

Se habla
ESPAÑOL

voltee la
revista

FAMILY ART

BY OUR CHILDREN AROUND THE WORLD

(pages 10-13)

How to Avoid Worrying
about Your Children

(pages 4-5)

The Art of Loving - Part 2

(page 6)

10 Bible Verses for
Young People

(pages 14-15)

and more

Cover art by Hannah Kate Skelton (10)

Christianfamily

A bilingual magazine for Christian families | Vol 6, No 4, October - December 2021



“Paul and Rachel”
illustration by
Hannah Holsclaw (13)

EDITORIAL

*I*t is amazing to see how much talent our children have, and this new issue of the *Christian Family* magazine shows how they can use their talents for the glory of God. This issue is not only full of wonderful articles that are sure to strengthen your family, but it is also completely illustrated by children around the world. All the different sections have been illustrated by children from the church of Christ in Elizabethton, Tennessee, and two spreads (pp. 10-13) feature the art submissions from children from North, South, and Central America. Their art is fascinating, and their descriptions about family are delightful. We are sure you will greatly enjoy this issue.

Paul Holland & Moisés Pinedo



“Moisés and Kimberley”
illustration by
Holly Holsclaw (13)

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Christianfamily

Helping families become stronger in the Lord

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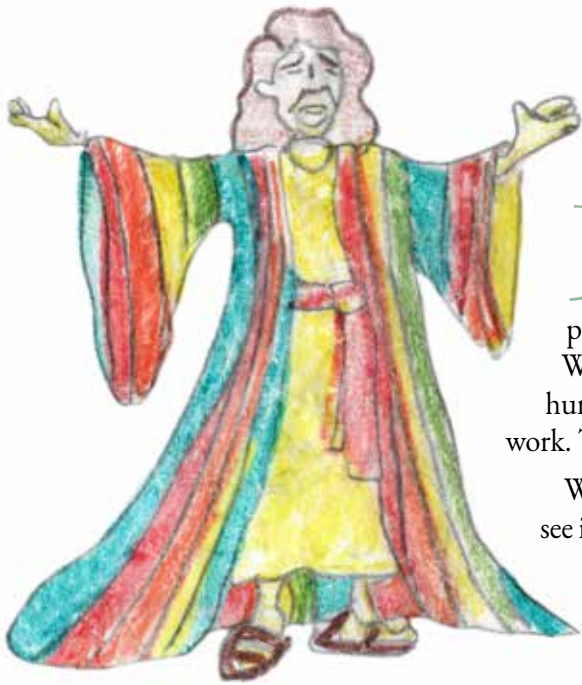
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Created for WORK

by Eric Welch



Recently, my wife and I passed a fast-food restaurant with a sign asking, “Who is **not** hiring?” This question is a sign of the times, isn’t it? The combination of the pandemic and bad economic policies of the government has created a worker shortage in every industry. Why work if Uncle Sam pays more to stay home? The country needs fewer human mandates and more divine mandates. One of those mandates is to work. This mandate goes back to our Creator and to His creation.

Work reflects Who God is because it is the first aspect of His character we see in the beginning. With His powerful words, God worked to create all that exists. This divine activity had a purpose. God filled and shaped the earth to be suitable for human habitation. God’s first work was an act of service, and any act of service is an expression of love.

Then, God worked in creating humans in His image (Genesis 1:26). As our Creator and Sovereign, God delegated dominion over His creation to humans. Human dominion over creation takes work. God engineered the human body, mind, and heart for work. When God made Adam and Eve, He placed them in the garden of Eden to “work it and keep it” (Genesis 2:15-17—ESV). Interestingly, “work” and “keep” are also used in the rest of the Pentateuch to describe worship. God created humans to serve and worship Him. Therefore, when we work, we act like God, and it helps us to focus on God. We glorify God through good and honest work. Human work reflects the image of God in us.

The patriarch Joseph comes to mind when I think of a good work ethic. Although Joseph came from a dysfunctional family, one value his father Jacob instilled in his sons was hard work. Joseph’s work ethic helped him to cope with the rejection and loneliness he experienced as a slave and a prisoner. His story emphasizes how God was with Joseph and caused everything that his hands touched to flourish. His work even earned the respect of his master and prison keeper. Because God was with him, Joseph’s success became the success of both men (Genesis 39:3-6,20-23).

