

# FAMILY AN ENDURING LEGACY

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*"As for me and my house,  
we will serve the Lord."  
Joshua 24:15*

RICK HUGHES



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*“Choose for yourselves today whom you will serve ...  
as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”  
Joshua 24:15*

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## INTRODUCTION

Satan's first attack on the human race was aimed at volition, the free will God gives each individual. Then followed onslaughts targeting God's design for the family. Satan's assaults on the family are incessant, malicious, often subtle, and seem to be increasing in effectiveness. This is the reason I wrote this book.

It is my prayer that God the Holy Spirit will use the information presented in this study to heighten your spiritual discernment to identify and thwart the attacks, to gain a greater appreciation of family, and to encourage you to leave your family a tremendous spiritual legacy.

Scripture has a great deal to say about families. The first family mentioned in the Bible is that of Adam and his wife, Eve, and their sons Cain, Abel and Seth. God blessed Adam and Eve, gave them great responsibility, and told them to be fruitful and increase in number. In other words, grow a family (Genesis 1:28).

In the beginning God placed Adam and Eve in a perfect environment. God created them spiritually alive, gave them an abundance of provisions, and tasked them to take care of things. *"The Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it"* (Genesis 2:15). God warned them about one specific fruit they were not to eat:

But from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die [spiritually]. (Genesis 2:17)

It was this tree that Satan used to deceive them into disobeying God, resulting in their spiritual death.

It is amazing how quickly humans can be convinced that God does not really mean what He says.

God is truth. He always means what He says. Adam and Eve found this out the hard way. They realized, too late, they had been lied to by Satan, the deceitful serpent.

But the wonderful thing about our heavenly Father is that He loves us, and that forgiveness is always available. *“God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)”* (Ephesians 2:4-5).

The Lord made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them.  
(Genesis 3:21)

This verse describes God sacrificing an innocent animal to cover Adam’s and Eve’s nakedness. Here is a picture of the atonement Jesus Christ offers each one of us through His judgment for our sins on the cross.

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace which He lavished on us. (Ephesians 1:7-8)

Adam’s and Eve’s acts of disobedience cost them dearly. They were cast out of the garden of Eden. Think of it this way - Adam lost his job, lost his benefits, and the couple had to relocate.

Then later on Cain, their oldest son, killed his younger brother, Abel. This act caused Cain to come under a curse from God for the rest of his life. Never able to grow his own food or have a home, he became a homeless beggar searching for food and shelter (Genesis 4:11-16).

The first family, who were given perfect circumstances and abundant resources by God, found themselves in a horrible mess all because they bought the lie of Satan rather than obeying God.

Now bring this into your own life. Has Satan deceived you into believing he has a better deal for you than what God makes available through His Son Jesus Christ and His divine provisions? I hope not.

Thank you for reading this book. You will discover the lasting impact you can have on your biological family and with your royal family by obeying God.

Among the topics we will look at are those from the word FAMILY:

- F** Father - Husband
- A** Authority - Humility - Arrogance
- M** Mother - Wife
- I** Instruction - Training - Discipline
- L** Love
- Y** Young People

This book is not intended to be a manual on parenting. My purpose is to expand your perspective of Biblical principles for the family, increase your understanding of the importance of family in a national entity, identify responsibilities each family member has, and encourage you by highlighting the blessings God designed to be appreciated by all.

Hopefully, through this information you will be motivated to set and adhere to right priorities related to God and your spiritual life so that you fully enjoy your life, your family, and leave an enduring legacy.

**Choose for yourselves today whom you will serve ...  
as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.  
(Joshua 24:15)**

## **YOUR CHOICE: THE TRUTH OR THE LIE**

The Apostle John recorded the words Jesus spoke to the Jewish religious crowds who were persecuting and trying to kill Him, *“You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He [Satan] was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies”* (John 8:44).

The Lord also said, *“Unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins”* (John 8:24) and *“You will know the truth and the truth will make you free”* (John 8:32). He was not speaking for purposes of manipulation, deception or entrapment. He was telling them, and you, that by understanding who He is and by putting your trust in Him for your salvation, you will be freed from the slave market of sin and avoid the Lake of Fire.

**Jesus also said, *“I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life”* (John 8:12).**

You receive eternal life when you accept Jesus Christ as your Savior. One way this faith may be expressed is through a silent prayer such as, “Father, I believe Jesus Christ died on the cross for me. In Christ’s name, Amen.”

Then no longer do you have to walk in the darkness of the lie. The mechanics are as simple as:

**Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved.  
(Acts 16:31)**

Once you make the decision to believe in Jesus Christ, you have a new life, a spiritual life, and a new family.

You are now a permanent member of God's royal family. No earthly father could ever love you as much as your heavenly Father loves you. As His child, He protects you, provides for you, and He blesses you. He is with you always. You are never alone.

God wants you to learn about Him and store spiritual matters in your soul. The soul is the immaterial essence of every human and is comprised of self-consciousness, volition, mentality and conscience. Souls live forever. The soul of everyone, without exception, will spend eternity either in heaven or in the Lake of Fire.

The only way to have eternal life with God the Father is to come through His Son.

As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name. (John 1:12)

To function in your new spiritual life you must be filled with God the Holy Spirit. When you sin, you lose the filling of the Holy Spirit and the power to live your spiritual life. To regain fellowship with God and the filling of the Holy Spirit, you must confess or name your sin to God the Father, in the privacy of silent prayer.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our [known] sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness [known, unknown and forgotten sins]. (1 John 1:9)

The objective of your spiritual life is to stay filled with the Holy Spirit and grow to spiritual maturity.

Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and forever. (2 Peter 3:18)

## THE FOUR DIVINE INSTITUTIONS

God designed a system for the protection and orderly function of mankind. My pastor, R. B. Thieme, Jr., taught this to me years ago as the **four divine institutions of: Volition, Marriage, Family and National Entities**. These divine establishment principles are recorded in the Bible. Allow me to introduce them to you.

God ordained them to preserve, and I might add, to perpetuate the human race. These divine institutions apply to all humans, regardless of race, gender or creed. They point the way to happiness in time, even if a person is not a Christian. Each has its own authority structure.

### Volition

Starting with the creation of Adam, God gives volition to every individual. Volition is the authority of our soul. It is our decision-making capability, our freedom of self-determination. The decisions you make will determine your future, the legacy of your family, and even influence the course of your nation.

Using your volition, you exercise freedom of choice and bear the responsibility for the choices you make. **God does not coerce your volition.** Volitional responsibility means you alone are responsible for the decisions you make. The Word of God tells us to apply Biblical truths and principles in our decision-making.

The most important decision you will ever make is "*What think you of Christ?*" (Matthew 22:42). By making the decision to accept Jesus Christ as your Savior, putting your faith in His work on the cross where He died as a substitute for you, you will have eternal life.

He who believes in the Son has eternal life;  
and he who does not believe the Son shall not  
see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.  
(John 3:36)

Your volition will either accept or reject God's grace  
gift of salvation. It is your choice to make. You are free to  
choose for or against God and His plan.

## **Marriage**

God set the precedent and the pattern for the divine  
institution of marriage in the garden of Eden when He  
formed Eve, the perfect counterpart for Adam. Marriage  
is the union between one man and one woman, and it is  
analogous to the relationship between Jesus Christ and the  
Church. *"The husband is the head of the wife as Christ  
also is the head of the church, He Himself being the  
Savior of the body. But as the church submits to Christ, so  
also wives ought to submit to their husbands in  
everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also  
loved the church and gave Himself up for  
her"* (Ephesians 5:23-25).

The final authority in marriage is the husband, who is  
commanded to love and protect his wife. The wife is to  
respect her husband's leadership and respond to his love.  
The goal is that the man and the woman use their free will  
to develop a relationship of cooperation and stability, and  
for Christians, to have like-mindedness in advancing to  
spiritual maturity.

A successful marriage starts with making a good  
decision about your choice of spouse. You must know the  
person well. Just as important as identifying the right  
mate is *being* the right mate.

**Marriage is to be held in honor among all.**  
**(Hebrews 13:4)**

You should be growing up spiritually and have a solid understanding of God's plan for your life before you marry. If you are self-centered and emotional, you will make a mess of your marriage even if you somehow make a good choice in a mate.

In 2 Corinthians 6:14 Paul warns against marriage between a believer and an unbeliever. "*Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers.*" Such a marriage will result in an irreconcilable collision of principles - and marriage doesn't solve problems.

Husband and wife are not two separate individuals, each "doing their own thing." The two must operate with a unity of purpose and values. This does not mean that they agree about everything or have the same approach to every situation. They maintain their separate personalities and thoughts. However, as the marriage matures and strengthens, the bond between man and woman deepens and they develop a coalescence of souls.

Marriage is ordained by God to stabilize society and is the institution for raising children to mature responsible adulthood, oriented to God and His Word.

## **Family**

The divine institution of family is the framework for the perpetuation and safeguarding of future generations in a nation. As the designated authority, father and mother are to provide a secure and nurturing environment for raising children, training and disciplining them, and leading them to God consciousness and His saving grace.

Parents are to teach children authority orientation, right from wrong, norms and standards, respect for the privacy and property of others, and an appreciation for God.

Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it.  
(Proverbs 22:6)

The child is mandated to honor his father and mother, *“Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the Lord your God gives you”* (Exodus 20:12).

National stability rests with the family unit. Broken families contribute to broken nations. Without the proper functioning of the divine institutions of individual volition, marriage and family, the nation will disintegrate.

### **National Entities**

Following the flood, *“God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth’”* (Genesis 9:1).

Instead of obeying God’s plan, people settled into one spot and came up with their own scheme. *“Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name, otherwise we will be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth”* (Genesis 11:4).

