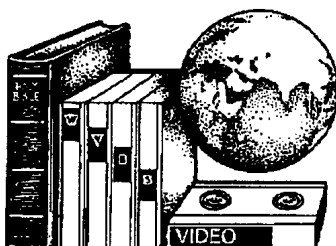


World Video Bible School®

Established 1986



MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY



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MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY

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MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY INFORMATION AND REQUIREMENTS

- I. General:
 - A. Instructor: Don Ruhl.
 - B. This course consists of 12 lessons on 4 DVDs.
 - C. Each class is approximately 38 minutes long.
- II. Course Description:
 - A. This course is an in-depth study of Marriage and the Family.
 - B. Much attention will be given to the practical application of the Bible in family matters.
- III. Purpose of the Course:
 - A. To use the word of God to help build stronger marriages and families.
- IV. Course Objectives. It is a fact of life that we all do better and accomplish more when we set goals for ourselves (Phil. 3:13,14). Accordingly, we have established the following goals for this course and ask each student to do the same:
 - A. To learn some of the important things which God says about marriage and the family in the Bible.
 - B. To learn some important ways to build a child's character by doing such things as the following:
 - 1. Recognizing that only God has all of the answers.
 - 2. Having effective family devotionals.
 - 3. Using the word of God to shape and mold children's hearts.
 - 4. Exerting the proper parental influence.
 - 5. Training a child up in the way he/she should go.

V. Course Schedule:

DVD #1

- Class # 1 The heartbeat of marriage (Gen. 2:18-25).
- Class # 2 The destruction and reconstruction of a marriage.
- Class # 3 Building a stronger family (Mal. 2:14).

DVD #2

- Class # 4 The honor and beauty of marriage (1 Pet. 3:1-7).
- Class # 5 The greatness of married love (Song of Solomon).
- Class # 6 The concerns of a Christian father.

DVD #3

- Class # 7 The concerns of a Christian mother.
- Class # 8 Building your child's character from the inside out - Who has all the answers?
- Class # 9 Building... - Family devotionals.

DVD #4

- Class # 10 Building... - From the inside out.
- Class # 11 Building... - Proper parental influence.
- Class # 12 Building... - Training.

VI. Instructional Materials:

A. Required:

1. Bible.
2. Personal notes from lectures.

VII. Course Procedures and Requirements:

- A. The course will be formal lectures on video tape.
- B. Each student must keep a notebook. The notebook must be neat and well organized. The notes must be full and understandable so that they will be a valuable tool for years to come.

VIII. Grading: As set by the local instructor.

MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY

INSTRUCTIONS FOR LOCAL ADMINISTRATOR OR PERSON TAKING THIS COURSE

I. Introduction:

- A. We want to begin by expressing our appreciation to you for your interest in the Lord and His word.
- B. The purpose of this set of instructions is to help you administer or take this course entitled, Marriage and the Family.
- C. In addition to the video tapes, the following material is available for this course:
 - 1. An abbreviated set of student class notes. These notes give all the major points, many of the minor points and most of the Scriptures used by the instructor on the video tapes. The notes follow the same outline that the instructor used in presenting the material on the tapes. Space has been provided for the student to make their own hand-written notes as they view the video, thus obtaining a complete set of notes. For the cost of this material, please refer to our current catalog.
- D. This is intended to be an in-depth study of God's word. The instructor has done his best to provide high-quality, biblically accurate instruction. We believe that God's word is powerful and that we need to teach it in all of its beauty, simplicity and power! That is our pledge to you.
- E. But, for you or others to obtain the most benefit from this study, each participant will have to put forth effort. For example, we encourage each student to do at least the following:
 - 1. Bring your Bible and read the verses as the instructor discusses them in class.
 - 2. Pay close attention to what the instructor says.
 - 3. Bring pencil and paper and take notes during each class.
 - 4. Study your notes between class sessions.

5. Search the Scriptures daily to determine whether the things being taught on these tapes are in accordance with God's word (Acts 17:11).
 6. If you miss a class, try to make the class up by viewing it at another time, preferably before the next class meets.
 7. Remember 2 Tim. 2:15, where God tells us to study to show ourselves approved unto Him, thus being workmen having no need to be ashamed before Him because we handle His word properly!
- F. Each class session on the video tape is approximately thirty eight minutes long. This should allow enough time at the beginning and/or end of each class period for prayers, announcements, recitation of memory work, etc. There are three classes on each two hour tape.
- II. For whom is this course intended? Generally speaking, this course is intended for anyone who wants to **GROW** as a Christian!
- III. Goals for the course. It is a fact of life that we all do better and accomplish more when we set goals for ourselves (Phil 3:13,14). Accordingly, we have established the following goals for this course and ask each student to do the same:
- A. To learn some of the important things which God says about marriage and the family in the Bible.
 - B. To learn some important ways to build a child's character by doing such things as the following:
 1. Recognizing that only God has all of the answers.
 2. Having effective family devotionals.
 3. Using the word of God to shape and mold children's hearts.
 4. Exerting the proper parental influence.
 5. Training a child up in the way he/she should go.
- IV. Overview of the course. See # V of the Information and Requirements sheet for this course.
- V. How to obtain the best use of the video tapes. If you will implement the following suggestions, your tapes will last longer and the quality of the picture should be better.

- A. The tracking lever on your VCR may need to be adjusted for you to receive the best possible quality picture. This lever is normally on the front face of the VCR. Slowly adjust the lever in both directions to see which setting produces the best picture.
 - B. At the end of each class, stop the tape, forward it to the beginning of the next class and eject the tape. The tape is now ready for the next viewing. No rewind or fast forward is necessary. Rewind at the end of the tape only.
 - C. Never leave video tapes in the VCR when not in use. If the tape is left in the VCR, there is a good chance that it will be stretched, thus causing distortion.
 - D. Always check the sound volume before the class or your personal study begins. In addition, for large classes such as in an auditorium, it may be necessary to place a microphone near the speaker of the television monitor. This is so that the sound can be carried through the auditorium or other sound system rather than depending solely upon the television speaker.
 - E. Please see the card in the storage case for each video tape for additional instructions on proper care and storage of the tapes.
- VI. This is just one in a series of courses that covers all of the books of the Bible and many Bible-related subjects. If there are any questions, comments or suggestions about this material we would appreciate it if you would contact us at the **World Video Bible School** in Maxwell, Texas, 78656-4231, U.S.A. Our goal is to exalt the Lord, His word, and His church, not ourselves. Thus, we want to make any improvements that we can which will result in God and His beloved Son being glorified, His powerful word being spread and precious souls being snatched from the wicked one before it is everlastingly too late!!

THE HEARTBEAT OF MARRIAGE (GENESIS 2:18-25)

- I. GOD COULD HAVE CREATED A MATE FOR ADAM WHEN HE WAS CREATED.
 - A. But God wanted Adam (and Eve too) to observe something:
 - 1. Their similarities.
 - 2. Their deep need for each other.
 - B. They are similar and do similar things, but also have complementary roles like in singing.
- II. YOU WILL NOTICE THAT THESE SIX POINTS ARE BASICALLY SYNONYMS.
- III. IN THIS PASSAGE RECOGNIZE GOD AS THE CREATOR OF MARRIAGE.
 - A. So follow His plan and pattern for marriage and fulfillment will be attained.
- IV. COMPANIONSHIP - (2:18).
 - A. An initial observation.
 - 1. It is not good for man to be alone.
 - a. First time during creation week was this pronouncement made.
 - 2. Why it is not good for a man to be alone:
 - a. Companionship is intrinsic with a man.
 - b. A man needs a woman to support him.
 - c. A man needs a woman to understand him.
 - B. The meaning of “a help meet.”
 - 1. Margin “answering to.”
 - a. Not meaning simply doing everything he says.

- b. Comparable, compatible, able to meet the needs of the other, whereas animals are not capable.
- 2. They are designed to improve each other - which is what companionship does.
 - a. Prov. 27:17
 - b. 1 Pet. 3:7 - "joint-heirs of the grace of life."
- 3. She is a help.
 - a. She must render herself a helper.
 - b. He must nurture, train, cherish, etc., her as a helper.

V. BEST FRIEND - (2:19,20).

- A. Is a dog really man's best friend?
 - 1. Is a dolphin actually close to man's intelligence?
 - 2. Is a monkey truly closely related to a man?
 - 3. Is there any animal that even comes close to being a suitable companion?
- B. Only woman is a true friend.
 - 1. Hearing God state v. 18 must have impressed Adam.
 - 2. God was allowing Adam to observe for himself the insufficiency of animals.
 - 3. So he would appreciate the friendship of Eve.
 - 4. He named them with appropriate names realizing they were not compatible to him. Not one did he name "woman."

VI. RESPECT - (2:21,22).

- A. Woman was taken out of man (1 Cor. 11:7-12).
 - 1. Therefore she should respect him, for she is a part of him.

- a. If she degrades him, she degrades herself.
 - b. If she thinks that he is not worthy of her respect, then she is only reflecting upon herself.
- 2. Similarly he should respect her, for again she is a part of him.
 - a. When he builds her up it is not a disgraceful or embarrassing thing.
 - b. By respecting his wife he builds a happy relationship.
 - c. Eph. 5:28,29
- B. With respect for each other it is a joy to be in each other's presence.
 - 1. Do you not avoid people who are disrespectful toward you?
 - 2. Recognizing she has a deep part in man.
 - 3. By seeing her as an extension of himself, he respects her.
- C. She was made (built) from his rib.
 - 1. N. B. Hardeman's (former president of Freed-Hardeman College) thoughts below:

THE BEGINNING OF MARRIAGE

"When the Spirit of God brooded over the garden of Eden, it was observed that the fowls of the air and the beasts of the field had each its respective mate, but that man for whom all else was created was left alone. Thus as a hermit he sighed until woman smiled upon him.

Out of the dust of the earth man was created. He was akin to the hard rocks and the strong fibers of the trees, able to suffer and endure. When it was no longer good that he should be alone, woman, the sweetest, dearest, and best of all creation was wrought into existence. She was not made from man's head to be his ruler, nor from his heel, to be trampled under his foot, but from his side, that she might be loved and protected by him. She was then as pure as the lily unvisited by the morning sun, as beautiful as the full-blown rose, as modest as the daisy of the field or the drooping violet, as sweet as the pink, all covered with dew, as graceful as the fern, and as trusting as the clinging vine."

2. God could have created her like He did Adam.
3. God took the time to cause Adam to sleep, opened his flesh, took out a rib, closed flesh, etc.
4. Adam gave of himself; there was literally a part of him in her (when work or give for something we say “a part of me is in...”).

D. God brought her to the man.

1. Mt. 19:6b.
2. Prov. 19:14.
3. Prov. 18:22.
4. Therefore respect each other.
 - a. Rejection is not against each other, but God (1 Thess. 4:8).
 - b. How do you feel when someone rejects your gift?

VII. UNITY - (2:23).

A. She is an equal human being.

1. Thus Gal. 3:28.
2. She is not a slave whose only concern is her husband.
3. She has many, if not all, of the same needs as her husband and he must meet them.