As He did in creation, God worked to bring order out of Joseph’s chaotic world. Joseph reassured his brothers that “God meant it (Joseph’s suffering) for good, in order to bring it about as *it is* this day, to save many people alive” (Genesis 50:20). God works in our lives in the same way. Paul writes, “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose” (Romans 8:28).

Centuries later many Christians in the Roman empire suffered the indignity of slavery (forced work without pay). Paul taught them how they could cope by seeing their work in a new light. He wrote, “whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ” (Colossians 3:23-24).

Through age-appropriate chores, parents can teach their children in the framework of family the values of a good work ethic and pass those values to their children. The children can learn cooperation, teamwork, and perseverance. They should also learn that pay without work (allowance, entitlement, or perpetual, unconditional governmental welfare) also brings indignity as much as slavery does. Paul instructed the Thessalonian Christians, “If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat” (2 Thessalonians 3:10).

The bottom line is that work gives people dignity, which comes only from God. If you take away work through human mandates, chaos (individual, family, and nation) on every level will result. God created us for work. ■



“Joseph” illustration by Millie Mosley (11)

HOW TO AVOID

WORRYING ABOUT YOUR CHILDREN

by Neal Pollard

In early May, Carl, my youngest son, had a serious motorcycle accident. A large pickup truck tried to turn left onto the highway, and Carl hit it going highway speed. Our concern was for his immediate safety and long-term health. Thanks to the Lord, he has recovered from his injuries. However, our lives have been full of similar stressful incidents—two sons unofficially assisting police in breaking up a local theft ring, a son tackling a shoplifter attempting to flee a store and interrupting a gang initiation beating, broken bones, ER trips, ICU stints for health issues; and that’s not to mention innumerable “close calls,” “near misses,” “close shaves,” and “narrow escapes.”



“Father and Son”
illustration by
Casper Houston (8)



Of course, it is not just health. What about their relationships? What about their jobs, careers, and financial futures? What about the country they are inheriting, or the children God may bless them with? Most of all, what about their spiritual condition, their faith, and their relationship with Christ? With each new phase of life, we are left to numerous “what ifs.” For future empty nesters, these concerns do not decline or disappear when children leave home. If anything, it mounts. So, how does a Christian not worry about their children?

PHILIPPIANS 4:6

Paul urges us to be “anxious for nothing.” The word “anxious” depicts apprehension, being unduly concerned about possible danger or misfortune. We can drive ourselves crazy thinking of all the scary scenarios. Paul says instead to pray (speak to God and petition His help), supplicate (urgently request God to meet the need, suggesting begging and pleading), and express gratitude. Specifically articulate the help you seek from God. Won’t this just make things worse? Not at all. Instead, “the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (vs. 7).

LUKE 12:25-26

Luke records Jesus’ voluminous teaching on various material concerns. In the middle of it, Jesus shares a principle that applies to any number of matters. He teaches, “And which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? If you then are not able to do *the* least, why are you anxious for the rest?” What a practical, sensible truth! What do we change by endless fretting and worrying? Does it change outcomes? Does the exercise of worry keep the bad and scary things from occurring? Does it override the freewill choices of our children or others? We are at one place at a time. God knows everything (vs. 30). “He who keeps you will not slumber...nor sleep” (Psalms 121:3-4). Trust that!