Nations came about when God intervened in the people’s arrogant plan to make a name for themselves and build the tower of Babel into heaven. Since then, national entities exist and are divided by geographical borders and languages, each nation functioning independently.

God ordained this institution to prevent the world from degenerating into chaos. God grants government the authority to restrain the unbridled evil that man, without some sort of boundaries, would commit. *“Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed quickly, therefore the hearts of the sons of men among them are given fully to do evil”* (Ecclesiastes 8:11).

Government is designed to protect individual volition, to safeguard privacy and property, to maintain internal tranquility through the enforcement of laws, and to maintain external security through military preparedness. In short, to protect the human race from self-destruction.

Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right ... Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God. (1 Peter 2:13-14,16)

The Scripture does not condone the practice of any tyrant, but neither does oppressive government negate the principle of obedience to authority. You may have a government you do not like but the Bible does not authorize you to engage in civil disobedience or to start a revolution.

Romans 13:1-3 makes this clear: *“Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same.”*

Regardless of the character of the ruler, his office represents a divinely delegated authority in the nation. Remember, it is the office, not the man, that should always be respected. God does not authorize civil disobedience or lawlessness in His name.

### **The Client Nation to God**

The United States of America is the current client nation to God. God designates a client nation to advance His plan for the human race. A client nation is one whose government allows communication of the gospel and the preservation and teaching of God's Word and promotes

spreading missionary activity to the world. It also serves as a haven for the Jews. *“You are the salt of the earth ... You are the light of the world”* (Matthew 5:13-14).

### **Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord. (Ps 33:12)**

A nucleus of spiritually mature Christians brings God’s blessing to the client nation. We call this the pivot. When believers fail to grow spiritually, no longer honor God, and abandon His divine institutions, the pivot shrinks and the nation comes under divine discipline. It is also then subject to losing client nation status. *“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge”* (Hosea 4:6).

### **National Disintegration**

Deviation from the four divine institutions will bring about the downfall of any nation, including our own. These four areas are targets of Satan’s influence in a client nation such as ours.

Today we see politicians try to eliminate personal freedom and replace it with governmental control. People seek to destroy the concept of marriage as God originally designed it and to shut down the authority structure of the family. National sovereignty is threatened by the eradication of our borders, attacks on the military and replacing the rule of law with anarchy.

Any hope we have of reversing these trends depends on Christians learning, knowing, and adhering to God’s Word. If our nation is to reclaim the divine establishment ideals that our founders set forth in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, it will require the proper functioning of responsible personal volition, Biblical marriage and stable families.

**Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, revere God, honor the king. (1 Peter 2:17)**

## FATHER - HUSBAND

You are accountable first to God for everything in your life - all you think, say and do. *“So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God”* (Romans 14:12).

As a husband and as a father, you have fundamental responsibilities. In Ephesians 5:25 you are commanded to love your wife, *“Husbands, love your wives just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her.”*

You are not authorized to be a bully or to be bossy to your wife, nor is she your servant. Your goal as a husband is leading a relationship of cooperation and stability and advancing together in spiritual growth.

Regarding your children, be certain to guide them to God consciousness. Have them look up at the stars and read Psalm 8:3, or take them to the beach and while watching the waves quote Jeremiah 31:35. They have to learn God exists.

Pray that they seek to know God. This is positive volition and their first step to accepting Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Evangelize your own children. Do not depend on others to do it. Give them the gospel early and often.

Teach them volitional responsibility, how God gives each of us free will and holds us accountable. Seldom does a young person think about how a decision made today will affect their future. Explain why God ordained the four divine institutions.

Curb their inherent arrogance. Make them aware of their sin nature, sin, and the need to confess their personal sins to God the Father (1 John 1:9). Orient them to authority, starting with yours and God's.

Instill in them why they need to know God and His code of conduct, and follow it.

Train and discipline your children, but do not aggravate, exasperate or frustrate them. *“Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord”* (Ephesians 6:4).

You must be the spiritual leader for your family. And until your children become adults, it is your responsibility to raise them and to show them what a man and a husband should be. This requires wisdom. To acquire wisdom, you need to study God’s Word under the ministry of a qualified pastor, and apply it. *“A wise man will hear and increase in learning. And a man of understanding will acquire wise counsel”* (Proverbs 1:5).

### **Your spiritual life sets the example**

Foremost in your role as spiritual leader is to prioritize your own spiritual life. Your wife and your children will observe your personal commitment to God and His Word. As you grow spiritually, you will develop the characteristics that make you a leader, a loving and respected husband, and a model for your children.

Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. (1 Corinthians 16:13)

Leadership is a function of the authority of the husband in marriage and of parents in the family. A good leader has integrity, virtue and moral courage. He provides stability and protection for his family. He guides and motivates. He has acquired humility. He listens to the opinions of his wife. He controls his emotions, unlike children whose emotions often dominate their thinking. (Dad needs to be the grown-up in the family.)

Two other important qualities in a husband and in a father are that he be reliable and consistent. In order to flourish, children need a stable home environment. They need to be able to count on you.

It is up to the father to instill in his children unconditional respect for their mother. Never let them get away with sassiness or talking back to her. Do not tolerate disobedience, deception or lying to their mother or to you.

### **A Lifetime Commitment**

God ordained marriage to be a lifetime commitment, not a casual arrangement. Today, divorce is too easy and commonplace.

When questioned on divorce Jesus answered, *“Haven’t you read, that at the beginning the Creator made them male and female, and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh?’ So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.”* (Matthew 19:4).

Divorce can be devastating to children. Often divorce is a matter of adults putting their desires ahead of what may be best for their families. They salve their conscience by speaking of how “resilient” children are. Or they rationalize, suggesting that if they are not happy, the children can’t be happy. These are just excuses to justify their own poor decisions and behavior.

Divorce can shatter a child’s sense of security and stability; and badmouthing or promoting hostility toward the other parent is tantamount to child abuse. Of course there are legitimate reasons for divorce. My intent is not to get into details but rather to emphasize divorce is never to be taken as an easy out.

Allow me to give a few words of advice: If you are still unmarried, choose your spouse well. Don’t have children if you are not committed to staying married and are not in synch with how children are to be raised spiritually.

In difficult times, work out problems together, always ready to forgive, to forget, and to move on.

You are much more likely to have a lasting, happy and satisfying marriage if you prioritize growing spiritually. Attend a sound, Bible teaching church if available. I encourage you to dedicate time to study God's Word and pray together.

This won't be easy but it will be a powerful witness for your family and bring them blessing by association.

**Your relationship with your wife is  
an indicator of your relationship with the Lord**

Enjoy life with the woman whom you love all the days of your fleeting life which He has given to you; for this is your reward in life.  
(Ecclesiastes 9:9)

Always treat your wife with love and respect. As the authority in the home, you are responsible to God to initiate behaviors toward your wife that set a good example. Your sons will look to you to learn how to treat their future wives and women in general. Your girls will watch you to see how a man treats his wife and to learn what to expect in a husband. Like it or not, you are being observed. Your children follow the example that you set and take to heart your words and actions.

You and your wife growing together spiritually, coalescence of souls, and living according to Biblical principles form the foundation for a thriving family life. People will take notice. Conscientious mindful parents with well-trained, respectful, spiritually growing children are the exception in today's unruly society. This is your corporate witness to the confused and unenlightened world, and part of your enduring legacy.

**Advancing to spiritual maturity  
is your best preparation  
to be the husband and father God intends**

## **AUTHORITY - HUMILITY - ARROGANCE**

God is our supreme authority. *“The Lord has established His throne in the heavens, and His sovereignty rules over all”* (Psalm 103:19).

If you love Me you will keep on obeying My mandates. (John 14:15)

Authority structures are necessary for the orderly function of the human race. Authority preserves and protects freedom. It is not loss of freedom. Without the exercise of authority there is anarchy and exerting authority without freedom produces tyranny. There must be a balance.

Authority orientation is humans using their free will to obey systems of authority prescribed by God. The people’s authority orientation is the key to the survival of any nation. Acquiring orientation to authority ideally starts at a young age, in the home, under the leadership and training of the parents.

### **Husband and Wife set the example for authority orientation**

Orientation to authority is critical to establishing order within a family. Recognition of authority begins with the husband, as we have noted in Ephesians 5.

The husband’s prioritization of his spiritual life, or lack thereof, is indicative of his own authority orientation. Submitting to God’s authority and being oriented to God’s Word and God’s policy of grace are linked with effective authority within the family.

The husband's ruling authority within the home in no way endorses him being a bully or a dictator toward his wife nor being harsh with his children. On the contrary, he is commanded to love his wife. "*Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her*" (Ephesians 5:25).

"*Wives, be subject to your own husband, as to the Lord*" (Ephesians 5:22). The wife's submission to her husband is not demeaning, nor does it imply that the woman is inferior to the man. It is her recognition that he is the head of the home, and it is her response to his love and protection.

### **Children need to be taught authority orientation**

Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord.  
(Colossians 3:20)

Parents are a child's first authority in life. God mandates that children respect their parents' authority. "*Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right*" (Ephesians 6:1). Obedience indicates respect for authority. Children are born arrogant, self-oriented. They must be taught to be humble. Humility is an acquired life skill first learned in the home.

When a child is disobedient or rebellious, discipline is necessary for course correction, to instill authority orientation, and to develop humility. When parents neglect this, the result is a teenager out of control with no brakes in his soul. Lacking authority orientation and learned humility, and without acquired norms and standards, he can't identify right from wrong. Enforced humility from law enforcement and even incarceration may be needed to turn him around. This is why it is critical that we train children when they are young.

Children are also mandated to honor their father and mother. Divorce or remarriage doesn't preclude this.