B. Adam recognized her similarities.

1. He had observed the animals and even named them, but something was missing.
2. He named her, showing his recognition of her similarities.
3. “This is now...”

VIII. CLEAVING - (2:24).

A. A man leaves his parents.

1. He takes on his own responsibility and parents must let go.
 2. He does not forsake them.
- B. He cleaves to his wife.
1. He clings to her as if he never wants to lose her.
 2. How do they cling to each other?
 - a. By building companionship, being best friends, being respectful, maintaining unity, determining to cleave, not being ashamed.
 - b. By being careful to please each other (1 Cor. 7:33,34) ,i.e., think about it.
 - c. By giving each other a high priority.
 3. It would seem that this is natural, for they do it before marriage.
- C. They become one flesh.
1. A by-product of this is their children.
 2. They become as one person:
 - a. Goals, joys, heartaches, money, possessions, everything that was separate now becomes united.
 3. Technically a man and a woman become one flesh when married, but in spirit they become one flesh when they cleave to one another.
 - a. Some remain married, knowing divorce is wrong, but they are miserable.
 - b. Though not divorced they are still wrong if not cleaving.

IX. UNASHAMED - (2:25).

- A. The state of nakedness between husband and wife is God-created!
1. It is man who has perverted it by displaying it publicly.

2. They were ashamed after sinning.
- B. They were not ashamed to be with each other.
 1. They knew that each was the gift from God.
 2. Not only should there be no shame in private, but when with each other in public should be unashamed.
 3. When spouse is not present with you and your friends, do not be ashamed of him/her.

Conclusion:

- I. NOW IT WAS "VERY GOOD" (Gen. 1:31).
- II. NO PROVISIONS FOR DIVORCE.
- III. THIS IS THE HEARTBEAT OF MARRIAGE".
 - A. Being a description and explanation of the beginning it had to be the center, the philosophy of marriage.
 - B. Gain a new appreciation for your spouse which is what God did for Adam.

THE DESTRUCTION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF A MARRIAGE

I. THE MOST INTIMATE OF RELATIONSHIPS:

- A. Was designed by God (Gen.2:18).
- B. Hence it does not come without instructions, e.g., Song of Solomon.
- C. Use those instructions.

II. DIVORCE IS OUT OF CONTROL.

- A. Many married couples are:
 - 1. Miserable.
 - 2. Dissatisfied.
 - 3. Thinking happiness is unattainable.
- B. What destroys marriages?

III. SOME OF THE DESTROYERS OF MARRIAGES.

- A. Immaturity
 - 1. Gen. 2:24 speaks of a man and by implication, a woman.
 - 2. But some have not left their parents in spirit.
- B. God is not the center, hence:
 - 1. Do not seek biblical answers.
 - 2. No desire to work it out, or be committed as He desires.
- C. Failure to understand commitment.
- D. External influences:
 - 1. Friends.
 - 2. Media.

3. Family.
 4. Secularism.
 5. Feminist movement.
 6. False concept of manhood.
- E. Drugs, including alcohol.
- F. Lack of trust.
- G. Lack of kindness.
- H. Financial pressures.
- I. There is one more which is sometimes the basis of preceding reasons.

IV. HOW THE SEEDS OF DESTRUCTION ARE OFTEN PLANTED BEFORE THE MARRIAGE.

- A. When relationships before marriage are on physical basis:
1. They show disregard for God's plan.
 2. Thus they will not experience happiness as God intended.
- B. 80% of live-in couples, once they marry, end up divorced. Why?
1. After all, aren't they trying on the shoe before buying it?
 - a. Dating and engagement, apart from physical, is the "trying on."
 - b. Do you go to battlefield before deciding to join army?
 - c. Similarly cannot "know" in sexual sense until vows made.
 2. Live-in couples show a disrespect for institution of marriage.
 - a. Their respect is not heightened after marriage.
 - b. May become more disrespectful:
 - 1) Violate one law flippantly, easy to do it with others.

- 2) Marriage is more work, commitment, time, sacrifice, etc.
- 3) Does not meet expectations.

V. THERE ARE GOOD REASONS THAT VIRGINITY BEFORE MARRIAGE IS GOD'S WAY.

- A. Fornicators will be in Hell (Rev. 21:8).
- B. Fornication invites physical problems (Rom. 1:24):
 1. Pregnancy.
 2. Disease.
- C. Fornication desecrates the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:13-20).
- D. Fornication says:
 1. "I have a better way than God's way."
 - a. Prov. 16:25.
 - b. Jer. 10:23.
 2. Physical knowledge comes before spiritual and emotional and intellectual knowledge; but physical can be built only on truth.
- E. Fornication makes sex the goal rather than a by-product of committed and knowledgeable love.
- F. Fornication violates:
 1. Trust.
 2. Patience.
 3. Self-control.
 4. Future spouse, even if the same.

THE RECONSTRUCTION OF A MARRIAGE

- I. MARRIAGE IS THE SECOND MOST IMPORTANT ACTIVITY IN LIFE, (BEHIND BEING A CHRISTIAN), HAVING BEEN INSTITUTED BY GOD.
 - A. Thus He has things to say about it.
 - B. Much of the Bible is directed to it, because the Bible deals with two commands (Mt. 22:34-40) and marriage falls under the latter.
 - C. Therefore, four questions must be answered affirmatively to reconstruct marriage (the first three are from brother Gus Nichols):
 - 1. Do you want to do what is right?
 - 2. Do you want to do what is right right now?
 - 3. Do you want to let the Scriptures determine what is right?
 - 4. Do you want to read the Scriptures daily to learn what is right?
- II. REPENT OF FORNICATION (Lk. 13:3).
 - A. If married, do not glorify past fornication: forget about it.
 - B. If unmarried, stop and perhaps the Lord will be merciful and rebuild your marriage.
- III. LEARN BIBLICAL LOVE (1 Cor. 13:4-7).
 - A. Thus renounce worldly concepts of love.
 - B. Recognize true expressions of love.
- IV. SEEK THE LORD (2 Chronicles 7:14).
 - A. It is essential to understand that marriages, or rather people, crumble when one or both have left the Lord by:
 - 1. Failure to meditate on Scripture twice daily (Ps. 1:2f).
 - 2. Failure to ask for His directions (Jos. 9:14).
 - 3. Failure to keep His commands, namely, the two greatest (Mt. 22:34-40).

- a. See the chart at Appendix A.
 - b. Sin disrupts love for God, affecting marriage (Mal. 2:14-16).
 - c. Sin disrupts love for neighbor, affecting marriage (Mt. 19: 3-9, esp. v. 8).
 - d. All the law and all situations of life are built on these two commandments, so violation will hinder normal operations, including marriage.
- B. Seeking the Lord to reconstruct is not coming to worship once a week, but an entire change of life (Rom. 12:1,2 and entire chapter).
 - 1. Sitting in services is not a mystical, superstitious, holy “zap” that drives away all problems without repentance and dedication.
 - 2. Submission to His will daily; solving problems in His appointed way.
 - a. Daily meditation.
 - b. Daily prayer.
 - c. Making His thoughts second nature.
- C. The Lord has all the power, solutions and answers for success in marriage, for He created it.
 - 1. Prov. 3:5,6.
 - a. To receive His plans of reconstruction there must be total trust of His plan.
 - b. If it be acknowledged that His way is being followed, then He will direct.
 - 2. Prov. 16:3.
 - a. Isa. 55:10,11.
 - b. Allow His word to work freely within you (1 Thess. 2:13), without any hindrances (2 Thess. 3:1).
 - 3. It is recognizing the philosophies of men as deficient which drives us to the Lord:

- a. Jer. 10:23.
 - b. Ps. 60:11,12.
- D. Seeking the Lord implies that a person has crucified self and is letting Jesus live within (Gal. 2:20; 4:19; Rom. 8:29).
 - 1. Jesus has a genuine desire to make things right; He died for us that we might be right with God.
 - 2. Therefore, we should have the same desire.
- V. A GENUINE DESIRE TO MAKE THINGS RIGHT.
 - A. To reconstruct a marriage implies it has been destroyed.
 - 1. Genuine desire to make things right ought to be self-evident.
 - 2. It is sincerity which prompts reconstruction and seeking the Lord.
 - B. If there is no genuine desire, it will become obvious.
 - 1. Mt. 12:34 - by words or lack of them.
 - 2. Acts 26:20.
 - 3. Detected in every action or lack of them.
 - C. The Lord will work, and the spouse will work, when genuine desire is manifest.
 - 1. 2 Chron. 7:14.
 - 2. Phil 2:1-4.
 - a. Five blessings enjoyed by cooperation.
 - b. Desire to make things right is strong enough to put concerns of the spouse first.
 - 1) Even before any desire shown by other.
 - 2) True desire for right does not concern self with who goes first.

- D. Obviously, things will not be made right until there is a desire.
 - 1. God does not force.
 - 2. Spouse cannot force.
 - 3. Cannot expect things to happen without effort and patience.
- E. 2 Cor. 7:9-12.

VI. OPEN THE LINES OF COMMUNICATION.

- A. The rest of life will be vain, if there is no reconciliation (Mt. 5:23,24).
 - 1. God will not be fooled and will not forgive (Mt. 6:14,15).
 - 2. If one is unable to communicate with the spouse, it may also be difficult with others.
- B. A willingness to communicate demonstrates that one is seeking the Lord, for He wants us to communicate, and one has a genuine desire to make things right.
 - 1. Communication will result when one's spouse is convinced that his or her contributions are valued.
 - 2. Such willingness is motivated by:
 - a. Knowing the Lord and His will for marriage. A communication breakdown will result in a destroyed marriage, offending God, and we do not want to offend Him.
 - b. An earnest desire to bring one's life into harmony with:
 - 1) The Lord's will.
 - 2) The person we must live with until death.
- C. Proper communication - Prov. 25:11
 - 1. Proper communication is not:
 - a. One-sided.
 - b. Telling the other everything he/she does is wrong.

- c. Formulating rebuttal while the other is talking.
- 2. Proper communication is:
 - a. Confession without blaming the other for personal wrong.
 - b. Listening, trying to understand.
 - c. Eph. 4:31,32
 - d. Col. 3:12-15
 - e. Easily entreated.
 - f. Being available.

Conclusion:

- I. RULE OF RECONSTRUCTION OF A MARRIAGE: WHAT WOULD JESUS DO?
- II. FURTHERMORE, SOME CRUCIAL STEPS ARE THE FOLLOWING:
 - A. Repentance.
 - B. Biblical love.
 - C. Seeking the Lord.
 - D. Desire to make things right.
 - E. Opening the lines of communication.

BUILDING A STRONGER FAMILY (MALACHI 2:14)

I. MALACHI 2:10-16.

- A. In verse 14 the prophet gives four essentials that we must recognize and practice in order to prevent divorce, hence to build a strong family.
- B. I will elaborate on those four essentials, giving you the wisdom of God on the proper and smooth functioning of the home.