MATTHEW 6:33

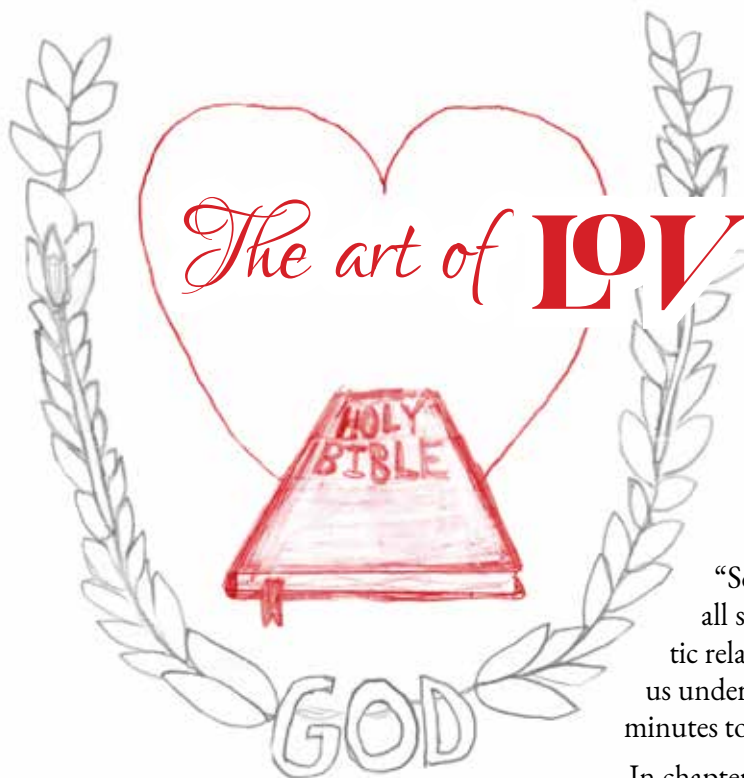
What Matthew records is a close parallel to Luke 12:22-32, though the wording and setting are different. The counsel here is about prioritization. It is hard to “let go

and let God,” but that is Jesus’ bottom-line guidance. Again, in context, He is dealing with material things rather than our children. But substituting the one concern for the other does not change the principle. We are well-served to practice “God-firstness” from as early as possible, before our children are born. We should strive to live by that principle throughout the years they are in our homes, trying to show it to them. Then, we must continue to live it out personally and exemplify it before them after they leave the home. God’s kingdom, His will, His righteousness, His goals, and His Word come first and foremost. Keeping focus on that, trust Him to take care of not only us but those whose lives we care about. Jesus sweetly consoles us, “Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day *is* its own trouble” (vs. 34).

I PETER 5:7

I love how Peter acknowledges that we all have anxiety. We are all tempted (and all of us at least occasionally succumb to the temptation) to worry. Peter’s words are practical. Humbling yourself under God’s all-powerful hand, throw all your anxieties on Him. He is strong enough to carry it. Do you know what is the best part? Not only can He do it, He wants to. Why? He cares for you! He is your Father. “Care” here means concern and anxiousness. Our lives matter to Him; His heart is involved. We need to stop and think that we are His children. Our Father can see the future, is fully in control, will never be startled or surprised, and never lacks what to say, how to react, and what to do. How foolish not to give Him the things we would obsess over, be consumed with, and eaten up by.

I wish I could tell you I will never worry about Gary, Dale, and Carl again. Those who know them know what a tall task that is. I wish I could tell you that you will never worry about your precious children again. But, none of us should. We can make progress and get better if we will feed on the rich truths of passages like the ones we have briefly studied in this article. Go back and read them again. Drink deeply of their comforting, helpful truths. They will help you trust Him more with whatever frightening prospects you face regarding your children’s lives. I don’t promise. He does! ■



The art of **LOVING** *by Paul Holland*

Song of Solomon 3 & 4

In the last issue, we began our study of God's inspired love poem, the Song of Solomon. The Hebrew name is the "Song of Songs" (1:1), which describes it as the best of all songs. God chose to pull back the curtain of a romantic relationship between King Solomon and his bride to help us understand the beauty and power of love. Let us take a few minutes to continue to meditate on this book.