Honor your father and mother that it may be well with you and that you may live long on the earth. (Ephesians 6:2-3)

And by the way, there is no statute of limitations on this. This means always, even into their parents' old age and through their health issues. **Children, take care of your aging parents.**

If anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. (1 Timothy 5:8)

## **Humility**

The great virtue in the Christian life is humility. It is an attitude of integrity and lack of self-importance. It does not imply nor demonstrate weakness. Humility is an acquired spiritual skill that allows teachability to God's Word. Humility has to do with obedience and submission to the will and authority of God even though we may not understand His purposes.

It means trusting in God's character - His omniscience, His omnipotence, His righteousness, His justice, His love. We do not have to know "why." We just have to fully trust that the Creator of the universe knows what He is doing and He is in control.

Do you not know? The Everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable. (Isaiah 40:28)

Our Lord Jesus Christ humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. (Philippians 2:8)

Our Lord modeled the virtue of humility toward God. He showed us what true submission to authority is. The greatest demonstration of Jesus Christ's humility was the cross. Fully knowing what He was about to endure, Jesus *"Began to pray saying 'Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done'"* (Luke 22:42).

Humility is teachability. Teach your child how to use his volition to think right and make good decisions based on what the Bible says. Humility is relying on God and His provisions. Humility is a strength, not a weakness.

What does the Lord require of you, but to do justice, to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God. (Micah 6:8)

Authority orientation and humility go hand-in-hand. Parental discipline in response to a child's display of arrogance and disobedience is called enforced humility and it is necessary so the child can learn genuine humility and be teachable.

### **Arrogance**

The big enemy of authority is arrogance. Arrogance always butts heads with authority. Arrogant rejection of authority means that you go through life believing you are right and your parents are wrong; you are right and the coach is wrong; you are right and the boss is wrong. An arrogant person thinks he knows better than everyone.

The child or the spouse in the family that has arrogant traits will always justify why they are correct and the authority figure is wrong.

This self-justification then leads to self-absorption, and if left unchecked to self-destruction. A person on this path of arrogance often destroys others in their proximity.

People in authority positions do sometimes make mistakes. Explain to your children how to handle unfair authority and perceived raw deals or injustice, without reacting with anger, self-pity or retaliation.

### **Authority is not always fair - neither is life**

A person who rejects authority will have a life of misery and unhappiness, and even the potential to become a criminal. He will be a loser all his life because he wants to set the rules, he wants to be in charge. That is exactly what Satan did in eternity past when he decided he wanted to take over God's throne and run the show.

### **A man's pride will bring him low but a humble spirit will obtain honor. (Proverbs 29:23)**

For the believer, God uses discipline to break our arrogance and bring us back to humility where we respect His Word and respond to His authority.

The same principle applies to family life. The family is where genuine humility begins by teaching children to obey and to respect their parents, and to obey God.

The Lord knows what we are thinking and He sees when we are arrogant. He notices when we justify our wrongdoing. We cannot deceive Him - He understands exactly what we are up to.

I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind,  
even to give to each man according to his  
ways, according to the results of his deeds.  
(Jeremiah 17:10)

## **You are the victim of your decisions not circumstances or people**

Once negative volition sets up in your life, you have rejected God's authority and the authority of His Word. You won't listen, and in your own arrogance you now think you are smarter than God.

Without authority orientation and humility it is impossible to learn anything. Many of our wrong decisions and suffering come from our own arrogance.

### **Bad decisions limit future options**

When you consistently operate contrary to God's Word you sear your soul with sin so that your conscience is burned away and your heart is hardened. You no longer want truth and are not able to distinguish between right and wrong; you are in a downward spiral. You betray your soul and head into self-destruction.

God's mandates in the Bible are for your benefit. Knowledge of Biblical principles guides you to good decisions. Do not make decisions based on emotions. Make decisions grounded in sound thinking. Base your decisions on the absolute truth of God's Word, not what you feel you should do.

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a standard of thinking from His Word. (Romans 12:2-3)

## MOTHER - WIFE

Charm is deceptive and beauty is fleeting, but a woman who reveres the Lord is to be praised. (Proverbs 31:30)

This chapter of Proverbs describes the qualities of a wife and mother who reveres and respects the Lord. Little is known about the author, King Lemuel, but we do know that his mother taught him this divine wisdom.

A few of the verses from Proverbs 31:

10 - *“An excellent wife, who can find? For her worth is far above jewels.”*

11 - *“The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain.”* She has the trust of her husband. Her careful household management contributes to the family’s prosperity. Her faith and spiritual growth benefit the man, the marriage, and the home.

25 - *“Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she smiles at the future.”* She has inner strength from putting God’s Word in her soul. She does not fear the future for she is prepared, and she knows it is in God’s hands.

26 - *“She opens her mouth in wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.”* With divine wisdom and in obedience to God’s mandates, she teaches her children.

30 - *“Charm is deceptive and beauty is fleeting, but a woman who reveres the Lord is to be praised.”* Her secret is her spiritual strength and virtue love, which are motivated by her personal love for the Lord Jesus Christ.

“*Reveres the Lord*” implies a personal relationship with God. The number one priority in her life, and yours, should be to respect God and consistently learn and obey His Word. It is not how attractive you are. It is not what kind of shape you are in. It is what kind of shape your soul is in. The real beauty of a woman is her spiritual maturity manifested through her soul.

This “*excellent wife*” and mother possesses both outward honorable behavior and the qualities of inner beauty. Lemuel describes her as trustworthy, supportive and helpful to her husband, industrious, and astute in providing for her household.

She accepts the authority of her husband and understands her responsibilities. She is neither disillusioned with life nor discouraged by circumstances. She displays dignity, inner strength, confidence, contentment, wisdom, kindness, tolerance and generosity. She is not frustrated, malicious, bitter, jealous or possessive.

We have seen that the husband is God’s delegated authority over the home. Where does that leave the wife?

Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church. He Himself being the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. (Ephesians 5:22-24)

Often, women bristle at these words. But keep in mind that this is God’s design for marriage. This is not submission of lesser status. For one thing, as members of God’s royal family, “*There is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus*” (Galatians 3:28).

No inferiority or superiority.

Secondly, the husband being the head of the wife is compared to Christ as the head of the church. This means that the wife recognizes that the husband is the head of the home, and she responds to him and does not try to usurp his authority. That requires genuine humility.

This mandate to the wife is concurrent with the mandate to the husband to love and protect his wife. The wife's respectful deference, together with the husband's leadership and unselfish love, make for effective teamwork. Each has his or her role and responsibilities in the marriage and in the family.

### **Mutual spiritual growth is key to a lasting partnership**

By wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established; and by knowledge the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches. (Prov 24:3-4)

### **Motherhood**

Motherhood is both one of the most rewarding positions in life as well as one of the most difficult. It is wonderful to see your children grow, learn respect for authority and become productive citizens. An even greater blessing is to see your teaching of God's Word take root so that they mature spiritually.

This is exemplified by Timothy's upbringing by his mother and grandmother. *"For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well"* (2 Timothy 1:5).

The faith that these two women nurtured in Timothy laid the foundation for his spiritual maturity and leadership in the early Christian church.

We will tell to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and His strength and His wondrous works that He has done ... That the generation to come might know, even the children yet to be born, that they may arise and tell them to their children, that they should put their confidence in God and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments. (Psalm 78:4,6-7)

### **When Your Children Rebel**

Proverbs 17:25 is a word of warning for any female who thinks that being a mother equals fulfillment or happiness as a woman. *“A foolish son is a grief to his father and bitterness to her who bore him.”* Nothing is more heartbreaking to a mother than a child who is on the way to an early grave. What makes a child a fool? *“Fools despise wisdom and instruction”* (Proverbs 1:7). He rejects the Word of God and its principles.

**Mothers carry the same authority as fathers when it comes to the upbringing of their children.** Proverbs 1:8 states, *“Hear, my son, your father’s instruction and do not forsake your mother’s teaching.”* In spite of what a mother teaches, her children can still be captured by the cosmic system and turn away from God.

Perhaps the most recognized virtue of a mother is her unconditional love for her children even when they make ill-advised decisions and go down the My Way Highway.

A mother may be disappointed and frustrated toward a wayward child and this can lead to sins of anger, bitterness and guilt. She may blame herself and think, “I didn’t do a very good job raising my child.”

However, she avoids sinning and getting derailed in her own spiritual life by using impersonal love toward her difficult or rebellious son or daughter.

**Impersonal love is God’s provision designed to solve all sorts of problems, especially people problems.** This love is unconditional, based on your personal love for God and obedience to Him, not based on the merit of the object of your love. John 13:34-35 says, *“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”*

Impersonal love does not imply permissiveness or ignoring a child’s bad behavior. Parental instruction, training and discipline must be ongoing and consistent, **always under the umbrella of love and prayer.**

As children grow up, they have to decide and choose for themselves. They need to be taught God holds them responsible for their choices. It is up to you to instill in them divine norms and standards so they have the foundation to make wise decisions.

### **Divine Viewpoint Thinking**

A spiritually mature woman has the advantage of God’s Word stored in her soul’s mentality that keeps her from worrying about her children or even interfering in their lives when they are older. *“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus”* (Philippians 4:6-7).

This refers to another **divine provision of faith-rest which is standing on the promises of God.** The steps to faith-rest: be filled with the Holy Spirit; claim a promise to steady your thoughts; recall through the ministry of the Holy Spirit a relevant Biblical principle to apply to the situation; and mix your faith with God’s promise.

By using the faith-rest technique, a mother will have a relaxed, stable mental attitude and peace that counter the temptation to worry. Such a woman doesn't get angry or lose her temper. She nurtures. She forgives the child and forgets the act.

### **A Mother's Love, Courage and Faith**

Exodus 2:1-10 tells the story of a mother's love, courage, faith and sacrifice. Jochebed, Moses' mother, knew that all of the Israelites' male babies were under a death sentence by the order of Pharaoh. She did not fear. She hid her baby and when that was no longer possible, she placed her tiny infant in a basket amid the reeds on the edge of the Nile River, where he was found by Pharaoh's daughter, who raised him as her own son.

