. Every one of us has heard, "Go clean up your room," and then responded, "But why?" Next, we heard, "Because I said so!" When your mom or dad says, "because I said so," it is the only time that circular reasoning cannot be refuted. Ephesians 6:1-3 says, "Children, obey your parents in the

Lord, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother,' which is the first commandment with promise: 'that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.'" The tension of the relationship that we have with our parents is resolved by seeking obedience.

However, just like in music, not all dissonance or tension is good. Nothing is more upsetting to me than when a note is being played or sung out of tune. It makes me want to turn away and cover up my ears. Likewise, sin is the tension that ruins our relationship with God. It is like an out of tune note for Him. Isaiah 59:2 says, "But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear." Thankfully, Christ humbled himself to do the will of God, that He would bear our unrighteousness and be punished for it on the cross (Philippians 2). In this, we have a perfect example of obedience and are reconciled to the Father through imputed righteousness. In other words, through Jesus and His blood, we are no longer tone deaf to God's will.

So, are you harmonizing with your parents? Do you have tension that needs resolution? Seek humility in your life. As the humbling of Christ was a personal sacrifice for Him, so too should our humility be. We should clean our rooms and do our chores because we know the cross. For when we know the cross, we will understand why God deserves the glory; and if we want to honor God, then we will listen to His will and obey our parents. In the end, it all fits together... just like a well-composed piece of music. ■



# children.

## What **GOD** Says about How We Treat Others

[This article is courtesy of Apologetics Press: [www.apologeticspress.org](http://www.apologeticspress.org)]

**W**hoever came up with the saying, “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me,” did not know what he was talking about. Mean words from other people can be very harmful. When another person makes fun of us, calls us ugly, or says we are dumb or stupid, that really hurts. If we are not careful, we will start to believe that we are “ugly,” “dumb,” or “stupid” and start to feel very bad about ourselves. This happens to many people. After others make fun of them for a long time, they begin to think of themselves as worthless or no good. Because they feel bad about themselves, they often try to make others feel just as bad as they do. In order to do that, they begin to make fun of other people, trying to bring them down and make them feel bad. Most of the time, when a person is a bully and is mean to another person, it is because that bully feels bad about himself or herself.

In order to treat people the way God wants us to treat them, first we must know that **we are important and special to God**. There is not a single person in this world who is worthless or no good. Every person is created by God and has special talents and abilities that no one else in the world has. The Bible explains that humans are “made in the image of God” (Genesis 1:26). Each human has a soul that will live forever. Jesus explained that if God takes care of the

birds of the air, then He will take care of you, since you (as a human) are much more valuable than birds. Not only that, Jesus said that God knows exactly how many hairs are on your head (Matthew 10:30). The apostle Peter said that we could tell God about all of our cares and troubles, because God cares about us (1 Peter 5:7). In fact, God thinks that we are so important that He sent His only Son to the Earth to die on the cross to show us the way to get to heaven. God created you with amazing talents and abilities, and He knows that you are important. To God, it does not matter how good you are in math, how fast you can run, or how handsome or pretty you are. **To God, you are valuable simply because He created you!**

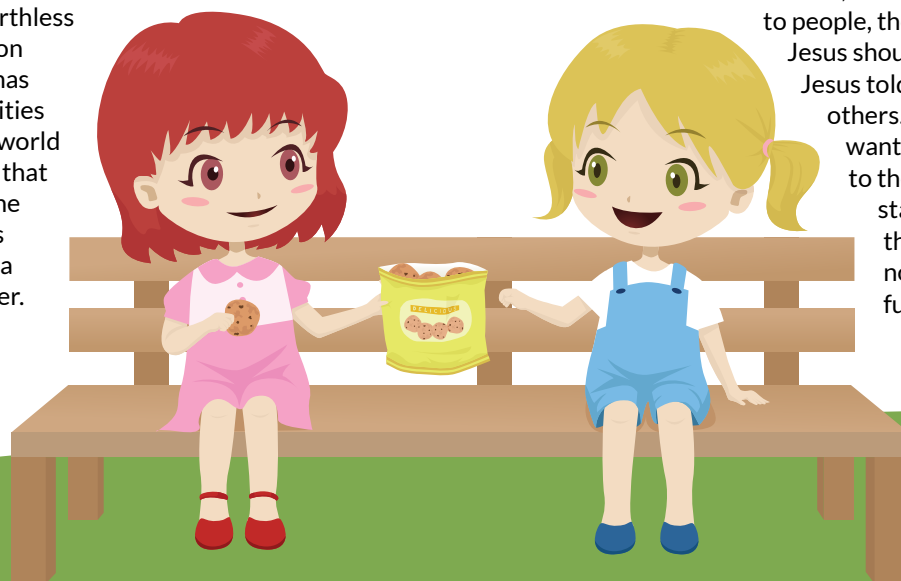
Because God thinks humans are so valuable, He gets very angry with those people who are mean and mistreat their fellow human beings. Jesus told a story about a master who went on a trip and left a servant in charge of things. The servant thought that the master was going to be away for a long time, so he began to beat the other servants, and party with the drunkards. The master surprised the servant and came back early. When the master found that the

servant was mistreating others, he punished him very severely. Jesus told this story to remind us that being nice to others is always very important (Matthew 24:45-51).