In chapter 2 (verse 1), we saw that the bride compares herself to common, ordinary flowers. Humility certainly plays a role in a healthy marriage relationship. While I should treat my wife as the "fairest among women" (1:8), I should not act like I am the best who ever lived! The groom speaks in verse 2. It is important for us to treat our spouse as God's gift to us. The bride speaks again in verses 3-6. She is looking for protection ("banner" is military imagery), pleasure ("apple tree"), and support from her groom. Men are to provide these things for their spouses. It is also important to embrace often (2:6). The groom speaks again in verse 7. It is important not to rush our spouses, for love takes time and effort. The bride speaks in 2:8-13, where love is compared to springtime, with its connotations of newness and revival. What are you doing to bring a sense of anticipation to your marriage? Let us be careful not to fall into a rut. Spark romance in the marriage, just doing ordinary things in extraordinary ways. The groom speaks in 2:14. He wants to see her form and hear her voice. Remind yourself what is good about your spouse. There are always distractions and external forces that work to destroy your marriage, like foxes running through a vineyard (2:15). Keep them out! The bride speaks in 2:16-17 and we see the idea of exclusive commitment. Dedicate your love to serving your spouse.

The bride continues in chapter 3. The first paragraph (3:1-4) suggests daydreaming. She feels uncertainty about marriage or about the future. Share your concerns with your spouse and work at finding a solution. Do not minimize fears; address them to alleviate them. Verse 5 echoes 2:7. The groom, King Solomon, is the subject of 3:6-11. Some suggest that Solomon, as king, is a symbol of the honor that belongs to any groom who has won a lady's hand in marriage. Do you remember the happiness of your wedding day? What can you do to bring that joy back into your marriage? Generally, it requires you to quit putting work or the children ahead of your spouse.

The first seven verses of chapter 4 are the groom's physical description of his bride's beauty. This passage illustrates how important it is that we do not understand poetry literally. Yet, as you read the text, ask yourself, "What is the comparison Solomon is drawing with his bride? Why is he describing her in those terms?" In verses 8-15, we see again that the groom provides protection and blessings for his bride. We also see that it takes patience to truly have a fulfilling marriage.

What is it about your spouse that makes your heart flutter (4:9)? Have you communicated that to him or her? In 4:16, the bride calls on nature to help her be more appealing to her groom. How much thought do we put into our love? ■



**"Bible" illustration by
Emily Miller (11)**

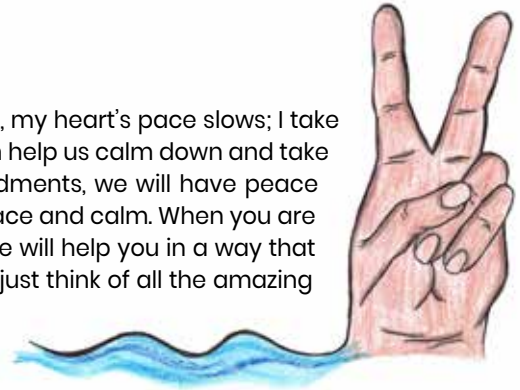
I've got PEACE like a RIVER

by Ella Pinedo

When I was a small child, I always loved to sing, "I've Got Peace Like a River." I used to go down to "Pew Packers" to sing and memorize verses with my friends before church started. Whenever we were about to sing this song, I would get so excited and would sing my little heart out. I still love to hear the little ones singing this song. This song emphasizes three great things: peace, love, and joy.

Peace Like a River

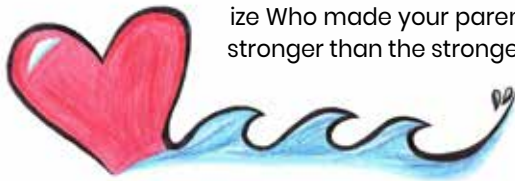
What do you think about when you hear this? When I see a river or a lake, my heart's pace slows; I take a deep breath, and peace fills my soul. Peace is a wonderful feeling; it can help us calm down and take in the wonderful moments in life. If we pay attention to God's commandments, we will have peace like a river (Isaiah 48:18); we can know God is always with us to give us peace and calm. When you are stressed out, pray to God for peace, and He will grant it to you willingly. He will help you in a way that only He can; He is the Master of Peace. If you ever get frustrated or mad, just think of all the amazing things God has created just for you; then you will feel better and go about your day with peace in your heart—just like a gentle flowing river.