How did Jochebed find the courage to risk the wrath of Pharaoh? Hebrews 11:23 says she did it "*by faith.*" She knew that God was in control. God had not allowed Moses to be born just to be killed. You see, Jochebed and her husband knew God and their people's history. They believed God's promise to Abraham of a land and descendants forever (Genesis 13:14-17). They knew there was a future for the Jews. Jochebed believed that Moses had a divinely ordained destiny. God would preserve him to fulfill the plan He had for Moses' life. This is a powerful example of faith-rest.

God has a plan and a future for your children as well. It is up to you to prepare them for it by teaching them who God is and what He has done, and will do for them. This is your most important mission regarding your children.

For God has not given us a spirit of timidity  
but of power and love and discipline.  
(2 Timothy 1:7)

## **INSTRUCTION - TRAINING - DISCIPLINE**

Train up a child in the way he should go, even  
when he is old he will not depart from it.  
(Proverbs 22:6)

As a parent, you have the God-delegated responsibility to teach, train, instruct and discipline your children, and it starts from the moment of their birth. Begin on day one to talk to them about anything and everything, including God's Word. They will not understand the words just yet, but you will be establishing a life-long habit and building a loving and trusting relationship with your children.

For a young child, the family is the primary source of instruction and learning. It is the classroom where mother and father must establish authority, teach and enforce humility, and restrain the sin nature of the child through constant training and appropriate discipline. They will wear you out, but don't give up. These things are necessary for a child to feel loved and secure.

### **God entrusted you with your children He also entrusted to you the Bible**

What your children do with their future depends greatly on what mom and dad put in their souls today. The enemy is hard at work trying to recruit your children and your grandchildren.

Youth are being evangelized daily by social media into Satan's cosmic system, and their thoughts are captured with promises that cannot be delivered. They are deceived and seduced by lies. It is your job to teach spiritual discernment, right from wrong, truth from lies. It is your duty to prepare them for their life ahead.

Do not send your children into the devil's world unprepared. Do you think you are being encouraging or boosting your child's self-esteem by telling them: "Good luck, give it your best shot, dream your dreams, you can do it"? All are human viewpoint garbage.

God's plans are bigger than any dreams you or they could ever contrive. It is abusing a child when you fail to prepare them for the devil's world. If parents do not put Biblical fundamental truths in the lives of their children, they don't stand a chance of recognizing the lies and resisting the lures of the world.

The unfolding of Your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.  
(Psalm 119:130)

Your duty as a Christian parent is not only to prepare your children for the future, but also to instruct them in their spiritual life. If you do not teach your child about God and His Word, the world will fill that gap with humanism and cosmic thinking and a vacuum will form in his soul that is devoid of truth.

**Soul strength is essential  
for survival in the devil's world**

A Christian, a believer in Jesus Christ, can wind up being crushed by the pressure on the outside when there is no equal pressure on the inside. Without Biblical norms and standards in your soul, you do not have the coping skills to deal with what is on the outside, and it will stress you, overpower you, and destroy you.

**Youth want the truth**

**Guide them with the Bible  
the source of truth**

## **Instruction and Training**

Heed instruction and be wise, and do not neglect it. (Proverbs 8:33)

Above all, teach your children the truths of God's Word, beginning with God's plan for salvation. Follow with basic doctrines that include sin and the sin nature, prayer and thanksgiving, who and what God is, grace, faith-rest (standing on the promises of God), and more advanced subjects as they mature spiritually. Take time to answer "Why."

In addition to daily Biblical training, there is a variety of subjects that apply to believer and unbeliever alike. The goals of both: to develop the conscience, norms and standards and objective thinking; and to produce mature, stable, responsible adults.

### **A Sampling of Topics for Teaching**

**What is Sin** - All children are born with a sin nature passed down genetically from Adam. They must be taught how to control it. Teach your children what sin is and that it is a choice they make. They must learn to take responsibility for their own decisions, words and actions. They may be inclined to blame others - siblings, friends, even parents when they are caught in wrongdoing.

**The Solution to Sin** - They need to know that no matter what the sin is, whether it is lying, trouble-making or cheating, when they sin they are breaking God's rules and disobeying Him. And they need to know the solution. We call it rebound, naming your sins in silent prayer to God the Father. *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our [known] sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness [known, unknown and forgotten sins]"* (1 John 1:9).

**The Divine Institutions** - Volition, Marriage, Family and National Entities. These institutions were ordained by God for the prosperity, protection and survival of the human race. They promote liberty, morality, civility and authority within a nation and apply to every person in every age. When divine establishment principles prevail, the people of a nation enjoy the blessings of freedom, privacy, property and life itself.

These basic truths were initiated at the beginning of history and are restated in the New Testament. They are God's design for restraining man's sinful nature while allowing maximum function of free will, which includes the responsibility of making your own decisions.

**Volition** - Volition is an individual's freedom of self-determination. We are the products of our own volition, and God holds us accountable for the decisions we make. Children need to understand volition, that when they lie, they choose to lie, and when they disobey, they choose to disobey. There are consequences to bad decisions, and there is no one to blame but themselves. Galatians 6:7 says, "*Whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.*" They need to realize the connection between their thinking and their decisions. This is why it is so important that you help them change their human viewpoint thinking to divine viewpoint.

**Learn to think with divine viewpoint  
Human viewpoint is stinkin' thinkin'**

**Prayer** - Pray for your children and teach them the importance of prayer. At mealtime, pray over the food to thank God for it and ask Him to sanctify the food for the health of the body. This helps to instill the idea that there is a God, He is real, He is in charge, and we depend on Him. When the child is old enough, have him bow his head and say grace, asking God to bless the food.

Teach your young ones how to pray. Teach them that they must be in fellowship with God through 1 John 1:9 for their prayers to be heard. A very young child can learn how to rebound by praying to God the Father in the name of the Son. Get them started early so that prayer becomes a natural and integral part of their everyday life.

With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints. (Ephesians 6:18)

Pray with your children for family and friends who are unbelievers, that they will recognize their lost condition and understand the issue of salvation by faith alone in Christ alone. Pray for people you know who are ill or suffering. You can pray with them for their teachers, coaches, others in positions of authority, and other people in their lives.

As they mature, initiate praying for the nation and your state and their leaders. The principle also applies to your city, community, organizations and activities.

Seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have sent you into exile. Pray to the Lord on its behalf; because if it prospers, you too will prosper. (Jeremiah 29:7)

**Personal Integrity** - This is understanding right and wrong and doing the right thing. It involves personal responsibility for thoughts, decisions, words and actions, respect for other people and their property, and respect for legitimate authority. It is staying aligned with God's standards.

To one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin. (James 4:17)

**Honesty and Truthfulness** - These are elements of personal integrity. Lying destroys trust and is one of the sins God hates the most. *“Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord”* (Proverbs 12:22). All children will lie at some point. If uncorrected, it will become part of their modus operandi. Deal with it early on.

**Manners** - Good manners demonstrate humility, thoughtfulness and respect. Learning courtesy and awareness of others counteracts self-centeredness. *“To malign no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men”* (Titus 3:2).

**Value and Necessity of Work** - Even in the garden of Eden, Adam was given an assignment by God. God gave Adam work to do. His job was to name and categorize the animals and to tend to the garden. *“Then the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it ... The man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him”* (Genesis 2:15,20). Eve was brought alongside Adam to assist him.

After Adam sinned and was expelled from the garden, he was to continue to labor; and now, along with mankind, nature also suffers the consequences of man’s fall. *“Cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you will eat of it all the days of your life”* (Genesis 3:17).

Paul lays out the duty of man to work for his living:

If anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either. (2 Thessalonians 3:10)

In Ecclesiastes 3:13 we see the satisfaction that man derives from his productive labor, *“Every man who eats and drinks sees good in all his labor - it is the gift of God.”*

**Patriotism and Love for Country** - Unless they are homeschooled, it is unlikely that your children are going to learn about our nation's divine establishment origins. Therefore it is up to you to teach them about the founding fathers, the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. Instill in them an appreciation and respect for our military, homeland security and first responders. Take them to patriotic events like Independence Day celebrations and Memorial Day observances. Introduce them to music that celebrates our nation and its freedom. Teach them to be good citizens. *“I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all reverence and dignity”* (1 Timothy 2:1-2).

### **Training is Protecting**

Your child may have believed in Jesus Christ and will go to heaven, but unless he has been trained in the home and has been taught Biblical norms and standards, his soul will be carried away by the lures of the world, the flesh and the devil. This is how so many “good Christian children” wind up going wild and rebelling when they hit the teen years or go off to college .

**Your children watch everything you do and how you do it.** They learn behavior from your actions as much as, or even more than, from your words. “Do as I say, not as I do” are wasted words. They will do what they observe in you.

So, give them something worthwhile to copy. Show them what it means to make daily Bible study a habit and to consistently to think and apply Biblical principles. You reinforce your words when you live what you teach and remind them of the source of truth, the Bible. Model the Christian life for them.

## Parental Discipline

Proverbs 22:15 states that *“Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of discipline will remove it far from him.”* According to the book, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, “discipline is moral correction, which includes spanking, verbal correction and other forms of discipline.”

As parents, we have certain standards - hopefully aligned with Biblical principles. Enforcement of those standards is the hard part. A parent who does not train and discipline his children is doing them a terrible disservice.

You are not meant to be your child’s friend. It is your duty to train, teach, lead, discipline - all done in love and without abuse. It requires energy and time, thought and good judgment, patience and compassion. Child rearing is a tremendous responsibility.

When children disobey or misbehave, you must decide what discipline is appropriate. Tailor the discipline to the offense and to the temperament of the child. It will not be the same for every child.