II. AFTER ANNOUNCING GOD WAS REJECTING THE JEWS' WORSHIP, THE PROPHET EXPLAINED WHY - Mal. 2:14.

III. GOD IS A WITNESS TO YOUR FAMILY AFFAIRS.

- A. God is the Creator of family.
 - 1. God created the home because He saw that man alone was not good. So He created woman (Gen. 2:18) and gave children (Ps. 127).
 - 2. Therefore God knows mankind's needs and how to fulfill them through the home.
- B. He is concerned about its smooth operation.
 - 1. He has given a multitude of commandments, principles, teachings and guidelines for maintaining holy and peaceful relationships, such as the second greatest commandment.
 - 2. Many times in the Word there are direct references to family, as in Deuteronomy, Proverbs, Song of Solomon, Ephesians 5, etc.
 - 3. If it is not operating as He desires, then He addresses the problem as in the text we are studying (Mal. 2:10-16).
- C. He ought to be the center of the home.
 - 1. This only makes sense if He created marriage and provides for its smooth operation.
 - 2. Every man should be aware that God is the head and center of the home.

- D. Therefore, remember He sees and knows all family affairs.
1. The Jews had forgotten this fact, as evidenced by their:
 - a. Idolatry (vv. 10-12).
 - b. Insincerity when worshiping the true God (v. 13).
 - c. Treachery within their families (vv. 14,15).
 - d. Divorces (v. 16).
 2. Every Christian family should remember the following:

Christ is the Head of
this house,
The unseen Guest at
every meal,
The silent Listener to
every conversation.
(Author Unknown)

IV. TREAT ONE ANOTHER KINDLY.

- A. The sin of treachery.
1. Treating one another treacherously violates the second greatest command and since religion and life hang upon the first and second greatest commandments, then a multitude of other commands will also be broken.
 2. In the home kindness is expected, therefore treachery can hurt deeper than if done by people in the world.
- B. It is natural to act kindly toward family (cf. v. 10).
1. Lacking natural affection, according to Romans 1:28-31, is a sign of a reprobate, because a person has refused to have God in mind.
 2. Second Timothy 3:1-3 shows lack of natural affection is a manifestation of grievous times, because such a one is consumed with self-love.
 3. Family members should naturally be the ones we think of first when meeting people's needs.

- a. A couple marries because they enjoy being kind to each other.
 - b. They have children usually because, again, kindness is ruling their hearts.
- C. It is natural to act kindly by keeping responsibilities to family instead of divorcing.
 - 1. Divorce is the quickest way to cut off kindness permanently, or rather kindness ceased and bitterness grew so that divorce seemed the only way to escape treachery.
 - 2. Divorce, in most cases, is an attempt to avoid responsibility because there is no longer a desire to be kind.
 - 3. The opposite, then, is to ensure your family you care for them by keeping the responsibilities they expect from you.
- D. Treat one another kindly in the daily affairs of life.
 - 1. 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a explains how love or kindness is a daily affair.
 - a. People often think kindness is shown through some one-time sacrificial act, which is the point of verses 1-3.
 - b. He who finds daily acts of kindness irritating will not do great sacrifices later.
 - 2. Families are built strong by:
 - a. Kind words which build each other up (Eph. 4:29).
 - b. Common courtesy (2 Cor. 8:21).

V. BUILD COMPANIONSHIP.

- A. A man and a woman marry, rear children and cherish grandchildren because of the desire for companionship.
 - 1. We all desire friends, companions to whom we can reveal our inner feelings and with whom we can test our ideas.

2. Such a desire becomes strong enough that in time we desire a permanent and daily experience, and fulfill that desire by forming a family.
- B. It is not good to be alone.
1. Men feel the sorrow of bachelorhood.
 - a. Such sorrow was the experience of the first man and God created a companion for man who was suitable in every way.
 2. Women despise the emptiness of widowhood.
 - a. Perhaps this is why Paul told younger widows to remarry (1 Tim. 5:14).
 - b. Concerning the older widows, the church is told to visit them (Jam. 1:27).
 3. Children are torn up by separation (by death or other means), desertion and neglect.
- C. The second greatest commandment was given to build companionship (Mt. 22:39).
1. Love your wife or husband, parents and children as yourself.
 - a. Family relationships are built when companionship is the bonding force.
 - b. David and Jonathan had an inseparable companionship because they loved the other as his own soul (1 Sam. 18:1, 3; 2 Sam. 1:26).
 2. Whether a Christian is going to keep the second greatest commandment will be tested at home.
 - a. At home we not only build companionships because of the favorable traits we see in the other that are similar to our favorable traits,
 - b. But the companionship also brings us into microscopic view of the other's faults and other unfavorable traits.

- c. In time those faults become glaring spots that can keep us from seeing the formerly desirable things.

- 3. Will we still love our relative even as we wish to be loved?

VI. KEEP AGREEMENTS AND VOWS.

- A. One of the biggest destroyers of families is disappointment.

- 1. And one of the most frequent disappointments is breaking a promise.
- 2. Broken promises send messages to our loved ones, such as, there are more important things for me to do and speaking the truth and living it are not really important.

- B. Keep your word.

- 1. This is fundamental to Christianity.
 - a. James 5:12 says failure to keep your word is to fall under the judgment of God.
 - b. Breaking agreements, ignoring vows and neglecting promises is sin (Eccl. 5:2-7).
- 2. Do not promise things just to make one happy for the moment, only to break it later.
- 3. Write it down, or do something to remember what you promised.

- C. Understand the serious nature of fulfilling promises, adhering to agreements and of doing as vowed.

- 1. It is a matter of Heaven and Hell (Psa. 15:1,4).
- 2. God will not overlook broken vows (Eccl. 5:2-6).
- 3. Be a man or woman of faith even as Jephthah was, proving true to his word (Jud. 11).
- 4. Have you considered what you vowed at your wedding?
 - a. First, the couple is asked “_____ will you have this woman/man to be your wedded wife/husband, to live to-

gether after God's ordinance in the holy estate of matrimony? Will you love her/him, comfort her/him, honor and keep her/him in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all others keep yourself only for her/him, so long as you both shall live?"

- b. Then the following vows are made: "I _____ take you _____ to be my wedded wife/husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death parts us, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto I give my vow of marriage."

- 5. It is healthy for a couple to periodically remember promises made and seek to fulfill them.

Conclusion:

- I. Family is one of the sweetest joys this side of Heaven or one of the bitterest disappointments this side of Hell.
 - A. The difference is whether you commit yourself to God's way for the family.
 - B. Walk with God, becoming a part of His family and then you can see how to build your family into a strong one.
 - C. But what blessing is it if a person has a beautiful family, and is not able to spend eternity with one's family in Heaven?

HONOR AND BEAUTY IN MARRIAGE (1 Peter 3:1-7)

I. SUBJECTION - 1 Pet. 3:1.

A. Context:

1. 2:13-17 - subjection to government.
2. 2:18-20 - subjection to employers.
3. 2:21-25 - Christ is an example of subjection.
4. Wives:
 - a. Like Christ did to the Father.
 - b. Even while suffering (1 Pet. 2:20-23).

B. The meaning of subjection: to give yourself to another person (Eph. 5:21).

1. Under the authority of another.
2. Does not mean inferior.
 - a. Jesus is in subjection to the Father (1 Cor. 15:27).
 - b. Jesus is also equal with the Father (Jn. 5:18).
 - c. Similarly, a wife rules the house with her husband (1 Tim. 5:14).
 - d. She has part in decisions, but he has final authority.
 - e. All institutions see the need for final authority.

II. CHASTE BEHAVIOR COUPLED WITH FEAR - 1 Pet. 3:2.

A. Chaste behavior.

1. Faithful to him.
2. Adultery is not found in her life.
3. 1 Pet. 3:16.

B. Fear.

1. Toward husband (Eph. 5:33).
2. Like:
 - a. Of God (1 Pet. 2:17).
 - b. Of government (Rom. 13:3).
 - c. Of sinning (Rom. 6).
3. God works through those in authority:
 - a. Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar.
 - b. Like David did with Saul - separate the person from the position.

III. INWARD ADORNMENT - 1 Pet. 3:3,4.

- A. Woman is the beautiful half of mankind, but her beauty is not only outward, it is also inward (v. 3).
- B. Inward adornment is the true beauty which lasts.
 1. Incorruptible.
 - a. Hair, jewelry, clothes decay.
 - b. Inward can get better.
 - 1) 2 Cor. 4:16.
 - 2) Eph. 4:22-24.
 - 3) Inward affects outward appearance (Prov. 15:13).
 2. Inward adornment is to have a meek spirit.
 - a. Humble, gentle, servant.
 - b. Mt. 23:12 - meekness is God's road to greatness.

- c. 1 Pet. 5:5 - the meek receive grace which helps them through all trials.
 - d. Like Joseph in Egypt, be excited to make others successful, namely, husband.
 - 3. Inward adornment is also having a quiet spirit.
 - a. Jas. 1:19,20.
 - b. Prov. 15:1.
 - c. Boisterous, know-it-all, do-it-all wife:
 - 1) Destroys her home (Prov. 14:1).
 - 2) Turns husband off to the gospel (Rom. 2:24).
 - C. Great price in the sight of God.
 - 1. In your husband's sight also.
 - 2. Keep yourself attractive outwardly (Jer. 2:32; Ex.24:16; Prov. 31:22).
 - 3. But remember what is most important to God and your husband.
- IV. IMITATE HOLY WOMEN OF THE PAST - 1 Pet. 3:5,6.
- A. Study each one:
 - 1. Elizabeth who was righteous with her husband (Lk. 1:5,6).
 - 2. Manoah's wife who sought to be holy with him (Jud. 13).
 - 3. Rachel who was an encourager to Jacob (Gen. 31:16).
 - 4. Ruth who was dedicated to her in-laws (Ruth 1).
 - 5. Priscilla who worked in the kingdom with her husband (Acts 18:26).
 - 6. Hannah who earnestly sought to give her husband a son (1 Sam. 1:11).
 - B. They hoped in God.

1. God and Christ must be first (Lk. 14:26).
- C. Note Sarah especially.
1. Called Abraham “lord”, meaning allowed him to be the leader.
 2. Be a daughter of hers by:
 - a. Doing well:
 - 1) To your family (Prov. 31:12-19).
 - 2) To the poor (Prov. 31:20).
 - b. Not fearing any terror.
 - 1) Do not worry (Mt. 6).
 - 2) Do fear evil influences upon children, but strengthen them in Jesus (1 Pet. 3:13-16).
- V. HUSBANDS, DWELL WITH YOUR WIVES ACCORDING TO KNOWLEDGE - 1 Pet. 3:7.
- A. To not divorce is not enough.
1. God commands a peaceful relationship to be worked out.
 2. He demands dwelling with your wife according to knowledge.
- B. Dwelling with your wife according to knowledge means:
1. To cleave to her (Gen. 2:24).
 2. To promote togetherness (1 Cor. 7:32,33).
 3. To lead her (1 Cor. 9:5; Eph. 5:23).
 4. To render affection to her (1 Cor. 7:3).
 5. To love her (Eph. 5:25,28).
 6. To rejoice in her (Prov. 5:18).
- C. To live with your wife according to knowledge you must learn about her.