Love Like an Ocean

How much do you love God? Is your love as big as an ocean or smaller than a stream? When I think of love, I think of Jesus dying on the cross for everybody. Think about all the pain and agony He went through to save the world! Think about the nails that were driven into His hands. He must really love us to be willing to die for something as small as man. Romans 5:8 says, "God demonstrates His own love toward us." He loves us more than any of us will ever be able to imagine!

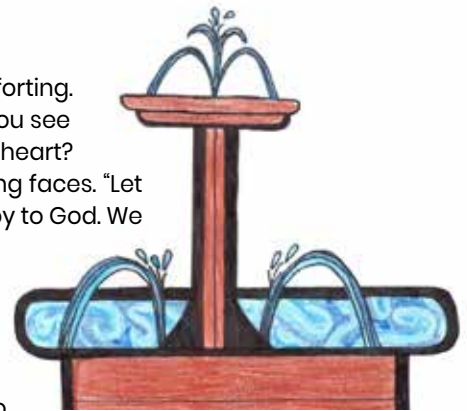
Doesn't that make you happy? Do you love your family more than God? If you do, you need to realize Who made your parents, sisters and brothers. Shouldn't your love for the Creator (God) be even stronger than the strongest wave you have ever seen? Shouldn't you love Him more than your family? I know it seems hard to even imagine loving someone more than our family—those who love us very much. But we need to pay special attention to the love we have for God and make sure our bond with Him is stronger and bigger than any ocean.



Joy Like a Fountain

I don't know what these words sound like to you, but to me they sound comforting. Joy is a feeling of contentment. Does your joy spring up like a fountain when you see something you love or care about? Do your spirits rise as you feel joy in your heart? Joy is a virtue of the spirit (Galatians 5:22); we need to show joy with our smiling faces. "Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation" (Psalm 95:1). We are to show our joy to God. We

are to show joy in our everyday lives and show Christ living in us! We need to show joy to others. I always love to see fountains; they give me time to just stop and listen to the wonderful nature around me, and, before I know it, I am smiling from ear to ear and giving thanks to God for all the wonderful things He has blessed me with. That is a lot to think about and keep in your brain! God has blessed us so richly with so many things—a good family, homes to live in, food, and everything else we need. So, let's have joy like a beautiful flowing fountain!



Illustrations on this page by
Kelsey Pinedo (12)

Peace, love, and joy are all amazing emotions to feel. We feel them all the time, even when we do not realize it. We should show these wonderful feelings to everyone, and spread the Gospel to them with love, peace, and joy! We all have hard times, but at the end of the day, we can think of this amazing song and all the powerful words that follow. We can know that God is here to protect us, love us, and give us joy and peace! ■

The Story of ESTHER



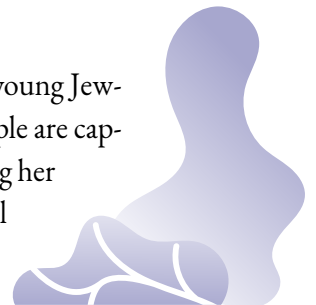
by Kerri Epling

Just for a moment, imagine that you are a young Jewish woman living in the foreign land of Persia. The queen has been suddenly dethroned by an angry king whose request she had refused. Under the advisement of his wise men, the king has just made an example of his queen so that other women in the kingdom would not be empowered to question their own husbands. Servants convince the king to choose a new queen from among the virgins in the kingdom, and you are taken to the king's palace to be considered for this position. You are a beautiful orphan who has been raised by your cousin, and suddenly you are being prepared to go before the king. Unbelievably, he chooses you, a Jew, as his next queen, and suddenly your position in life completely changes.

Our text for this month is the book of Esther—10 chapters detailing the account of a young Jewish woman who is chosen to be the new queen to the Persian king. In a land where her people are captives, she holds a position of great responsibility and faces a seemingly impossible task: saving her people. At a defining moment for God's people, Esther is faced with a question that we all can consider during times of trial and difficulty: "Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (Esther 4:14).