Wise men turn away anger. (Proverbs 29:8)

He who is slow to anger has great understanding, but he who is quick-tempered exalts folly. (Proverbs 14:29)

God does not discipline His children because He is angry at them. If we are under divine discipline, it is because He loves us. He is trying to save our lives so that we do not completely self-destruct.

It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline?  
(Hebrews 12:7)

The same principle applies to parents and their children. Discipline is intended to get the child's attention for course correction and to reinforce authority orientation. Parental discipline needs to be done in love and is for the benefit of the child. It is a critical part of their training.

### **Permissive parenting is not honorable in God's eyes**

While children are mandated in Ephesians 6:1 to obey parents, parents are cautioned in verse 4 "*do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline [nurture] and instruction [admonition] of the Lord.*" The words "nurture" and "admonition" in the New Testament Greek are *paideia* and *nouthesia*. One means to put something in their mind; the other means to put something on their behind. Authority is taught and arrogance curtailed by teaching the mind and when necessary, by swats on the behind.

Unfair, unreasonable or overly harsh discipline can provoke wrath in a child resulting in exasperation, discouragement and frustration. Punishment should be instructive. It must never be abusive. It should never engender bitterness or cause him to sin.

**Your child must know your rules and what is expected of him.** Children benefit from being given boundaries. You must strive to be fair in your discipline. Before you chastise, take the time to cool down and then calmly explain to him his wrongdoing. This is part of their instruction. **Never discipline a child in anger.** "*Do not be eager in your heart to be angry, for anger resides in the bosom of fools*" (Ecclesiastes 7:9). An angry parent produces angry discouraged children.

Discipline your son while there is hope.  
(Proverbs 19:18)

## **Wisdom .. Knowledge .. Discretion .. Understanding**

I call these **The Fantastic Four**. Your children will be set for adulthood if they acquire them. Notice this proverb starts off recognizing that thinking controls destiny.

For when wisdom enters your heart and knowledge is pleasant to your soul; then discretion will guard you and understanding will watch over you. (Proverbs 2:10-11)

**Wisdom** enters the heart [the mentality of the soul] from the study, retention and the application of God's Word. Wisdom must be acquired; it is not inherited. God's wisdom gives a child direction, protection and purpose in life. It is their strength.

**Knowledge** is pleasant when it becomes something a child wants and holds onto as treasure. Acquiring it is a daily choice. When it becomes habit, it is your child's eternal wealth.

**Discretion** will guard your children. It is like a blinking light that warns of dangers ahead. By acquiring the mind of Christ, a child can discern right from wrong and identify evil, human viewpoint and other lures of Satan's world. It is their shield.

**Understanding** is overwatch. When a child has the truth of God's Word in his soul, thinks with divine viewpoint, it generates objective optimism and insight for the future.

**With the Fantastic Four  
your child has a huge advantage in life**

## LOVE

The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. (1 John 4:8)

### God's Love

Love is one of the attributes of God's nature. But His love does not eclipse other qualities of His character. In this passage, John goes on to say how God demonstrated His love for us, "*By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His uniquely born Son into the world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation [God satisfied with the work of His Son] for our sins*" (1 John 4:9-10).

Exercising His justice and righteousness, with His love, God the Father sent His Son, our Savior, into the world to go to the cross, to die in our place, to be resurrected, and to ascend into heaven, so that we may also live in heaven with Him for all eternity.

At the point of salvation, the believer comes under maximum divine love. John 14:20 says, *In that day you will know that I am in My Father and you in Me, and I in you.*" Being in union with Christ guarantees that God the Father loves the believer with the same love that He has for His Son.

God is immutable. His love never changes. God loves you based on who He is, not based on who you are or anything that you have done. God's love is perfect and unconditional, patient and forgiving, protective, is proven and persistent, and promotes peace of mind.

One of the ways He expresses His love for His family is through His divine resources to live the spiritual life and promises, such as Hebrews 13:5, “*He Himself has said, ‘I will never leave you, nor forsake you.’*” And this is another, “*God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus*” (Philippians 4:19). Knowing and claiming promises like these gives you confidence in God and His plan for your life.

### **Personal Love for God**

Personal love for God is your greatest virtue. It is your motivation to be the father, mother, grandfather, grandmother and royal family member that God intends you to be. This spurs you to obey God and to follow His system to grow to spiritual maturity.

You develop love for God when you come to understand Him through the consistent study of His Word. This is your reciprocation of His love for you as demonstrated by His plan for your salvation and His amazing provisions for your life and for your family.

### **Personal Love for God = Motivational Virtue**

Keep yourselves in the love of God [it is the guardian of your soul]. (Jude 1:21)

Parents, I encourage you to drill this Biblical principle into your child’s mentality early and often. Help them understand the link between loving God and obeying God. **To love God is to obey Him.** This motivation will help keep them in God’s will and away from the dead end of going down the My Way Highway.

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you. (Ephesians 5:1-2)

How do you demonstrate your love for God? *“For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome”* (1 John 5:3). Your obedience and deference to God show your love for Him. In love, you revere and appreciate Him.

### **Impersonal Love for All**

To take love a step further, 1 John 4:7 commands believers to love one another. *“Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.”* This is what we call impersonal love. It is the greatest functional virtue of the Christian life.

### **Impersonal Love = Functional Virtue**

Impersonal love is unconditional love for not just other believers, but for all mankind. It means that you are to never judge, malign, criticize or gossip. You treat others with tolerance and compassion regardless of the kind of person they are. This love comes from your virtue, your integrity. It is not dependent on the character, personality or lovability of the object of your love.

This is His will, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us. (1 John 3:23)

Impersonal love is required by God as part of His plan for your life. Personal love without the insight to exercise impersonal love is weak and unstable. Lasting love has the character of God’s love behind it.

May the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the steadfastness of Christ.  
(2 Thessalonians 3:5)

## Husbands

Love in the family begins with the husband's love for his wife. The husband is instructed to love his wife just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself as a ransom to redeem us out of the slave market of sin. One of the ways the husband demonstrates his love is by meeting her needs before his own needs. This is virtue love.

So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own body, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church.  
(Ephesians 5:28-29)

## Wives

Under normal circumstances, a wife will reciprocate her husband's love, but the Bible does not mandate that she love him. Instead, the Biblical command to the wife is to respect her husband as the one who protects and cares for her and as the head of the family.

The wife must see to it that she respects her husband. (Ephesians 5:33)

Paul speaks about a wife's love in Titus 2:4. He instructs older women to "*encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children.*" Women who are properly motivated by God's Word are encouraged to share what they have learned about marriage and family with inexperienced younger women. Young wives may need instruction and encouragement in using impersonal love toward their husbands and children.

## **Impersonal Love steps in when Personal Love falls short**

When God mandates love, the Greek word is *agapao*, it is the mental attitude of impersonal love. Notice that personal love is not commanded by God. It is normal and expected that husband and wife love each other with personal love. That is a love of attraction and appreciation of the qualities, personality and character of your mate.

But what happens at those times when your spouse is not loving, or is gritching (my combination of two words), criticizing or angry? Or maybe they have done something stupid or made a bad decision. Do you get ticked off or bent out of shape? Do you respond in kind, giving them a taste of their own medicine? That would be revenge motivated. At such times, you love them based on who you are, not based on who they are or on something they have done that displeases you.

So, loving the person that you are married to requires impersonal love and ideally includes personal love. Personal love is your motivation for sacrifice and commitment. Impersonal love gives you the ability to forgive flaws, show mercy, and to give comfort in times of differences or disappointments.

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted,  
forgiving each other, just as God in Christ  
also has forgiven you. (Ephesians 4:32)

## **To know God is to love God**

Here is something interesting - two of the most mature believers of all time, who knew the most about love as recorded in the Bible, were never married. They are the Apostle Paul and the prophet Jeremiah. These two men had an exceptional knowledge of God and therefore knew a lot about God's perfect love.

Faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love. (1 Corinthians 13:13)

## **Parents and Children**

Love for your children is an attribute that most people take for granted. Normally, parents love their children beyond measure. But there are times when your child will try your patience and push your limits. They will test you to see what they can get away with. These are times when impersonal love must kick in. You must not react from your emotions, but from reason. Control your temptation to get angry. Remain calm.

The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged. (2 Timothy 2:24)

Love does not mean refraining from training and discipline. Just the opposite. Training and discipline teach a child self-restraint, humility, respect and obedience. Because you love the child, you discipline in fairness and in love, never ever with abuse. Children know they are loved when you give them rules and guidelines.

Children are not born automatically loving their parents. As little tots, they are dependent and perhaps clingy, but they must *learn to love*. Their love starts as personal love, and it often hinges on their emotions and is inconsistent. If things are going their way, they love you. If under discipline, then not so much.

Teach your children impersonal love and how to use their minds to keep their emotions in check. The less they are governed by their emotions, the more rational and objective they will become. With the inculcation of God's Word in their souls, love will grow - love for parents, love for siblings, and love for God and His Word.

## The Royal Law

At the moment of salvation, you became a member of God's Royal Family. This family has a unique honor code of conduct. **Central to this honor code is impersonal love for all people motivated by personal love for God.**

James calls this the Royal Law:

If you fulfill the royal law according to this Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing well. (James 2:8)

Does that sound impossible? What if your neighbor is an irritating weirdo? Does he have to be your buddy? Not at all. This is about impersonal, not personal love. Impersonal love means that you treat others the same way God treats you.

Jesus Christ Himself lived the honor code during His earthly ministry and He handed it on to us to learn and use. He expects you to represent Him with integrity and honor. This is the standard for Christian families. The principles behind the honor code include genuine humility, respect for authority, and love - personal love for God and impersonal love for each other.