VI. GIVE HONOR UNTO THE WOMAN.

A. Honor her by:

1. Thinking of her constantly.
 - a. Song of Solomon 2:14.
 - b. Remember before you married, you were probably consumed in thinking about her.
2. Considering her a best friend.
 - a. Rom. 12:10.
 - b. Partners in everything, so honor her by making her your best friend.
3. Pleasing her.
 - a. Rom. 15:1,2.
 - b. Do you want to consider her as the weaker vessel?
 - c. Then bear her burdens.
 - d. If a wife is not our neighbor, then it has no meaning.
4. Giving her gifts.
 - a. God did it for Jerusalem (Ezek. 16:10-12) and Isaac for Rebekah (Gen. 24:22).
 - b. What wife does not like gifts?
5. Accepting her family and friends.
 - a. Mt. 22:39.
 - b. She would appreciate it and will respect your thoughts.
6. Trusting her.
 - a. Prov. 31:11.

- b. Knowing that you trust her will edify her and cause her to do good.
- 7. Talking to her about your successes and failures.
 - a. She wants to know what is on your heart.
 - b. She can comfort like no other.
- 8. Being concerned about your appearance and actions.
- 9. Involve her in your plans.
 - a. She can offer insight (Mt. 27:19; Gen. 21:12).
 - b. She will gladly submit when she sees you lead and involve her.
- B. Remember how Christ treated the church, so let husbands do to their wives (Eph. 5:25-33).

VII. AS UNTO THE WEAKER VESSEL.

- A. Treat her gently as you would a weak or fragile pot.
- B. In honoring her as the weaker vessel:
 - 1. Provide for her (Eph. 5:29).
 - 2. Protect her (Eph. 5:25).
 - 3. Be proud of her (point of Song of Solomon being written).
 - 4. Cherish during emotional downs (Eph. 5:29).
 - 5. Never lay a hand on her except to love (1 Cor. 7:1,2).

VIII. AS BEING ALSO JOINT-HEIRS OF THE GRACE OF LIFE.

- A. Honor her as such.
- B. We are heirs together with Christ (Rom. 8:17).
- C. Know that God has entrusted her soul to you.

IX. TO THE END THAT YOUR PRAYERS BE NOT HINDERED.

- A. If prayers are hindered from going to Heaven, then so are you (Isa. 59:1,2).

Conclusion:

I. THE GREATEST GOAL OF LIFE: HEAVEN.

- A. What we do here is intended to help us get there.
- B. One of the greatest endeavors of this life is marriage.

II. IS YOUR MARRIAGE HELPING OR HINDERING?

- A. Realize that conduct in marriage cannot be separated from our travel to Heaven.
- B. God will judge our entire life.

III. LET EACH ONE SIMPLY KEEP THE SECOND GREATEST COMMANDMENT.

THE GREATNESS OF MARRIED LOVE

I. THE SPECIAL LOVE THAT IS IN MARRIAGE.

A. It is different than other expressions of love.

1. Friends.
2. Family.
3. Children.

B. It is a holy love as opposed to perversions.

1. Prov. 7:18 - adultery, even though it is called love.
2. Lust.

C. Married love is great because:

1. It is better than wine (Song of Solomon 1:2-4).
 - a. Wine leads to riot (Eph. 5:18).
 - b. Married love leads to all contentment.
2. One's spouse is incomparable (Song of Solomon 2:2).
 - a. A lily stands out among thorns.
 - b. So married love stands out among everything else a person does.
3. It provides special delights (2:3,4).
 - a. A forest of fruitless trees is beautiful to behold, but from an apple tree one can eat and enjoy its sweet flavor.
 - b. There are many beautiful people to behold in the world, but in married love there is a sweet flavor to enjoy that comes from no other.
4. It causes love-sickness (2:5).

- a. Sickness can weaken the body, requiring nutritious and energetic food.
 - b. Love, like sickness, can weaken the body, requiring the presence of one's love.
- 5. It gives delightful assurance (2:14).
 - a. A crack in a rock can hide what is otherwise an obvious flower, but if we get a glimpse we desire to see more.
 - b. Married love, when hidden or separated, earnestly desires time together.
- 6. It is built on a strong desire for togetherness (3:1-4).
 - a. Why do a man and a woman marry?
 - b. Consider vows.
 - c. Marriages that hurt, hurt because the "togetherness" has been violated.
- 7. It is a special knowledge (4:9,10).
 - a. In Chap. 4 (except v. 16) Solomon describes her in a way that only he should know.
 - b. Same with her towards him in 5:10-16.
 - c. Married love can enjoy in its own intimate way the unashamedness of Adam and Eve (Gen. 2:25).
 - d. Sexual relations are often called "knowing" in the Bible.
- 8. It overwhelms (6:5a).
 - a. Not a true desire to look away, but a way of saying, "Your look captivates me. Am I really this wild about you?"
 - b. Then there is a longing to see again.
- 9. It is oneness (7:10-13).
 - a. A simple desire to be with each other.

b. Rom. 12:10.

10. It is a kindred spirit (8:1).

a. Married love is more than a friendship.

b. It is family - they call each other "brother" and "sister" in Song of Solomon.

11. It is strong (8:6,7).

a. Nothing in the natural world is stronger than death - it is inescapable.

b. So there is no love stronger than married love.

12. It is peace (8:10-12).

a. Vineyards were protected by walls and towers.

b. So she was a refuge for him protected from all others and they could enjoy one another.

II. THE LOVE OF THE HUSBAND IS LIKE THE LOVE OF CHRIST FOR THE CHURCH (Eph. 5:25-31).

A. He is to give himself up for her (5:25).

B. His love beautifies her in holiness (5:26,27).

C. He loves her as he loves himself (5:28-30).

D. In love he clings to her (5:31).

THE CONCERNS OF A CHRISTIAN FATHER

Much of this material is from Leroy Brownlow's book, *A Father's World*.

- I. THERE IS A THING SO SPECIAL ABOUT FATHERHOOD THAT GOD CHOSE IT FOR HIMSELF, THAT WE MIGHT UNDERSTAND OUR RELATIONSHIP TO HIM.
- II. A FATHER HAS WEIGHTY CONCERNS.
- III. TRAINING HIS CHILDREN
 - A. Three beautiful things:
 - 1. Flowers - color appeals to the eye.
 - 2. Music - sound appeals to the ear.
 - 3. Children - devotion appeals to the heart.
 - B. Cultivation brings out the best in all three:
 - 1. Wild flowers are pretty, but not as much as cultivated.
 - 2. Beautiful music does not just happen, it must be cultivated.
 - 3. Do children become beautiful and mature into men and women without cultivation?
 - C. The need for training:
 - 1. Prov. 22:6.
 - 2. This passage has been interpreted in many ways, causing controversy and grief.
 - a. Is this verse restricted to religion?
 - b. Does it teach that children have no choice?
 - 3. The meaning:

- a. Note marginal reference of ASV : "Heb. 'according to his way.'"
- b. "As the twig is bent, the tree's inclined."
- c. Excerpt from *McGuffey and His Readers*, by John H. Westerhoff III.

"Teacher. How is *teaching* like *training*?

Pupils. We do not very well understand what is meant by training. Solomon says in the book of Proverbs, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." But we never were sure we understood him.

T. You know what training a vine is?

1st P. It is to *direct* it right.

T. But why does it need directing?

1st P. Because it would grow in wrong directions if it were not trained or directed.

T. Does a dead vine need training?

Several of the pupils at once - No sir, because it does not grow, and therefore cannot go wrong.

T. But when a vine or any vegetable does grow, why would it go wrong if not trained?

2nd P. Because it does not know how to go right, nor to take care of itself.

3rd P. And if it did, it is not strong enough to support itself unless its tendrils were directed to something which they may take hold on, and thus support the whole vine.

T. It is best then that vines should be trained that they may not grovel on the ground, nor stray through the palings, where they might, and most probably would be trodden upon and destroyed by the mischievous and the careless. But which needs training most - the feeble or the vigorous vine?

Part of the pupils - The *feeble* - others, the vigorous.

T. There seems to be a difference of opinion on this subject. Let us examine it a little. *Why do you* (addressing one of the youngest who had given the first answer,) think that the *feeble* vine should have the most care taken of it? Because it is least able to take care of itself. (A pupil who had joined in the second answer.) But *taking care* is not exactly training. Besides, the luxuriant vine is as much heavier in the top, as it is stronger in the stem, and needs to be held up as much as the stunted one, which if it is weak, hasn't much to carry.

2nd P. And there is not much danger that the vine which doesn't grow will get *through* the palings, even if it should go in that direction.

3rd P. And I remember to have heard my father say that those vines which flourished most, needed the most pruning.

1st P. But if "taking care" isn't "*training*", I wish to know whether "*pruning*" is. Does not the geranium require more care and skill to cultivate than the night shade does? Does not the sick lamb need the most care? The youngest bird the best food? The draggled kitten the warmest place on the rug? And my little sister, because she is weak and sickly needs more care, and protection.

3rd P. But does it take more to keep out of the street or out of mischief?

All who joined in the first answer - We still think the feeble vine most needs training - and we (quickly replied, the others) still believe the strong vine does.

T. Allow me to reconcile, if I can, your apparently different opinions. It happens to you, as to older persons, to dispute where there is really no difference of opinion. The feeble vine does need more care, and this a *part* of what is meant by training. This was well illustrated by reference to the geranium, the lamb, etc. But the vigorous and luxuriant vines need as much support, and more pruning than the other, all of which is also implied in training. This was well stated in the question whether the sickly little girl was more difficult to keep out of the street and out of mischief, than the

more robust members of the family, who were nearly the same age? But let us not forget the question with which we set out. "What resemblance is there between teaching a child and training a vine?"

Several pupils at once - We know now.

T. Well, let us hear?

1st P. Feeble minds must be taken most care of.

2nd P. And active ones will require the most guarding.

3rd P. And luxuriant minds the most pruning. But, I don't think I clearly understand what can be meant by *pruning a mind*.

Several pupils together - We are sure we do not.

T. Let me explain it to you then. Those persons who are most active are in the greatest danger of going wrong, if they do not know how to go right; or are not careful to do as well as they know. They need more frequently therefore to be directed and controlled by their friends, than those who are more sluggish. Those young persons, again, who have very vigorous and active minds, are like the vigorous vine whose growth is rapid, and whose branches and leaves are shooting out on all sides, so as to weigh down the stock and exhaust the vigor of the roots. Such minds are ready to stray off into a thousand unprofitable and even mischievous directions, so as to exhaust their energies, that ought to be directed to some profitable end. Such persons are full of resources and fertile in plans; but often, indeed always, in youth require the skillful bond of discipline to repress their extravagance, to guide their growth, and to lop off their redundancies.

5th P. Do then the smartest boys need the most discipline?

T. The most active and vigorous minds *often* do, but not always. Such minds are however best worth the trouble they cost. But *smart* boys are generally very worthless. It is the *intelligent, honest* boy, that usually rises by his modest merit to eminent usefulness. But we have said nothing yet on the last part of the verse from Proverbs, which some of you

quoted in the commencement of our conversation. What can Solomon mean, when he says that the child who is rightly trained will not depart from the right way when he is old?