"Esther" illustration by
Kate Harris (13)



Questions to consider about the story of Esther

- What was Esther's background?
- Who was Mordecai?
- Why was the king looking for a new queen?
- What kind of preparations did the woman undergo before a single meeting with the king?
- Why were the Jews even in the land of the Persians? Do a little research on this part of Jewish history and on what life would have been like in Persia (and for women) during this time.
- What plot did Mordecai uncover?
- Who was Haman? What made him angry about Mordecai? What plan did he develop?
- Why was Mordecai in sackcloth when Esther sent to inquire of him? What did he tell Esther?
- How did Esther respond at first? What law was she hesitant to break?
- Think about the new question Mordecai posed to Esther. Have you ever been in a situation where you could ask yourself this same question? What seemingly impossible tasks have been placed before you as you have tried to live as a citizen of heaven in this physical world? Have you ever been able to look back

on a circumstance in your life and see that you were in the right place at the right time to serve in the Lord's kingdom?

- What was Esther's reaction to this question?
- What happened when Esther went before the king?
- What did Esther request from the king? Did he grant it?
- How did life change quickly for Haman? What attitudes do we see in him that we need to guard our own hearts against?
- How did the king respond to Esther's pleas? What was the result for the Jews?
- What characteristics in Esther can we strive to imitate in our own lives?

Questions for children

- Who was the original queen?
- Who was chosen to be the new queen?
- Mordecai raised Esther; how did she respond to him? Did she respect and obey him?
- What did Haman want to do to the Jews?
- Why was Esther nervous about going to the king?
- What happened when she went to the king?
- Did Esther help save her people? How?

Suggestions for interaction with children

- Dress up like a queen and tell the story from Esther's point of view.
- Make crowns and re-enact the story; this is especially fun if you have a "royal banquet" as part of the re-enactment.
- Read the chapters dealing with Haman and Mordecai and their interactions (as well as the chapters about the banquets) and allow the kids to "cheer" for Mordecai and Esther and "boo" Haman when he is mentioned. Point out that Mordecai and Esther did what was right, and Haman did what was wrong.
- With older kids, research the feast of Purim and make Hamantaschen cookies. ■

If you have questions, please feel free to contact Kerri at kerriepling@gmail.com with email subject of "Christian Family Study."

FAMILY ART

BY OUR CHILDREN AROUND THE WORLD

For this issue, we asked our children around the world to send us a piece of art related to the family. Here are their wonderful submissions and descriptions.



YISLEIDY CÓRDOBA (14)
BOCAS DEL TORO, PANAMA

I represented my family with a bonsai tree. As this little tree is a representation of nature and has deep roots, the family is to represent God and be rooted in His Word.



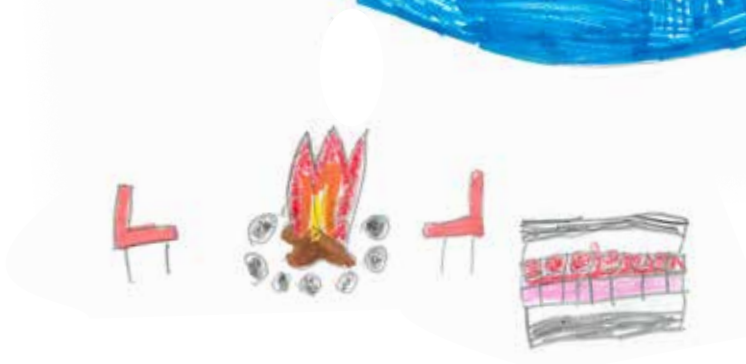
LUCIANA LARA (8)
BOGOTÁ, COLOMBIA

My family is important for me because they love me, care for me, and value me.



PEYTON JORDAN (9)
Tennessee, U.S.

My family loves to go camping because we get to spend time together. We love to go kayaking and fishing; we watch outside movies too. But we love the campfires best of all!



EVELYN POOT (12)
Cancún, Mexico

The Bible must be the center of family life. The family must go to church service together, pray together, read the Bible together, and sing together.