### Dysfunction within families

Better is a dry morsel and quietness with it,  
than a house full of feasting with strife.  
(Proverbs 17:1)

I can hear some wheels turning, "This is pollyanna. You don't know my family - it's dysfunctional."

The Royal Law is just what you need. God gives you divine resources such as impersonal love for you to objectively respond to all sorts of problems, including even the most complex family issues.

## **God's grace is your equilibrium**

All families have ups and downs and some have festering issues. God's grace is the equilibrium. In rough times, how do you return to a steady state? By refocusing on God and His Word and using His divine resources, such as impersonal love.

### **My grace is sufficient for you. (2 Corinthians 12:9)**

There is not an issue you will encounter that cannot be addressed through orienting to God's grace and applying His Word. 2 Peter 3:18 says, "*Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*" Grace orientation is the anchor of your spiritual life and gives you objective optimism and correct perspective.

You are on earth to represent Jesus Christ, and this applies especially to your family. Demonstrate your maturing spiritual life. As a grace-oriented Christian functioning by the principles of the honor code, your influence on the members of your family will yield blessings for many generations to come.

### **God wants to "grace-out" your family**

#### **He does so as you mature spiritually motivated by your personal love for God**

What does the Lord your God require from you, but to revere the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. (Deuteronomy 10:12)

## YOUNG PEOPLE

Walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects ... increasing in the knowledge of God. (Colossians 1:10)

### David - From Shepherd Boy to Future King

You may have heard about King David in the Bible, and you probably know about David and Goliath. But did you know that the prophet Samuel anointed David to be the next king of Israel following King Saul when David was still just a boy? You see, God had a plan for David's life. David had a destiny. Let's take a look at how God prepared David to become the King of Israel and how David obeyed and trusted God.

It began while David was a teenager. God directed the prophet Samuel to go to Bethlehem to the house of a man named Jesse, because one of Jesse's sons was to become the next king. Jesse lined up his sons. Samuel took a look at Eliab, the oldest, who was tall and good-looking, and he thought this must be the one. But Eliab was not God's choice, and the Lord said to Samuel, *"Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart"* (1 Samuel 16:7).

Jesse had other sons and he paraded each of them in front of Samuel. Not one of the seven was God's chosen one. Samuel was puzzled because he knew that one of Jesse's sons was to be anointed as king. He asked Jesse if he had any other children. Jesse did. Jesse's youngest son was out tending his father's sheep. Jesse had not bothered to bring the boy in for Samuel to see.

The story continues in verses 12 and 13, *“So he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, with beautiful eyes and a handsome appearance. And the Lord said, ‘Arise, anoint him; for this is he.’ Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him.”* That shepherd boy was David, the future king.

## **David’s Boot Camp**

Once anointed, David went back out to the fields and resumed shepherding the sheep, a job he took very seriously. He learned the skills necessary to keep the sheep safe, even rescuing them from lions and bears. That was David’s boot camp. God was training him to be a warrior and a king.

But more than physical prowess, David was learning God’s Word. He was learning to trust the Lord. He was learning responsibility and courage and leadership. God was preparing him for greater things. *“With all my heart I have sought You; do not let me wander from Your commandments. Your Word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against You”* (Psalm 119:10-11).

## **A Huge Challenge**

A much larger challenge was soon to come. Three of David’s brothers were on the battle lines serving in King Saul’s army in a war with the Philistines. Jesse one day sent David, while still a teenager, to his brothers with supplies. As he was talking with his brothers, as recorded in 1 Samuel 17:8-49, suddenly a booming voice shouted out, *“Why do you come out to draw up in battle array? Am I not the Philistine and you servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves and let him come down to me. If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will become your servants; but if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall become our servants and serve us.”*

*“I defy the ranks of Israel this day; give me a man that we may fight together.”* David heard the gigantic man’s challenge and saw that all of Saul’s soldiers retreated in cowardly fear. But David’s response was, *“For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should taunt the armies of the living God?”*

This man was Goliath, the Philistines’ champion. Not one soldier in Saul’s army dared to fight him. *“When the words which David spoke were heard, they told them to Saul, and he sent for him. David said to Saul, ‘Let no man’s heart fail on account of him; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine.’”*

### **The Battle is the Lord’s**

David convinces Saul. *“Then Saul said to David, ‘You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are but a youth while he has been a warrior from his youth.’*

*But David said to Saul, ‘Your servant was tending his father’s sheep. When a lion or a bear came and took a lamb from the flock, I went out after him and attacked him, and rescued it from his mouth; and when he rose up against me, I seized him by his beard and struck him and killed him. Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, since he has taunted the armies of the living God.’”*

So, Saul sent the boy David out to fight Goliath, the formidable battle-trying warrior. Goliath’s mocking and threatening words on the battleground did not intimidate David. He boldly said to the Philistine, *“You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted ... The Lord does not deliver by sword or by spear; for **the battle is the Lord’s** and He will give you into our hands.”*

You know the outcome of the battle. A well-aimed stone from David's slingshot struck down Goliath like a fallen tree. Then David used Goliath's own sword to cut off his head. With newly found courage, the men of Saul's army shouted a battle cry. They charged and crushed the Philistines.

David was prospering in all his ways for the Lord was with him. (1 Samuel 18:14)

### **What can we learn from David's encounter with Goliath?**

**Respect authority and be obedient.** David's father assigned him the job of shepherd over his flocks of sheep. David fulfilled his responsibilities and tended the sheep well, even defending them against powerful predators. In obedience and respect to God and to his father, David acquired humility starting at a young age. And he learned to trust the Lord. When his father sent him with supplies for his brothers, David followed instructions.

Taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:5)

**Be confident not arrogant.** Goliath's bombastic challenge to Saul's troops made David indignant. He was probably ashamed that when Saul's men heard the challenge, "*they fled from him and were greatly afraid*" (1 Samuel 17:24). David had no doubt that he could defeat Goliath. He would do it in the name and in the power of the Lord.

The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in Him, and I am helped. Therefore my heart exults, and with my song I shall thank Him. (Psalm 28:7)

**Be humble not prideful.** When he went before King Saul, David humbly referred to himself as “your servant.” He described killing the lion and the bear, but not by way of boasting. *“The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine”* (1 Samuel 17:37). David was presenting his credentials to the king and giving credit to the Lord.

**Be courageous not cowering.** You can be sure that David knew his Bible history. He knew how God had delivered the Hebrew people from slavery in Egypt. He knew many of God’s promises, like the ones Moses communicated to the Israelites as they were about to enter the promised land, the land where the ten spies had reported seeing giants!

Be strong and courageous, do not be afraid or tremble at them, for the Lord your God is the one who goes with you. He will not fail you or forsake you ... The Lord is the one who goes ahead of you; He will be with you ... Do not fear or be dismayed.” (Deut 31:6,8)

**Be ready to do battle.** David was prepared mentally by learning God’s Word, its history, its promises, its mandates, and its teaching about who God is. He was prepared physically by working in rough terrain, caring for the sheep, rescuing strays, battling predators and practicing with his slingshot.

He had a strategy in mind when he stepped onto the battlefield. *“He took his stick in his hand and chose for himself five smooth stones from the brook, and put them in the shepherd’s bag which he had, even in his pouch, and his sling was in his hand; and he approached the Philistine”* (1 Samuel 17:40). David remained calm and focused.

As the giant Goliath advanced toward David, bellowing, taunting and mocking him, *“David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine. And David put his hand into his bag and took from it a stone and slung it, and struck the Philistine on his forehead. And the stone sank into his forehead, so that he fell on his face to the ground”* (1 Samuel 17:48-49).

**Let your thoughts, words and actions reflect your trust in God.** David saw the bigger picture, including ramifications of the victory over the enemy. *“This day the Lord will deliver you up into my hands ... All may know that the Lord does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the Lord’s and He will give you into our hands”* (1 Samuel 17:46-47). David understood that news of victory over Goliath would spread and people would come to know the Lord because of it. David’s defeat of Goliath brought honor and glory to God, because David depended on God for his victory.

**Be aware of the Lord’s presence, His care and protection, and His grace provisions.** David was a poet, musician and composer. He wrote 75 of the Psalms. They speak of pain and suffering, of praise for his God, of gratitude, of prayer, and of the future Messiah. The Psalms express his assurance that God was his strength and protector. *“I have set the Lord continually before me; because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken”* (Psalm 16:8).

The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised, and I am saved from my enemies. (Psalm 18:2-3)

**Prioritize your prayer life.** Although it is not recorded that David prayed at this time, I have no doubt that David prayed for strength, protection and victory before he went out to face off with Goliath. *“I have called upon You, for You will answer me, O God; incline Your ear to me, hear my speech”* (Psalm 17:6). Prayer is your open line of communication directly with God. He is there for you always, 24/7.

Did you know that there is a correct procedure for praying? You pray to God the Father, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the power of the filling of the Holy Spirit, meaning you have no unconfessed sin in your life.

If there are any known sins that you have not confessed to the Father, begin with a prayer of rebound (1 John 1:9). Then you can present your thanksgiving and your requests for others and for yourself.

Wait for the Lord; be strong and let your heart  
take courage; yes, wait for the Lord.  
(Psalm 27:14)

**Wait on the Lord, have a relaxed mental attitude, be patient.** David eventually was crowned king when he was thirty years old. He waited on the Lord. He was patient with circumstances and people. He did not impose his timeline over God’s. He trusted God’s plan and God’s perfect timing. He didn’t fret and wonder how long it would be until he would finally wear the crown.

He kept a relaxed mental attitude. He knew that it was God’s plan for him to reign and God always keeps His word. *“God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent; has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?”* (Numbers 23:19).

**Wait on God’s timing - don’t be impetuous**

**God's plan is perfect; God's timing is perfect.** When you are consistently in fellowship with God, learning His Word and growing spiritually, God will point the way for you. He will reveal His plan and lead you.