3rd P. I think I can tell.

T. Your classmates will probably thank you to do so.

3rd P. When a vine has become old it keeps its *set*, do as you will. You can easily turn a *green* vine another way, but when it is dried, it will break first.

5th P. But you can't make a bean vine wind round the pole in the same direction, as a hop vine does. I have tried it often, and they won't stay so a single night. One *will* wind round *with* the sun, and the other *against* the sun.

T. You are both right again, you can give any direction you please to a young vine, if it be not contrary to its *nature*. And both the kinds of vine mentioned may be trained pretty much as you please while green. But neither of them will let go their hold, when once they have been set by age. It would destroy them to be rift off.

1st P. It is plain enough then, what is meant by our not departing when we are old, from the ways in which we were trained while young. Old men keep on in the way in which they have gone while they were growing old - just as the old vine becomes dried in the shape which it took while it was green.

2nd P. May not that be the reason why good men and bad men will never change after death?

1st P. I believe it is. You remember (addressing the teacher) you once told us that this was the force of habit.

3rd P. I see it now much plainer than ever before. As long as the vine was nourished from the earth it was green and soft, though its *nature* could not be *forced*, it might be turned from its course. But when it ceased to draw its support from earth, it became fixed so that it could not be changed any more than a man's character can become vicious after he has gone to Heaven.

T. Your philosophy is good, though there might be objections to your mode of stating it. But we must now close this conversation. We may resume it again should it seem best. You see of what importance it is to have the right kind of *training*, for our *characters* will certainly be such as our *habits* have been.

d. This excerpt illustrates how Prov. 22:6 is dealing with character, mentality, habits, skill.

D. No one knows a child like his parents.

1. Therefore Eph. 6:1-4; Col. 3:21.

2. Everyone else should be supplementing what we are doing.

E. Fourfold nature of training (Lk. 2:52).

F. Edward Markham:

We are all blind until we see
That in the human plan
Nothing is worth the making if
It does not make the man.
Why build these cities glorious
If man unbuilted goes?
In vain we build the work unless
The builder also grows.

IV. PROVIDING FOR HIS FAMILY.

A. A grave responsibility.

1. 1 Tim. 5:8.

2. What could be worse than not believing there is a God?

a. Even demons believe (Jam. 2:19).

b. Height of arrogance to disbelieve (Rom. 1:20-23).

3. A father without natural affection for his own children is worse than an atheist, because:

- a. Fatherly care is natural.
- b. Logical.
- c. Acceptable socially.
- d. Thus, extreme self-centeredness to fail to provide.
- e. But a believer who fails...denies the faith (Titus 1:16).

B. Most fathers know their responsibility and carry it well.

- 1. The burden can be heavy.
 - a. Shortening his life.
 - b. But he does it out of love.
- 2. He knows the burden is part of manhood.
 - a. Gen. 3:17b-19.
 - b. A father who will not carry his burden is a contradiction.

C. Christian fathers also know material provisions are only a means to an end.

- 1. He does not stop at custodial care.
- 2. He uses it to furnish an environment for training.
- 3. By providing:
 - a. He sets an example of personal responsibility.
 - b. He meets physical needs so the real needs can have attention.
- 4. Excerpt from *A Father's World*, by Leroy Brownlow, Brownlow Publishing, Fort Worth, TX, pp. 30,31:

A coal miner father had a day off and decided to spend it in a nearby saloon. Slipping quietly away from home, he began walking in that direction. He had not gone far when he heard a voice behind him. It was his six-year-old son who

said “Go ahead, daddy, I’m walking in your steps.” But daddy did not go right ahead. The child’s remark took on a deeper and more thought provoking significance. The father turned and picked up his little boy and said, “My foot steps are not going to lead you there.”

V. BUILDING A FAMILY.

A. Why does a man have a family?

1. Psa. 127:3-5.

a. Heritage.

1) The importance of a name.

2) Of a legacy.

b. The desire to make an impact.

1) A Christian father wants to influence his world.

2) Best to start from scratch.

3) Like company who wants to train own employees.

4) Like almighty man with a bow.

2. ____ Gen. 18:19.

B. He wants to do his own building as much as possible.

1. If all done through others, then children will not see family ties.

VI. RESTORING WAYWARD CHILDREN.

A. Yearning for restoration shows the heart of the father.

1. The rebellion of Absalom (2 Sam. 13-18).

a. 2 Sam. 18:5.

b. 2 Sam 18:33.

2. Who can describe the loss of a son while rebelling?

3. Nothing else seemed to matter to David.

4. Longfellow:

“There is no far nor near,
There is neither there nor here,
There is neither soon nor late,
In that Chamber over the Gate.
Nor any long ago
To that cry of human Woe,
‘O Absalom, my son!’
That ‘tis a common grief
Bringeth but sleight relief:
Ours is the bitterest loss,
Ours is the heaviest cross;
And forever the cry will be,
‘Would God I had died for thee,
O Absalom, my son!’”

5. “The father’s heart beats not so much for himself as it does for his offspring” - Leroy Brownlow.

6. David won one war, but lost another.

a. Lost a foolish son.

b. But he was his son.

B. The yearning father builds a home a wayward child wants to come back to.

1. No partiality (Lk. 15:11,12).

2. Love had been so common at home the prodigal did not realize how ugly the world could be (Lk. 15:13-16).

3. Thoughts of the home his father built made the son come to himself (Lk. 15:17-19).

4. G. C. Brewer, *Brewer’s Sermons*, p. 101, (In: *A Father’s World*, p. 57):

When our boys and girls go away from home today, if they leave with a mother’s kiss warm upon their lips and a father’s benediction fresh in their hearts, they are far better armed against temptation

than the boy or the girl who has never known the sweetness of a happy home. And if they fall into sin and even go down to the brink of ruin, as long as there remains in the background of their minds the memory of a sacred home circle there is hope. There will come moments of rational reflection when they will think of that home with its family altar and its hallowed associations; they will remember the father's counsel and the mother's anxious warnings, and perhaps they will be saved through the memory of these early influences.

5. The anxious father's response does not surprise us (Lk. 15:20-24).
6. His desire to reconcile wayward sons is manifested with the older son (Lk. 15:25-32).

VII. A FATHER WANTS HIS CHILDREN TO HEAR INSTRUCTION - Prov. 1:8; 4:1 - he has been there.

- A. He encourages his children to have high ideals.
 1. Imitating great men and women (Heb. 13:7; Phil. 3:17).
 2. Hawthorne's "The Great Stone Face."
- B. He wants his children to serve rather than to be served.
 1. Mk. 10:43-45.
 2. Lazy and unappreciative children are embarrassing and irritating.
- C. He wants his children to strive for excellence.
 1. Eccl. 9:10; Col. 3:23.
 2. Who is not happy when a child excels?
- D. He knows the world can be generous or cruel, depending upon how we treat it, so a father encourages generosity in his children.
 1. Lk. 6:38.
 2. Life is a mirror. Notice how you act around certain people, or how they react around you.
- E. He is concerned that his children develop good habits.

1. Eccl. 12:1ff.
 2. He himself has tried to fight bad habits.
- F. He knows a good character is paramount.
1. Gal. 5:22,23; 2 Pet. 1:5-7.
 2. Making a desirable and successful person.

THE CONCERNS OF A CHRISTIAN MOTHER

- I. WHAT MAKES HER A MOTHER ARE HER CHILDREN.
 - A. Her concerns are for the well-being of her children.
 - B. She is careful to keep her motherhood pure, i.e., without distraction.
- II. THE CHRISTIAN MOTHER HAS ADDITIONAL CONCERNS.
 - A. The unbelieving mother wants to make men and women of her children.
 - B. The Christian mother builds men and women of God.
- III. THERE WAS A CHRISTIAN MOTHER WHO HAD THESE CONCERNS THAT CHRISTIAN MOTHERS CAN LEARN FROM TODAY (Margaret Campbell).
 - A. Phil. 3:17.
 - B. Consider the outcome of her life and imitate her faith (Heb. 13:7).
- IV. THAT HER CHILDREN BE THOROUGHLY ACQUAINTED WITH SCRIPTURE.
 - A. The desire of Margaret Campbell before her death - From *The Memoirs of Alexander Campbell*, by Robert Richardson, vol. 2, pg. 176:

During the fall months, Mrs. Campbell's disease, which in the summer had seemed slightly alleviated, began rapidly to increase, and it soon became apparent that recovery was hopeless. Of this she had herself long been convinced, and looked forward to the time of her release with the utmost composure. Her chief desire seemed only that she might first see her youngest daughter, Clarinda, able to read the New Testament. One day, when Miss Counselman called in to see her, she found her listening to her little daughter, now six years old, reading to her out of the sacred volume, upon which occasion she remarked the Lord had granted her desire, and that she was fully ready to depart.
 - B. Reading is an indispensable tool.
 - 1. Poor is he who does not or will not read.
 - 2. TV is with few benefits and is becoming a curse to those who:
 - a. Do not discern its contents.

- b. Do not control the amount of time.
 - C. But reading can be made of evil literature.
 - D. Therefore reading the Scriptures daily is the concern of the Christian mother for her children.
 - 1. She must be persuaded about its exclusive guidance for success.
 - a. Josh. 1:8.
 - b. Psa. 1.
 - E. She encourages her children to read the Scriptures by:
 - 1. Being the prime person (along with father) to teach general reading.
 - 2. Being caught reading the Bible by her children.
 - 3. Making it obvious her life is built on Scripture.
 - 4. Buying their own Bible and teaching respect for its care.
 - 5. Delighting to hear them read it.
- V. THAT HER CHILDREN IMITATE JESUS CHRIST.

A. *Memoirs*, vol. 2, P. 177-179, Richardson continued:

Shortly before her death, she assembled her five remaining daughters around her bed, and made to them an address expressive of her hopes and wishes in regard to their future course in life. After speaking of her gratification in knowing that they could now read the Scriptures, she thus continued:

The happiest circumstance in all my life I consider to be that which gave me a taste for reading and a desire for understanding the New Testament. This I have considered, and do now consider, to be one of the greatest blessings which has resulted to me from my acquaintance with your father. Although I have had a religious education from my father, and was early taught the necessity and importance of religion, yet it was not until I became acquainted with the contents of this book, which you have seen me so often read, that I came to understand the character of God, and to enjoy a firm

and unbounded confidence in all His promises... I say to you, then, with all the affection of a mother, and now about to leave you, I entreat you, as you love me and your own lives, study and meditate upon the words and actions of the Lord Jesus Christ. Remember how kindly He has spoken to and of little children, and that there is no good thing which He will withhold from them who love Him and walk uprightly.

- B. There are many ungodly role models portrayed by the world.
 - 1. Their influence is powerful.
 - 2. The following encourage our children to imitate the ungodly:
 - a. Friends.
 - b. TV.
 - c. Music.
 - d. Sometimes mothers, even Christian ones, wanting children to be popular.
- C. Therefore when a mother exhorts her children to imitate Christ, her exhortation must be with authority (Titus 2:15).
 - 1. By a consistent example.
 - 2. By beginning early in life.
 - 3. By building her children's trust in her.
 - a. She cannot be so involved in other things, whether bad or good, that they resent her.
 - b. We so often delegate training to others that children do not see mother as one to trust.
- D. A Christian mother has gained everything when children imitate Christ.
 - 1. Would you like to have Christ as a son?
 - 2. Mt. 12:46-50.