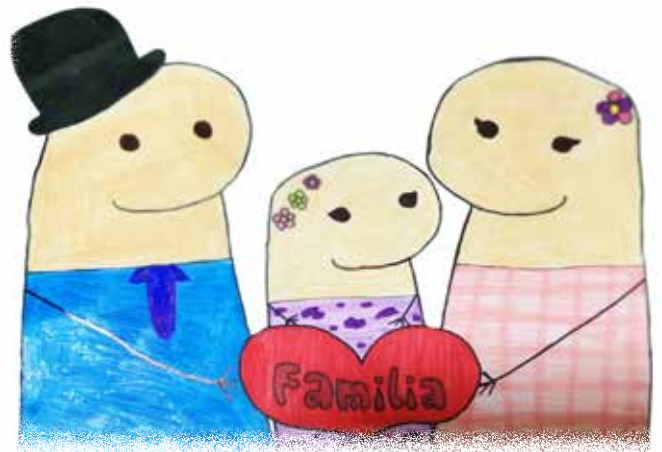
ABEL COLUNGA (7)
TEXAS, U.S.

I love my family; they make me happy. I thank God for them!



JONELY PÉREZ (13)
LIMA, PERU

This drawing represents the family. The family is very important for the development of people and society, and that is why we are to love it, respect it, and protect it.



LUNA AGUILERA (13)
BOGOTÁ, COLOMBIA

From left to right: my grandma, me, my dad, and my sister. I love my family because they mean trust and protection. My family is very important to me; we are a little family but valuable.





HANNAH KATE SKELTON (10)
Tennessee, U.S.

This is a watercolor painting of Papa (my grandfather) and my brother Micaiah. We have a farm with cattle. I like to paint, and I wanted to paint this because it is a picture taken on our farm. Micaiah and our youngest brother, Noah, like to work with Papa. I love living near our grandparents because we get to see them a lot.



EILEEN ROA (5)
DOSQUEBRADAS, COLOMBIA

This is my family: my mom, dad, me and my grandma, and some cousins. All of us have Bibles in our hands. My cousins are swimming in a pool. Jesus is on the top right, walking on water; God is resting on the top center.



10

BIBLE VERSES

for young people

by Willie Alvarenga

Young people are the present and future of the Lord's church. Many of them work, and will continue to work, for the Lord after their parents leave this world. This reality should motivate all our youth to consider with solemnity the work in the Lord's church. It is my prayer that the following verses from Scripture will be of spiritual encouragement for today's young people, and that those young people will be, in turn, a great blessing to the church for whom Christ gave His life on the cruel cross of Calvary. I encourage you to meditate on the lessons that you can learn from these passages.

- 1** **Genesis 39:9: "There is no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you *are* his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"**

From this passage you can learn the way to respond in the face of sexual temptation. Young people must act as Joseph, refusing to defraud God and their neighbor. Holiness in youth will always bring honor and glory to God. The church needs more young people like Joseph, who are determined to practice constant moral and spiritual purity.

- 2** **Psalm 119:9: "How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word."**

This psalm teaches young people the way to have clean lives and avoid sin: by keeping the Word of God in their hearts. Keeping or heeding the Word means to learn it carefully and apply it daily (James 1:22-25). Are you learning and keeping the Word of God in your heart?



- 3** **Proverbs 1:10: "My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent."**

This is a call to reject sin and embrace God's will. Sin is always near; however, if we want to please God, we need to be ready to deny anything that is in conflict with God's will. Sin only produces eternal destruction (Romans 6:23). This is why we are to keep ourselves away from it.

- 4** **Ecclesiastes 12:1: "Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, before the difficult days come, and the years draw near when you say, 'I have no pleasure in them.'"**

God wants for man to serve Him all the days of his life. The strength of youth is one of the best things we can give God. Here the young person is urged to give his life to Christ in an early age and to serve faithfully. Serve the

Lord in your youth, the same way Joseph, Daniel, Timothy and many more served Him.

5

Daniel 1:8: “But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.”

Daniel and his friends are an excellent example of a heart that is determined to faithfully serve God and avoid the contaminations of sin. Young people today must do the same to please God (1 John 2:15-17; James 4:4). May God help you to conform yourself with His way, not the world’s (Romans 12:1-2).

6

Matthew 12:36-37: “But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”

This is an instruction and reminder for young people to refrain from words that God does not approve. Our Lord said that the words of the mouth may hinder someone from entering to heaven. Young people need to strive to speak what is good before others (Ephesians 4:29). They must be good examples in word, speaking as Christ spoke.