While Jesus was on Earth, He often explained how we should treat others. In one place, Jesus told how He would come back some day and separate the evil people from the good people. Jesus told those good people who had obeyed God that they were going to heaven, because they had fed Him when He was hungry, visited Him when He was sick, and given Him water when He was thirsty. The righteous people did not understand. They did not remember seeing Jesus sick, thirsty, or hungry. How could they have helped Him if they never saw Him? Then Jesus explained to them that anytime they helped their fellow human beings, they were actually helping Jesus (Matthew 25:31-46). That is an important lesson to learn. Just think about those people at your school, or in your class, who do not have many friends, or are mistreated by others. Anytime you help one of those kids, you are actually helping Jesus.

Even though many people make fun of others, mistreat others, and are mean to people, those who are following Jesus should never do these things.

Jesus told us how we should treat others. He said, “whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them” (Matthew 7:12). This statement by Jesus is called the Golden Rule. You would not like for others to make fun of you, so you should





not make fun of others. You would want your classmates to include you in their fun, so you should include others. You would want others to treat you fairly and respect your opinion, so do the same for those around you.

Always remember that you are special and God cares about you, just like He does everyone in the world. Because He loves humans, He gets very unhappy when people mistreat others. Whatever we do to those in need, we do to Jesus. Let's make sure that we help others and treat them kindly, just like we would like to be treated. ■

# Treating Others Well with Your WORDS

Here is an easy way to remember how to treat people with your words.

**Before you speak, THINK!**

**T = Is it TRUE?**

**H = Is it HELPFUL?**

**I = Is it INSPIRING?**

**N = Is it NECESSARY?**

**K = Is it KIND?**

For more children's materials, we recommend the Discovery website at: [www.apologeticspress.org/discovery](http://www.apologeticspress.org/discovery)

# Treating Others Well with Your ACTIONS

Find the following words that will help you treat others the way God wants you to treat them.

- **Compassion**
- **Forgiveness**
- **Gratitude**
- **Honesty**
- **Kindness**
- **Love**
- **Patience**
- **Respect**



# questions.

## Q&A

**Q:** What kind of work could the wife do to financially help the husband that will not affect her role as a wife and mother?

—TEXAS, U.S.

The wife, with input from the husband, would need to see what job opportunities are available which would allow her to be at home as much as she desires and provide the financial assistance the family needs. With the internet, many businesses allow employees to work from home, in their own time, at their own pace. Some of those jobs require specialized training while others do not. Additionally, there are part-time jobs that might allow a woman to work during the hours her children are in school, such as grocery stores or substitute teaching. —PH

**Q:** How can a Christian person overcome unfaithfulness from his/her spouse? How can he/she cope with the memories after several years?

—NORTH CAROLINA, U.S.

Our hearts go out to those who have been betrayed. Whether you have chosen to divorce and remarry or to keep your spouse, issues with trust can be hard to deal with. If you stay married, help your spouse avoid anything that could lead him or her down the same path. Emphasize how much the bonds of trust have to be re-established. You should pray frequently for God's help. If in a

new relationship, remember that this relationship does not have anything to do with the old one. Do not "expect" a new spouse to also be unfaithful. Finally, ask others who have had the same experience how they coped with their memories. —PH

**Q:** Does the love of a Christian couple end at death?

—QUITO, ECUADOR

This question has two answers—depending on the kind of "love" we are talking about. If we are talking about the feelings of attraction a couple has for each other that find fulfillment in marriage, then the answer is that this kind of love will end at death. But if we are talking about godly love between a Christian couple, then there are enough Bible implications to draw the conclusion that this kind of love will continue throughout eternity.

Jesus specifically addressed the ending of the first kind of love in Matthew 22. When the Sadducees concocted a complicated marriage situation in hopes to disprove the resurrection, Jesus answered that all marriage arrangements will come to an end at death (vs. 30). He further clarified this by pointing out that, in the resurrection, people will be like angels in this respect—heavenly beings without sexual need and reproductive ability (Hebrews 1:14). Although God created humans with the ability to develop a special bond in

the marital relationship, this will only last as long as we are in this physical body.

However, Christian couples will continue to love each other for eternity since there is a greater love that never fails nor ends (1 Corinthians 13:8). First, God is love (1 John 4:8), and as long as God exists, there will be love. Second, God's children love (1 John 4:7), and as long as God has children, then love will abide among them. Love will remain when faith and hope are fulfilled and come to an end (1 Corinthians 13:13). We will not only love each

other for eternity, but our love will be eternally perfected!

For those of us who have tasted the blessings of marriage and have a hard time picturing eternal bliss without this holy and wonderful institution and everything that involves, we can rest assured that the infinite God is able to give us something better. As the New Testament surpasses in glory to the Old Covenant (2 Corinthians 3:7-11), our eternal marriage with the Lord will be more glorious than any relationship we have enjoyed on earth (Revelation 19:6-9). —MP

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