VI. THAT HER CHILDREN RESPECT THEIR EARTHLY FATHER.

A. *Memoirs*, page 178, Margaret Campbell continued:

With regard to your father, I need only, I trust, tell you that in obeying him you obey God, for God has commanded you to honor him, and in honoring your father you honor Him that bade you do so. It is my greatest joy in leaving you that I leave you under the care of one who can instruct you in all the concerns of life, and who, I know, will teach you to choose the good part and to place your affections upon the only object supremely worthy of them. Consider him as your best earthly friend, and, next to your heavenly Father, your wisest and most competent instructor, guardian and guide. While he is over you, or you under him, never commence nor undertake nor prosecute any important object without advising with him. Make him your counselor, and still remember the first commandment with a promise.

B. The Christian mother teaches her children to do this because the Bible says for them to do so.

1. Eph. 6:1-3.

C. Thus placing themselves under the protective authority of God.

D. Family harmony encouraged by Christian mother (and Christian father) builds strong children.

E. Do not be afraid of rebellion of children.

1. Don't fear establishing the authority of the father.

2. All psychological teaching which diminishes parental authority ought to be disregarded.

VII. THAT HER CHILDREN IMPROVE THEIR MINDS BY SPIRITUAL CONVERSATION.

A. *Memoirs*, p. 178,179, Margaret Campbell urged her children:

As to your conversation with one another, when it is not upon the ordinary duties of life, let it be on subjects of importance, improving to your minds. I beseech you to avoid that light, foolish and vain conversation about dress and fashion so common among females. Neither let the subject of apparel fill your hearts nor dwell upon your tongues. You never heard me do so. Let your apparel be sober, clean and modest, but everything vain

and fantastic avoid....have often told you, and instanced to you, when in health, the vain pursuits and unprofitable vanities of some females who have spent the prime and vigor of their lives in the servile pursuits of fashion,... and what and where are they now? Let these be as beacons to you. I therefore entreat you neither to think, nor talk of, nor pursue these subjects. Strive only to approve yourselves to God, and to commend yourselves to the discerning, the intelligent, the pious. Seek their society, consult their taste and make yourselves worthy of their esteem.

B. Margaret Campbell warned of the vanity of fashion and immodest appearance.

1. If the warning was needed in the early 1800's, how much more now!
2. We have been deluded into thinking that the true man or woman can be determined by the world.
3. Lk. 16:15b - Christian mother impress this upon children.
4. Lk. 12:15.

C. Therefore Christian mother encourages spiritual conversation.

1. Yes, there are some earthly things we must talk about in order to conduct life.
2. But how much of our conversation consists of things that do not improve our minds?
3. Col. 3:1-4.
4. Eph. 4:29.
5. The speech that insists upon spirituality will have to have a spiritual heart (Mt. 12:34), leading to heavenly treasure (Mt. 6:21).

D. The Christian mother improves her children's spiritual mindset by:

1. Example in conversation.
2. Daily spiritual instruction.
3. Making available wholesome literature.

4. Encouraging Christian friendship.
5. Regulating worldly influences.

VIII. THAT HER CHILDREN REMEMBER THAT GOD SEES THEM.

- A. *Memoirs*, p. 179, again Margaret Campbell emphasized:

But there is one thing which is necessary to all goodness, which is essential to all virtue, godliness and happiness; I mean necessary to the daily and constant exhibition of every Christian accomplishment, and that is to keep in mind the words that Hagar uttered in her solitude: "Thou God seest me." You must know and feel, my dear children, that my affection for you, and my desires for your present and future happiness, cannot be surpassed by any human being. The God that made me your mother has, with His own finger, planted this in my breast, and His Holy Spirit has written it upon my heart. Love you I must, feel for you I must, and I once more say unto you, remember these words, and not the words only, but the truth contained in them: "Thou God seest me." This will be a guard against a thousand follies and against every temptation....

- B. Christian mother, restore this concept, which psychologists have convinced us is unhealthy, i.e., God sees us.
1. Even Christians have cringed at the thought of an all-seeing God.
 2. This persuasion has not come from the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures.
- C. God does see us at all times.
1. Prov. 15:3.
 2. Heb. 4:13.
 3. Mt. 28:20.
- D. The benefit of knowing God sees us:
1. Guard against evil and temptation.
 2. He knows our trials and helps us.
- E. Those who have something to hide are put in terror by thought of God seeing.

F. A Christian mother who implants this in children's hearts is demonstrating her concern, but even more so God's concern.

1. A caring mother always knows where her children are (or at least attempts).

2. But God never loses sight of us.

Conclusion:

I. *Memoirs*, p. 179, Margaret Campbell concluded:

I cannot speak to you much more upon this subject. I have already, and upon various occasions, suggested to you other instructions, which I need not, as indeed I cannot, now repeat.... That we may all meet together in the heavenly kingdom is my last prayer for you, and, as you desire it, remember the words of Him who is the *way*, the *truth* and the *life*.

II. Ultimate concern: to spend eternity together.

A. Greater concern than:

1. Secular education.

2. Marriage partner.

3. Business success.

4. Sports, etc.

5. Mt. 16:26.

B. These should not hinder, but enable heavenly entrance.

III. All energies are funneled toward this goal.

BUILDING YOUR CHILD'S CHARACTER FROM THE INSIDE OUT (WHO HAS ALL THE ANSWERS?)

- I. OFTEN YOUNG COUPLES WITHOUT CHILDREN WILL OBSERVE OTHER COUPLES WHO HAVE CHILDREN AND SEE BOTH THINGS THEY LIKE AND ESPECIALLY DISLIKE.
 - A. This often leads the childless couples to begin forming what they believe will be infallible child-rearing philosophies.
 - B. Then they have children, reality sets in and it proves to be a formidable task.
 - C. They wrestle with their invincible philosophies and begin to change them.
 - D. And the older the children become the more the parents change their child-rearing perspectives.
 - 1. Especially as the children become more independent.
 - 2. And more influenced by the world.
- II. WHEN THE CHILDREN BECOME TEENAGERS, OR OLDER, THE ONCE ARROGANT PARENTS CONFESS:
 - A. That at one time they thought they had all the answers.
 - B. But now they feel as though they may not know what any of the answers are.
 - C. They reach the point where they are persuaded that there is little parents can do to make men and women of God out of their children.
 - D. In exasperation they throw up their hands and hope and pray for the best in their beloved children.
 - E. Once their children leave home the parents often become as they were before they had children, i.e., they once again have all the answers.
- III. WHO HAS ALL THE ANSWERS?
 - A. As evil, that our children will confront, waxes worse and worse, parents can easily fall into despair.

1. Since they think they failed in their theories, which seemed filled with wisdom and insight, they conclude no one else has all the answers.
 2. Sarcastically, the parents request of others that if they find someone who truly has all the answers, then let the parents know.
- B. No man or woman, whether young, childless couples or old, childless couples or singles should ever claim that they have all the answers.
1. For if God ever blesses them with children the know-it-alls will experience a humbling lesson.
 2. Are young couples then left without any guiding principles?
 - a. Can we give them absolute truth during their public school education, but on building men and women the young parents just have to let things happen?
 - b. Did they themselves mature into men and women of God accidentally?
- C. There is One who has all the answers.
1. He has revealed all the answers in the Book we call the Bible.
 2. Does this mean that if parents follow God's guidelines perfectly that all their children will turn out to be disciples of Christ?
 - a. No more than in the work of evangelism.
 - b. Teaching the perfect gospel in the perfect methodology still results in sinners who not only remain lost, but often become more hardened than they were in the beginning.
- D. The Holy Spirit spoke plainly as to the fact that God through the written word has all the answers (2 Tim. 3:16,17).
1. Paul acknowledged the increase of evil which we are currently witnessing.
 - a. Which evil seems to overpower us.
 - b. Especially do parents sense an almost unbeatable situation as they try to steer their children away from evil.

2. However, in contrast to the ever increasing evil, there is a safe haven, if only we can develop the right character within our children that they may desire to remain in what they have been taught.
3. Notice how the apostle contrasts the growth of evil with the wisdom which is imparted by the Holy Spirit-inspired sacred writings of God.
 - a. Our precious gifts from God are attacked by evil through:
 - 1) Friends.
 - 2) School (at all levels, intensely in high school and college).
 - 3) Television.
 - 4) Music.
 - 5) Books.
 - 6) Magazines.
 - 7) Neighbors.
 - 8) Employment.
 - 9) Any other weapon that Satan can find to use without mercy.
 - b. However, Paul assures us that if the child has:
 - 1) Learned the wisdom-imparting Scriptures.
 - 2) Has been assured of their truthfulness.
 - 3) Remembers who did the teaching.
 - 4) Then the little man or woman who has been entrusted to our care will grow in faith.
 - a) In Christ Jesus.
 - b) Leading to salvation.

4. Additionally, the God-breathed scripture will not only save them from evil,
 - a. It will give them the teaching, reproof, correction and instruction in the ways of righteousness that children need.
 - b. They need these things in order to be complete men and women of God.
 - c. Men and women who are saved from evil, but also are well equipped to do every good work.
 - d. Therefore Paul charges Timothy to keep right on preaching the word (2 Tim. 4:1-4).
 5. However, this whole text implies that Timothy had parental instruction, because he had known of these from his earliest years.
 - a. This is obvious when 2 Timothy 1:5 is also read.
 - b. If we as parents believe that making sure our children are in Bible class every Sunday and Wednesday and that alone will do the trick, then in the majority of cases we have lost them already.
 - c. If we believe that, we believe in tricks instead of bearing our own burdens.
 - d. Deuteronomy 6 has some eternal principles that place the burden on parents. We will examine these later.
- E. Does God have all the answers for building our child's character from the inside out? Yes!
1. Meditate upon the explicit and implicit truths of Psalm 127.
 - a. The explicit truth of Psalm 127 is that God is the One who has given us children.
 - b. The implicit truth is that unless parents recognize the home as God's work:
 - 1) The house will crumble.

- 2) Children will not be looked upon as a reward, but a punishment.
 - 3) The parents will not know how to use their children as a mighty man would use arrows.
- c. Though Psalm 127 was not written until the time of Solomon, Joshua was certainly familiar with the principles involved when he said, "... as for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah" (Jos. 24:15).
2. The godly parents of Samson certainly knew whom to consult for the building of their son's character, for they prayed to God (Jud. 13:8).
- a. Likewise every parent should pray on behalf of their parent-hood.
- b. Sometimes it seems odd that those who are themselves just coming out of childhood (and in some cases are still in childhood) are to be parents:
- 1) With a lack of parental wisdom.
 - 2) To whom do they turn for the ultimate answers?
 - 3) Interestingly, Robert Coles, a Harvard child psychiatrist, asks, "Are students really better off with the theories of psychologists than with the hard thoughts of Jeremiah and Jesus?" (Reader's Digest, May, 1987, p. 101).
- c. Thankfully the word of God gives parents assurance that they can do it, enabling them to have the needed wisdom.
- 1) We are promised in James 1:5, that God will give wisdom.
 - 2) Furthermore, by daily meditation and application of the precepts of God, the following can be true of even young and inexperienced parents (Ps. 119:98-100).
3. If any book in the Bible was written to provide parents with the knowledge that God has all the answers for helping to build a child's character from the inside out, it was Proverbs.