7

Philippians 4:8: “Finally, brethren, whatever things *are* true, whatever things *are* noble, whatever things *are* just, whatever things *are* pure, whatever things *are* lovely, whatever things *are* of good report, if *there* is any virtue and if *there* is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.”

This passage teaches the way to keep our minds focused on what is truly important. The apostle Paul urges to use our minds for our spiritual benefit. This passage can be used as a standard to determine whether what we listen to is approved by God or not. Avoid listening to or thinking about anything that is not in line with this standard.

8

1 Timothy 4:12: “Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.”

This is excellent encouragement to be a godly example to others; in this God is glorified (Matthew 5:16). If you determine to be a good example in all the areas this verse lists, you will show that you are a true follower of Jesus.

9

2 Timothy 2:22: “Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.”

The word “flee” conveys the idea of escaping, as a fugitive runs away for his life. To please God, you must practice spiritual purity, fleeing constantly from the things that may defile your life, for those things will cause you to be lost.

10

1 John 2:14: “I have written to you, fathers, because you have known Him *who* is from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the wicked one.”

The apostle lauds the Christian young people, pointing out that they have defeated and are able to continue to defeat the devil through God’s Word. The knowledge of God’s Word must be in the minds of young people for them to overcome temptations. They must fill their minds and hearts with the teachings of God (Colossians 3:16).

It is my prayer that God will bless our young people who faithfully serve Him in His kingdom. The church is, and will be, in good hands thanks to the faithful service of each one of them. ■



“Teen with Bible” illustration by Tyler Roberts (13)



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Q: *According to 1 Corinthians 7:14, what does it mean that “the unbelieving spouse is sanctified by the wife/husband”?*

—PUERTO VARAS, CHILE

First, we should understand the broad context and the immediate context. Relative to the broad context, 1 Corinthians 7 is the longest description of the marriage relationship in the N.T. The theme is that “each man [should] have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband” (7:2). In the immediate context (7:12-16), Paul is discussing the challenge of a “brother” (Christian) who has a “wife who is an unbeliever” (7:12). Some might ask if a Christian should leave (“divorce”) the unchristian spouse. Paul’s response is: “No.” The **relationship** is still sanctified in the eyes of God through the Christian spouse. In other words, God still recognizes the marriage as legitimate, even if one spouse is not a follower. —PH

Q: *Some Christian families who come to the U.S. get entangled in materialistic pursuits and are spiritually ruined. How can the church family help?* —CALIFORNIA, U.S.

We have a saying, “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” Before moving to the U.S., the family should be strongly warned that the temptations of wealth are very real and dangerous. We ought to live where we can faithfully serve the Lord, not where we can make ourselves fat. The materialism around us is very real and dangerous. Paul warns Christians about the dangers of wealth in such passages as 1 Timothy 6:6-10, 17-19. Jesus

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warns that if someone finds spiritual comfort in wealth, he has all the comfort he will ever receive (Luke 6:24). Once people are entangled, we can pray and try to help them see how they are damaging their relationship with Christ, the church, and their family. —PH

Q: *How can I work on a marriage (one being a Christian while the other is not) where there is no longer love and happiness?*

—MENDOZA, ARGENTINA

First of all, you need to understand that love is not a feeling but an action—a determination to do what is best for the other person (cf. Luke 10:25-37). When someone says that “love” has been lost in the marriage, he/she is usually thinking about the feelings of passion, romanticism, and/or attraction. This wrong perspective may lead the person to think that there is nothing to do to save the “loveless” relationship. Yet, the pursuit of true love is the very answer to this problem and the means to enjoy marital happiness. Love your wife as Christ loves the church—with sacrificial love (Ephesians 5:25-29), or love your husband as the church must love Christ—

with submissive love (Ephesians 5:22-24), and things will change in your marriage. Of course, your spouse has his/her own responsibility to help restore the relationship, but from your part you will know that you have done what you can to recover what has been lost in your marriage. —MP



“Editor” illustration by Leandra Parsons (10)