How did David know God's plan? Did he "dream big," set himself the goal of leadership, and begin a campaign to ascend to the throne? No! God sent the prophet Samuel to his home and anointed him. That is how David knew what God intended for him.

God does not work through prophets today, rather He directs us through the Bible. God opens doors for us and closes others. You must know God and His Word to be able to recognize His guidance. When making a decision, always ask yourself if it lines up with the norms and standards of the Bible. Whatever you do in life, as a student, on your job, in your home, do it to the best of your ability and do it as unto the Lord.

By learning and obeying God's Word, David prepared himself for whatever God had planned for him and he waited for the Lord's perfect timing in his life. David came to a personal sense of destiny knowing that whether he lived or died, he was the Lord's.

For if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. (Romans 14:8)

### **You have a personal destiny - it is eternal**

David had a destiny. So do you. You may be thinking, "I can't be like David. I will never be a king!" You are right. But this much you do have in common with David - God's will for every one of us to enter into His salvation. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. For David, he looked forward to the coming of the Messiah. Now, we look back to the cross where Jesus the Messiah died for us so that we can have eternal life with Him.

That's step one. Now, do you want to know what God has in store for you here on earth? **God designed a plan and a purpose specifically for you!**

David wrote in Psalm 139:13,16, *“For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother’s womb ... Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; and in Your book were all written the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them.”*

God knew everything there is to know about you before you were even born. He took great care in designing His plan and purpose for you even before He breathed your brand-new soul into your newly-born tiny body.

“For I know the plans that I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.” (Jeremiah 29:11)

No, you are not going to find a book in the Bible with your name on it telling you what school to go to or what job to take or whom you should marry. But the Bible does tell you how to think and how to live. It tells you that God loves you and wants only the best for you. As you advance in your spiritual life you will see God's will. *“I delight to do Your will”* (Psalm 40:8).

There is nothing that you do or say or even think that God does not notice. God knows every little detail about you, and He cares about you. With a personal sense of destiny, there is no reason for you to be worried about the future. *“Are not five sparrows sold for two cents? Yet not one of them is forgotten before God. Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows”* (Luke 12:6-7).

**The will of God will never take you  
where the grace of God can't protect you**

**I will instruct you and  
teach you in the way which you should go;  
I will counsel you with My eye upon you.  
(Psalm 32:8)**

You may not know exactly what God has planned for you but trust Him to show you the way. His plan and His timing are perfect.

### **God Uses Prepared People**

Learning your destiny, what God wants for your future, requires your cooperation. It requires that you follow God's rules and obey Him. To do this, you have to know what He expects of you. That is where your Bible study comes in. In the Bible, God tells you all you need to know about Him and what He wants for you. So, feed your soul on God's Word every day, because the key to fulfilling His plan is to grow up spiritually.

Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord  
and Savior Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 3:18)

God wants this for every believer. You grow in grace and knowledge of Christ when you:

Study to show yourself approved unto God, a  
workman that need not be ashamed, rightly  
dividing the word of truth. (2 Timothy 2:15)

Your life experiences - your upbringing, schooling, job or military service, various circumstances, and other things you observe and learn along the way are also part of your preparation.

**Circumstances are your pulpit  
Use them to glorify God**

## Guiding Lights

You are my lamp, Lord; my God illuminates  
the darkness around me. (Psalm 18:28)

You have lampposts to guide you along the way. First is **God's Word**. The Bible is your instruction book for living the Christian life. David was a devoted student of Scripture. He knew what God had done for His people and that God keeps His word. He knew God's promises and even wrote songs (psalms) about them. *"I love You, O Lord, my source of strength! The Lord is my high ridge, my stronghold, my deliverer ... I call upon the Lord, who is worthy of praise, and I was delivered from my enemies"* (Psalm 18:1-3).

The second lamppost is **Circumstances**. For example, perhaps the university you were hoping to attend turned down your application, but you were accepted at another school. When the plans you are counting on go awry, it is because God has other - better - plans for you. These things are not just happenstance in your life. God closes doors and opens others. It is one of the ways that He guides you. There are no coincidences or accidents in a Christian's life.

**The Holy Spirit** is the third lamppost. He gives you peace and contentment when you are on course and living God's plan. 1 Samuel 16:13 tells us that when David was anointed, *"the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward."* The Holy Spirit was given to only a few Old Testament believers for a special purpose. In the Church Age, as a believer in Christ, you have God the Holy Spirit permanently indwelling you to mentor, teach, empower and guide you.

The Holy Spirit will teach you all things, and  
bring to your remembrance all that I said to  
you. (John 14:26)

I, even I, am the one who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake, and I will not remember your sins. (Isaiah 43:25)

**Rebound is a necessity to  
move forward in your spiritual life**

Don't get the idea that David was perfect. When you read more about David in the Bible, you discover that he was a great king and a victorious commander, but he also failed, sinned, and even committed adultery and terrible crimes, including murder. How then could God say, "*I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will?*" (Acts 13:22).

The answer is that David consistently confessed his sins to God and got back on track. "*I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I did not hide; I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,' and You forgave the guilt of my sin*" (Psalm 32:5).

David suffered greatly from self-induced misery and under divine discipline because of his misdeeds, but he always recognized his sins, confessed them to the Father, and was restored to fellowship with God. In this way, he was able to get back on course, restore momentum in his spiritual life, and fulfill God's purpose for his life.

When you sin, you lose fellowship with God and you lose the filling and empowerment of the Holy Spirit. Confession of your sins to the Father is the solution. Your sins are forgiven, fellowship with God is restored, and the power of the Holy Spirit is regained.

Forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.  
(Philippians 3:13-14)

## BASICS FOR CHRISTIAN PARENTS

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

### #1 Responsibility

As a parent or a grandparent, your job is to strengthen and protect the souls of your precious children and grandchildren. You do this by planting the Word of God in their souls' mentality starting at a very early age.

Christian parents are mandated to evangelize their children. First, tell them about God. Bring them to God consciousness. Then, give them the gospel. Make sure they understand how they can live with God forever in heaven. As you nurture them spiritually, develop in them why they need the Word of God.

Parents must instill a respect for God in their children's lives. Some of the ways to do this are family prayers at meals and Bible reading. Speak of God and His Word in your normal conversation. Share Scripture with them. Teach them promises from the Word and explain how to use them by connecting Biblical principles.

*“With respect to the promise of God, he [Abraham] did not waiver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform”* (Rom 4:20-21). Teach your children the concept of God's policy of grace. Be sure they know God sustains their life every day and that everything they have comes from Him.

## Wrong priorities have consequences

When Dad and Mom don't place a priority on their own spiritual life, but instead prioritize their children's entertainment, sports, pets and after-school activities, then it is no wonder that the children see no need to seek God's will as adults. Their parents never did. They trained them with sports competition but never took time to sit down and pray with them, never took time to study the Bible with them, never took them to church. They were always on the go, always trying to make sure they were happy through what the world offers - experiences, people and circumstances.

Perhaps you have taught your child Biblical principles. What happens when a believing son or daughter turns away from what you taught them when they were younger and are now on the My Way Highway?

Maybe they went off from high school and were recruited into the cosmic system. They moved out from beneath the umbrella of your protection and provision and abandoned the Biblical standards they learned at home. They arrogantly assume that they are smarter than God and you, and that all that "Bible stuff" is just hot air.

**They are responsible for their decisions, the principle of volitional responsibility, and they can expect discipline from God.** *"My son, do not scorn the Lord's discipline or give up when He corrects you. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves and chastises every son He accepts. Endure your suffering as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is there that a father does not discipline?"* (Hebrews 12:5-7).

If your son or daughter rejects what you taught them, take comfort in knowing they cannot lose their salvation. Keep praying for them to respond to God's discipline and return to their spiritual lives. Don't try to argue or debate with them.

## **Do not allow your children to steal your joy**

Trust in the Lord. Pray and acknowledge Him. Key verses for me are Proverbs 3:5-6, *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.”*

## **Pray for your children**

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.  
(James 1:5)

As parents, ask for guidance in the teaching, training and discipline of your children, and pray for them. Intercede to the Lord for their protection and well-being, for their spiritual growth and application of Biblical principles, and that they fulfill the destiny that God has designed for them. *“Pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus”* (1 Thessalonians 5:17-18).

## **Patience avoids frustrations and emotional sins**

Part of patience is having forbearance under stress, under provocation, or under indignity. I can assure you that you will experience these things when you are a parent. Being patient includes being in control of your emotions and having a relaxed mental attitude. When your teenager angrily shouts “I hate you!” how do you react? You can become angry and frustrated and yell back at them, or you can keep your cool and stay patient. You are the adult. Exercise self-restraint and do not hastily discipline. Handle the problem in a rational, reasonable and appropriate way with impersonal love.

## **Forgiveness**

One of the most familiar family stories in the Bible is Jesus' parable of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15:11-32. Jesus used the family dynamic as an illustration of God's gracious forgiveness of His children when they return to Him after going astray. The story demonstrates the attitude of grace and forgiveness that parents need when their children disobey or rebel. Correct and discipline them when appropriate, and forgive them and love them. They are still your children.

The process for Forgiveness: Forgive the person; Forget the deed; and Forge on in your spiritual life and parenting.

### **As goes your spiritual life so go your family and your nation**

Hosea 4:6 tells us, *"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being My priest. Since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children."* While this warning was addressed to Israel just before they fell and went into exile in 721 B.C., the principle is just as real for national entities today.

It is critical that you have a consistently advancing spiritual life so that your children will have freedom in the future. National degeneration is a result of Christians' failure to anchor their spiritual life in the Word of God. If you find no time for Bible study in your daily routine, you are guaranteeing that your children and grandchildren will not have the blessings of God on their future and the future of their country.