- a. Most of this book of the collection of wise sayings on character development was written by Solomon to his son.

BUILDING YOUR CHILD'S CHARACTER FROM THE INSIDE OUT (FAMILY DEVOTIONALS)

I. FAMILY DEVOTIONALS.

- A. Once parents are persuaded that God has all the answers, then they can begin to build their child's character from the inside out.
 - 1. By first impressing upon them that God does indeed have all the answers pertaining to the issues of life.
 - 2. 2 Pet. 1:2-4.
- B. Family devotionals are one way in which children will see the priceless value of spirituality.
 - 1. They will see the priority placed on it.
 - 2. When other activities cease and time is given to the worship of God and the edification of one another on a daily schedule.
 - 3. When time is set aside for a family to assemble together for a time of Bible study it:
 - a. Moves children to be curious about spiritual issues.
 - b. It moves them to see that manhood and womanhood are inward qualities.
 - c. And that masculinity and femininity are also of the heart as well as of the flesh (perhaps more so).
 - 4. Family worship provides an opportunity for parents to develop the real person on the inside.
 - a. By doing that which engages the spirit of the children in spiritual activities.
 - b. And by giving the children the food for the soul, the word of the Holy Spirit.
 - c. While it is true that children could and should pray to God and meditate upon scripture on their own:

- 1) It is also true that family devotionals give the needed direction parents are supposed to give.
- 2) It stands written in Eph. 6:4 that parents, viz, fathers are to guide their children in the way of the Lord.
 - a) Having our children present without fail in the weekly worship and edification assemblies, and having them in both Bible classes every week goes a long way in promoting real spiritual characters in our children.
 - b) A much more profound foundation is laid when the parents do the training at home.
 - c) Then the church's work is viewed as supplementary to what the parents are doing.

C. Deuteronomy 6 is an entire chapter in the Bible given to parents in explaining the training of their children.

1. Though an Old Testament passage, it still contains rich information for the saints of God today.
2. Verses 1-3 are a strict injunction to the Israelites to keep the law of God and that their children were included in the charge.
 - a. Moses appears to be very urgent in stressing that families keep the commandments of God, for there would be three blessings for them in doing so:
 - 1) First, "that thy days may be prolonged" (v. 2b).
 - 2) Second, "that it may be well with thee" (v. 3a).
 - 3) And third, "that ye may increase mightily" (v. 3b).
 - b. Likewise, when parents are diligent to build their child's character from the inside out by saturating the child's soul with the teachings of God, then:
 - 1) The days of the church will be prolonged:
 - a) By children who become faithful members of the church,

- b) And by children who are active Christians.
 - 2) It will be well with us.
 - a) Because rebellious children shame their parents (Prov. 17:25).
 - b) But righteous children are an endless delight (Prov. 23:24).
 - 3) We will increase mightily.
 - a) That is how the early church grew (Acts 5:42).
 - b) We would grow numerically at a great rate if we saved all of our children and only our children.
 - c) (Of course that is an unreal scenario, but it illustrates the point).
- c. Children rebel for many reasons, even when parents have striven according to God's word to form Christ within their children.
 - 1) Some children turn their backs on Christianity.
 - a) Because they were never instructed in conforming themselves to the image of Jesus Christ.
 - b) Instead it was hoped the children would mature from the outside in:
 - (1) By thinking just being there on Sunday would be enough,
 - (2) And by dictatorial answers and prohibitions from the parents' self-made authority ("because I said so," or "the preacher says so," etc., instead of a gentle explanation of the word of God).

- 2) It is imperative, therefore, for parents to be disciples of Christ themselves and follow earnestly the pleading of Deuteronomy 6.

D. Moses also stressed to the Israelites that the teaching is to be diligent in order to keep children from forgetting God.

1. If they do forget, then apostasy is guaranteed to follow.
2. Moses explained what would lead the parents to want to teach their children diligently - Deut. 6:4-6.
 - a. First of all, in verse 4, is the essential ingredient of belief.
 - 1) When parents believe in the One God it leads to a certain way of thinking.
 - 2) This is implied by Jesus in Luke 6:46.
 - a) Does a man believe Jesus is Lord?
 - b) Then the man will want his children to have the same conviction.
 - c) The man will do whatever the Lord says to do.
 - d) This includes building his child's character from the spirit outward.
 - b. Second, in verse 5, is a parent who loves God with the total being of humanity.
 - 1) We naturally want to engage others in that which we love.
 - 2) Children will detect our lack of love for God or a lackadaisical love, and will resist our efforts to form their hearts after the heart of God.
 - c. Third, in verse 6, is the natural foundation of first having in the heart what we wish to teach others.
 - 1) Family devotionals are natural to parents who already:

- a) Spend time daily in the word privately.
 - b) Pray without ceasing.
 - c) Seek opportunities to do good.
 - d) Mind the things of the Spirit.
- 2) Jesus taught - Mt. 12:34b.
 - a) If a man's heart is filled with the word of God -
 - b) Then family devotions are not awkward, hassles and inconveniences.
- E. Next Moses emphasized how the teachings of God are involved in every aspect of the parent's lives, subsequently the children's behavior is brought into conformity with God's wishes - Deut. 6:7-9.
 - 1. Verse 7 explains how teaching is done when in the house and out of the house.
 - 2. From the rising of the sun until the going down of the same.
 - 3. Verses 8 and 9 show how what is done in labor, in the mind, in the home and in society is to be guided by the word of the Lord.
- F. This is all so important because of the danger of forgetting -Deut. 6:10-19.
- G. As was said earlier, family worship creates many opportunities for children to be curious about spiritual issues.
 - 1. Such as what a verse means,
 - 2. Or why God does something, etc.
 - 3. As an example, in Deuteronomy 6:20-25, Moses says children will ask about the meaning of religion and why we have to do these things.
 - a. Notice he says to explain the historical background (6:20, 21).
 - b. The miraculous background must also be included (6:22).

- c. Explain the purpose of religion (6:23).
- d. Teach how it is for our good (6:24).
- e. Finally they must see how it is only by God's way we can be righteous (6:25).

H. Some pointers to help keep the devotionals going consistently:

- 1. Maintain a scheduled time.
- 2. Start off small and simple.
- 3. Be patient.
- 4. Be cheerful.
- 5. Investigate what others are doing.

I. Include:

- 1. Prayer (take requests).
- 2. Bible reading and discussion.
- 3. Contribution.

BUILDING YOUR CHILD'S CHARACTER FROM THE INSIDE OUT (FROM THE INSIDE OUT)

I. FROM THE INSIDE OUT.

- A. At stake in character development is the heart, and the life of a person springs forth from the heart, as Solomon said (Prov. 4:23).
- B. Perhaps one of the most necessary things to convince our children of, in order to make sure they know that they must mature from the inside out.
 - 1. Is that it is not outward qualities that make the man or the woman.
 - 2. 1 Peter 3:3,4 reveals essential principles when considering the true beauty of a woman.
 - 3. Girls can begin working on the outward adornment, i.e., adornment which is beyond the ordinary, when:
 - a. They understand that they are built from the inside out.
 - b. They have begun to achieve a godly character.
 - c. They want to please God first.
 - d. They understand how outward adornment is like a frame which enhances a picture not distracts from the picture.
 - e. They can use it with discernment.
- C. True character is described in the following quotation:

True character - character that really makes a difference when the chips are down, manifests itself from the inside out. It's the wholeness of one's thoughts, desires, motives, feelings, speech, behavior, habits and the choices one makes. Character is not just doing all the right things. It's thinking the right thoughts; it's having the right motives; it's feeling the right feelings; it's making the right choices. It's the wholeness of a person's inward thinking and outward behavior. It is the quality of the soul as it is revealed in conduct. But most of all, "It's grace." It's God's power working from the inside out (Kay Kuzma, *Homemade*, May, 1991, Vol. 15, No. 5).

- D. Therefore, it is essential that parents realize that whatever their children are and become, it all begins in the heart, soul or spirit of the children.
1. Jesus taught that the heart is the origin of the things that defile us (Mt. 15:17-20).
 - a. The point is: concerns for their health should not outweigh concerns for their spiritual well-being.
 - b. Give more attention to building Christ-like character in them than to health, career, clothes, etc.
 - 1) 1 Tim. 4:7b,8 gives the proper emphasis.
 - 2) Do not forget the message of Ecclesiastes that all is vanity, and that includes everything in life, except one (12:13,14).
 2. In Matthew 12:33-35 Jesus again taught that whatever goes on in the heart is what determines:
 - a. What we do.
 - b. What we are.
- E. All these things being true, this is why Solomon urged his son to build his character from the inside out (Prov. 4:20-27).
- F. Based on this passage notice what Solomon did to build his son's character from the inside out:
1. There was teaching and he urged his son to listen attentively (v.20).
 2. He encouraged his son to meditate on what was the word of God (v.21).
 - a. There is no psychological magic trick to substitute for keeping the word in the midst of the heart.
 - b. Psa. 119:9-11.
 - c. If the heart is saturated with the word of God, then evil will not come out, but righteousness.

3. He told his son of the benefit of Scripture-meditation (v.22).
 4. He instructed his son of the fact that the kind of life we lead begins in the heart, so the heart has to be guarded with all effort and strength (v.23), exercising self-control, regulating thoughts, etc.
 5. An evil tongue should be avoided (v.24).
 6. Concentrate on the way of holiness (vv.25-27).
- G. Furthermore, in order to convince our children that they are built into men and women from the inside out we must show them that we value spiritual qualities, such as The Beatitudes (Mt. 5:3-12), The Fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22,23) and the Christian Graces (2 Pet. 1:5-7), over worldly success and standards, by:
1. Our example, what they see us striving for in life.
 2. Our reaction to:
 - a. The things they do.
 - b. Things others do.
 - c. What you admire.
 3. What you emphasize in their education.
 4. What you emphasize for their future or career.
 5. The approval you show for their friends of:
 - a. Various social levels.
 - b. And character qualities.
- H. Matthew 6:33 is the thesis for showing what we pursue in life.
1. Our children observe whether or not we are living this verse.
 2. In the ways stated above.
 3. And in an infinite number of other ways.

4. Ezek. 16:44b has a principle of imitation that goes for all parents and their children.
- I. One more passage shows how behavior comes from what is inside (Eph. 5:18-21).
 1. When we are filled with the Spirit it is manifested in three ways:
 - a. Singing spiritual songs to the Lord, which shows our attitude.
 - b. Being thankful for all things, which keeps God foremost in the mind.
 - c. Subjecting yourself to the brethren, which keeps down gossip.
 2. These are all things that show what is in our hearts.
 - a. Makes us pleasant people.
 - b. Makes us desirable to be around.
 - c. Causes our children to want to grow up to be just like us.