### **Your spiritual life is your priority, parents**

I urge you to prioritize your spiritual life by staying filled with the Holy Spirit and by getting under the ministry of a well-qualified pastor who can shepherd your soul and lead you to spiritual maturity. One sound pastor-teacher is much more valuable than any political leader. Our ministry in this life is not to promote a political party or to make the world a better place, but to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ and lift Him up to others.

Thus says the Lord, “Cursed is the man who trusts in mankind and makes flesh his strength, and whose heart turns away from the Lord ... Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord and whose trust is the Lord.”  
(Jeremiah 17:5,7)

Be aware of the standard you are setting for your children. The best training aid is leading by example. Demonstrate the Christian life by expressing divine viewpoint thinking through your words and actions. Deal with your children in love and grace, including when you have to discipline them.

**Time doesn't shout  
it just runs out - sooner than you think**

Do not wait until your children are older to begin establishing a relationship. Cuddle and talk to your babies, not just baby talk but properly formed words and sentences. Your child learns how to think from you and learns language from you. If you are to have rapport with your teenager, you must begin while they are still young. Spend time with them, talk with them, explain how to respond to people and circumstances, listen, read to them, play with them, and teach them. They will be grown and gone before you know it.

## **Reminders for Mom and Dad**

- Model the Christian spiritual life.
- Just as you should use impersonal love to each other, so also to your children, for they will try your patience.
- Parent with a unified purpose. Don't argue in front of your children. Avoid criticizing. Be consistent, fair, and keep your sense of humor.
- Think about how your behavior will affect the spiritual lives of your children and their relationship with God.
- Wayward children can be reached through the love and grace of God. Never lose faith.
- Every problem has a solution stated in the Bible.
- Any mistakes you may have made as a parent can always be forgiven in Christ Jesus.

### **It is not too late**

Speaking of mistakes, do you worry that you have failed as a spouse or as a parent because of your own poor decisions or wrong or hurtful actions or even because of circumstances you couldn't control? What if you are separated from your family or are alienated from loved ones? It is never too late.

You can't turn back time to get a do-over. Even if you are never able to reunite, mend a broken relationship or resume responsibility for loved ones, as long as you are alive, God still has a plan and purpose for you.

One of the most powerful things you can do is pray for your family. Communicate with your spouse, children and parents, if possible, and let them know that you are growing spiritually and changing through your study of the Word of God. Tell them that God loves them, and will care for them.

**Mature spiritually**  
**Your family will be blessed by association**

## Essentials for Christian Parents

**Stay filled with the Holy Spirit** to maintain fellowship with God through the frequent use of the rebound technique, which is confession of sin through silent prayer to God the Father. *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”* (1 John 1:9).

This is the power  
for your spiritual life and for parenting

**Learn to think with the mind of Jesus Christ** by studying the Bible under the ministry of a well-qualified pastor and applying it. *“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus”* (Philippians 2:5).

This is the truth  
and your guidebook for parenting

**Use what you have learned from Scripture** in every decision and action, including the upbringing of your precious children. *“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work”* (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

This is your wisdom  
for living and parenting

**Execute a maturing spiritual life.** This will glorify God and have lasting impact on your family and nation.

This is your legacy

## Corporate Witnesses

A marriage between two spiritually maturing believers in the Church Age is the highest Christian service. Why? Because they are corporate witnesses for God in the angelic conflict, the invisible spiritual warfare we're in. *"So that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the Church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord"* (Ephesians 3:10-11).

At the start of this book we talked about Satan's first attacks on the human race were against volition and God's design for the family. Satan is condemned to spend eternity in the Lake of Fire; but God in His grace granted him an appeal process which is playing out now.

The testimony against Satan during this appeal has three witnesses: the Lord Jesus Christ during His time on earth, the witness of believers who use their volition to learn and execute God's protocol plan, and the corporate witness of Christian marriages.

Marriage is the first corporation in human history. The divine laws of Christian marriage demand exceptional integrity and virtue. A man and woman united in marriage and in their spiritual advance is an incredibly strong witness in testimony against Satan.

**We have become a theater to the universe, both to angels as well as mankind. (1 Corinthians 4:9)**

Marriage has been an issue in Satan's appeal since the first man and woman failed. Satan contends that if the first marriage failed in perfect environment, no marriage can succeed.

You, spiritually maturing parents and grandparents, prove otherwise. Your corporate witness is recorded evidence against Satan's appeal.

## YOUR FAMILY LEGACY SHINING HIS LIGHT

The Bible tells us of many notable families who had impact on history and were instruments in furthering God's plan of salvation for the human race. They serve as wonderful examples of faith - families such as Noah's, who built and entered the ark. Families that trusted God against all odds like Abraham and Sarah. Families that brought glory to God including Mary and Joseph.

All are great heroes of faith. I encourage you to read Hebrews chapter 11, and then go to the Old Testament and read the accounts of each of the great believers mentioned in this "*by faith*" chapter.

Our challenges may be different than those the Biblical families faced, but God remains the same. He is forever faithful.

You and your family can be heroes of faith and have historical impact through the ages. How? "*Faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the preached word of Christ*" (Romans 10:17). Here Paul is saying that your faith grows as you learn God's Word under the teaching of a well-qualified pastor.

I have come as Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness. (John 12:46)

The light energy that believers possess comes from the filling of the Holy Spirit plus the dynamics of the Word of God stored in the soul, because His Word is alive and powerful.

As you and your family grow spiritually, you become beacons of God's Light to a lost and sightless world.

Listen to the words of our Lord about being faithful and shining His Light: *“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven”* (Matthew 5:14-16).

**Jesus Christ’s words are a call to each of us to shine His Light and be beacons of the truth and hope that come only through Him.** We must remain faithful to Him and His Word so that we may shine the light of the glorious Gospel and call people to salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

You are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light (for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth).  
(Ephesians 5:8-9)

Nothing would please me more than to know that you men have resolved to be the loving husband, father and leader your family needs by advancing to spiritual maturity, living the unique spiritual life that God has designed for you.

I would be so happy to hear that you women have dedicated yourselves to being the loving wife and the caring mom who puts God first in your life and allows nothing to take precedence over raising your children in grace and in the knowledge of God’s Word.

Your duty as Christian parents is to lead your children to the Lord, teach them the Word of God, and instill in them the importance of growing spiritually so they may enjoy God’s incredible blessings and their beacons may also shine bright.

This will be your enduring legacy.

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# GOD'S PROBLEM SOLVING DEVICES

REBOUND

FILLING OF THE  
HOLY SPIRIT

FAITH-REST DRILL

GRACE  
ORIENTATION

DOCTRINAL  
ORIENTATION

PERSONAL SENSE  
OF DESTINY

PERSONAL LOVE  
FOR GOD

IMPERSONAL  
LOVE FOR ALL  
MANKIND

SHARING THE  
HAPPINESS  
OF GOD

OCCUPATION  
WITH CHRIST

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If you, or a loved one, are incarcerated  
and want to study the Word of God contact:

### **PHILIPPI FREEDOM MINISTRY**

PO Box 552  
Chesterfield, Missouri 63006-0552  
philippifreedomministry.org  
314-435-2957

Philippi Freedom Ministry presents the Gospel message of Faith Alone in Christ Alone and teaches Basic Bible Doctrines to those who are incarcerated. The purpose of this ministry is to make doctrinal Bible teaching available without charge or obligation.



**RICK HUGHES**, founder and President of Rick Hughes Evangelistic Ministries, Inc., communicates clear and concise Biblical principles for people to apply in their lives. For over 50 years, Rick has presented the truth to thousands of students and spoken at hundreds of schools and churches. He has authored books and training publications and hosts *The FLOT Line*, a weekly radio broadcast that is also available as an archived podcast library. All of these resources are available free of charge on his website, [rickhughesministries.org](http://rickhughesministries.org).

A native of Birmingham, Alabama, Rick was raised in a modest, single-parent home. He distinguished himself through excellence in athletics, being named to the High School All-American football team and setting state records in the shot put and discus. The University of Florida offered Rick a full football scholarship, but his SAT scores were too low. Challenged by a coach to overcome this failure, Rick applied himself in the classroom as he had done on the field. He seized the challenge, earned a second chance, and entered the University of Alabama as a football player under the training of the prestigious coach Paul “Bear” Bryant. The team won a national championship that year. After just one successful year, however, Rick quit school and drifted down *the my way highway*. Rick emphasizes that *bad decisions limit future options*, and that *God gave you two ends: one to sit on and one to think with. Success in life depends on which end you use. Heads you win—tails you lose*. Many of Rick’s personal experiences vividly illustrate these principles.

Rick’s turning point came when he accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as his Savior, by faith alone in Christ alone. This is the most important decision in your life, also. Rick’s decision opened a new path, not of football, but one personally designed for him by God. Through the ministry of Berachah Church in Houston, Texas, and its pastors, R. B. Thieme, Jr. and now R. B. Thieme III, Rick learned principles and promises of God’s Word that directed him into a life of Christian ministry. Rick’s life is proof that when you leave your own agenda behind and walk into God’s plan, you can have fulfillment and happiness beyond your imagination. “For with God, nothing

### **FAMILY—An Enduring Legacy**

This book addresses the growing assault on God’s design for the family and calls readers back to the unchanging truth of His Word. Beginning with the issue of human volition—our God-given freedom to choose—Rick Hughes shows how spiritual decisions shape individuals, families, and even a nation’s stability. Rather than a parenting manual, this book presents Biblical principles that clarify roles, responsibilities, and the blessings God intended for the family, encouraging readers to develop spiritual discernment and establish priorities that lead to lasting strength and purpose. As individuals and families grow spiritually, they become beacons of truth and hope in a confused world, reflecting the light of Jesus Christ and leaving a legacy that endures beyond a lifetime. “You are the light of the world ... Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 5:14-16).