BUILDING YOUR CHILD'S CHARACTER FROM THE INSIDE OUT (PARENTAL INFLUENCE)

I. PARENTAL INFLUENCE.

- A. Parental influence has been touched upon already, but more specific attention needs to be discussed.
- B. Our children are bombarded with many influences.
 - 1. The influences can be minimized by being an important factor in their lives from their earliest years.
 - 2. Jesus taught the heavy responsibility we have with children when He taught - Mt. 18:5,6.
- C. Therefore, beware of wasting your time of influence.
 - 1. A father will do well in meditating beforehand whether or not he will do something that might decrease his time of influence over his children.
 - 2. A mother also does well in deliberating seriously before she decides to work outside the home.
 - 3. Ask yourself why you want to do the extra project or get the outside work.
 - 4. If either parent cuts out too much of their time as a parent:
 - a. They will miss out on influencing, training, teaching, laughter, reassuring, holding, listening, etc.
 - b. Clearly, parents cannot be with their children every moment and there will be circumstances where a parent is away, but those outside influences cannot overwhelm.
 - 5. When home, be careful of watching too much television.
 - a. Some of the same irredeemable time will be wasted.
 - b. Eph. 5:15,16 encourages a wise use of time.
 - c. Ponder the truths of Psa. 101:2,3.

- 1) If we profess to know God, then it should be obvious by our conduct at home.
- 2) Includes what we set before our eyes.
- 3) And television falls into that category.

D. It is frightening to realize that after preschool age, society tends to have our children more than we do, hurting our ability to influence our children's character.

1. One author has written,

...raising children meant that the parents trained or formed their children. Parents did not simply give their children physical life and send them out to society to be formed and established. The parents trained them in the training "of the Lord." Children were formed to be like their parents. For Christian parents, this meant forming the children to be men and women of God. They taught their children how to live as Christians, and thereby the image of God was formed in them. They trained their children to carry on the life of the body of Christ. The parents passed on to their children the way of life they themselves had received (Stephen B. Clark, *Man And Woman In Christ*, Ann Arbor, Michigan: Servant Books, 1980, p. 69).

2. Schools give general education.

- a. Colleges train for careers.
- b. Scouts teach how to camp, etc.
- c. 4 H shows them how to raise animals and do crafts.
- d. School counselors give advice.
- e. Coaches make them athletes.
- f. Television entertains.
- h. Churches lead spiritually.
- i. And who knows where society stops?

3. What are the average parents left with to do in building their children's character?
 4. Remember Deuteronomy 6:7-9.
- E. It is indispensable then for parents to work at maximizing their influence and regulating other influences.
1. Our influence is increased when we take heed to our example:
 - a. In marriage.
 - b. In treatment of children.
 - c. In life.
 2. Luke 6:39-42 shows the power of influence.
 - a. Generally, children are not going to surpass their parents in character, but may do so in spite of their parents.
 - b. Parents cannot build their children's character any higher than what the parents have already gone, though the parents can steer the children in the right direction.
 - c. They are blind beyond what they have attained, for a beam may be in their eye.
 - d. So know what to do and what you are doing:
 - 1) By knowing God's instruction on character.
 - 2) By having developed the right character.
- F. Parental influence is magnified when parents are quick to encourage and compliment their children.
1. We all like such.
 - a. We will try harder.
 - b. We will do better.
 - c. When someone we love lets us know they are on our side.

2. Children are very interested in wanting to please their parents.
 - a. The wise parents will capitalize on that interest and use it to build the right character within their children.
 - b. How often do children show their parents art work, letters, stunts, new found knowledge?
 - c. And other things in which they are seeking parental approval.
 - d. The wise parents use these golden opportunities to make sure that when the children are older the children will still see their parents as their heroes.
3. First Thessalonians 2:7,11 show how parents can increase the power of their influence.
 - a. When a mother cherishes her children she is naturally gentle, which opens up many doors of opportunity later.
 - b. Fathers who exhort, encourage and teach their children have children who brag about their fathers.
4. Moreover, do not be afraid to encourage and compliment.
 - a. Some people do not encourage and compliment others.
 - 1) This is true with parents towards their children.
 - b. They fear the approval of an imperfect work will encourage mediocrity.
 - c. In fact just the opposite is normally true.
 - d. They try harder to get more praise next time.
5. Consider the wisdom of Proverbs 25:11.
 - a. A word spoken in due season is given when the level of development of a child is considered.
 - b. This is what the Hebrew writer did when he chastised his readers (Heb. 5:11-14).

- c. If they were babes in Christ, then he would have spoken differently (1 Pet. 2:2).
- d. Parents likewise consider their children's age appropriate abilities.
- e. Sometimes our children will act younger than their ages.
 - 1) Sometimes we expect them to act older than their ages.
 - 2) To be able to be at our level.
 - 3) We forget that they do not have the advantage of several decades of experience.

G. How does God as your Father influence you?

- 1. Now do the same with your children.
- 2. Become God's child and understand how He developed your character from the inside out.

BUILDING YOUR CHILD'S CHARACTER FROM THE INSIDE OUT (TRAINING)

I. TRAINING

A. A well known verse on building our child's character is Proverbs 22:6.

1. There has been no small controversy associated with the meaning of this verse, but I do not have the space to deal with the various interpretations.

B. The controversies have centered around the promised result or second half of the verse, but the point of this verse is the fact that children are to be trained.

1. Solomon reveals a method of that training.
2. Sometimes parents forget they arrived at adulthood by training, thus the Bible reminds us that children must be trained.
3. Common sense and observation tell all of us that untrained children are like wild animals.
 - a. Without respect for other people.
 - b. Destructive of much of what they touch.
4. Scripture also testifies of the shame of untrained children (Prov. 29:15).
5. It is simply not true that children will develop on their own without parental training as humanistic psychologists are teaching.

C. The method of training.

1. According to His way, like training a vine (see pages 20-23 of these notes for the excerpt from *McGuffey and His Readers*).
 - a. It is directed in the right direction.
 - 1) It does not know the way to go which is most productive.

- 2) And it is not strong enough to support itself, unless its tendrils are directed to something which it can grasp.
- 3) Thus it is kept off the ground where it would be trampled.
- b. Weaker plants will need more care and stronger ones more pruning.
- c. Some vines will wind round a pole clockwise and some counter-clockwise and each cannot be forced to go the other direction, i.e., against its nature.
- d. Also plants are easier to train while green and when old will keep that shape.
- e. Children each have their own nature, character, interests, etc. (cf. margin).
 - 1) More active ones may need more correction to keep energy in good things.
 - 2) But slower ones will need still different training.
- f. When Pop Warner tried to train Indian athletes to do calisthenics they seemed lazy to him.
 - 1) When he gave them a bag and told them to catch rabbits, the Indians excelled.
 - 2) One of them was Jim Thorpe.
2. Using the book of Proverbs.
 - a. The purpose of the book of Proverbs is to supply parents with material for building their child's character from the inside out.
 - 1) This is obvious from the first six verses.
 - 2) And by the oft repeated, "My son," which appears almost two dozen times.
 - b. The book of Proverbs can be used by applying certain maxims from the book to a specific problem.

- 1) One way is to find the right verses.
 - a) Study one chapter for each day of the month.
 - b) Look for the passages that address the point of character under consideration.
 - c) Write those down and:
 - (1) Study them.
 - (2) Memorize them.
 - (3) During the next month meditate upon, teach and apply the verses from chapter one on day one and so on.
- 2) For example, children must develop the trait of self-control or self-discipline.
 - a) In your study you will come across Proverbs 25:28.
 - b) Paint a mental picture or tell a story of a ruined city whose walls are broken down, maybe even let your child draw a picture on a piece of paper.
 - c) Help them to see how lack of self-control is like that city.
 - d) Help them memorize the scripture and one important step in building his character has been taken by helping him to lay up the word in his heart (Ps. 119:11).
3. Training is enhanced by good habits.
 - a. This is the idea of “practice makes perfect”.
 - b. Our troops were victorious against Iraq because they practiced and trained repeatedly until they knew what to do out of habit.

- c. Therefore practicing good and training in doing good repeatedly will form a good habit, from which the child will not depart.
 - d. This is the whole point of Christianity: throwing off bad habits and acquiring good habits (Eph. 4:17-32).
 - 1) Part of training our child in the way he should go is helping him to be engaged in doing good often enough that it becomes instinctive.
 - 2) It is lack of this that frustrates a child when he is made to do good, like a child who rarely does math or drawing, when he has to do it, he says, "See, I can't do it!"
 - 3) He will respond likewise to good when it has not been trained to be a habit.
 - 4) Therefore consistency is a necessity in all that you do.
4. Training is preventing evil influences.
- a. If evil is not taken care of, it can ruin all efforts of training.
 - b. If a coach trains his athlete well:
 - 1) But lets drug-taking by the athlete go without dealing with the problem,
 - 2) The coach will lose an athlete in time.
 - c. A gardener who ignores aphids will soon have a ruined plant.
 - d. Since child-rearing is likened to vine-training, some evil can be prevented or delayed by mulching.
 - 1) Mulching is laying down an organic or inorganic layer on the surrounding ground, partly to prevent weed growth.
 - 2) Likewise we can lay a spiritual mulch to hinder the weeds of evil by:

- a) Limiting the exposure to evil (Lk. 8:7,14; 1 Cor. 15:33).
- b) Saturation with Scripture (Jam. 1:21; Mt. 12:33-35).
- c) Cover with love (Prov. 10:12; 1 Cor. 13:4-7; 1 Pet. 4:8).

5. Training gives some opportunities to gain experience.

- a. A parent teaches his child certain principles.
 - 1) The principles are cemented through experience.
 - 2) This gives a feeling for what the parent has been teaching.
- b. You can explain the workings of a car, but then the student must feel or experience the power of the engine, brakes and steering.
- c. Hebrews 5:13,14 makes this very point.
- d. A child gains experience, hence character development by:
 - 1) Decision making through biblical principles.
 - 2) Working around the house.
 - 3) Doing good works.
 - 4) Church work.

6. Training is incomplete without correction.

- a. Every soldier, every athlete, every plant needs correction of some sort lest a bad habit develop that hinders total success, and a child is the same way.
 - 1) Therefore punishment is done not so much to the child as for the child, helping him to see the best way to go.

- 2) Punishment cannot be an excuse for a parent to be uncontrollably mad,
 - 3) Or a ploy to demonstrate dominance.
- b. It is done out of love for the child and for his welfare.
 - 1) Prov. 3:11,12.
 - 2) Prov. 23:13,14.
- c. However, the Bible does warn against overdoing it or using it incorrectly, and thus producing the opposite of the desired effect.
 - 1) Prov. 19:18.
 - 2) Col. 3:21.
 - 3) Eph. 6:4.
- d. A child becomes discouraged, provoked to wrath and is destroyed when:
 - 1) Punishment is done out of frustration or irritation.
 - 2) No other guidance is given.
 - 3) Expectations are too high (parents often forget their own years of experience).
 - 4) Love is lacking.
 - 5) No approval at other times.
 - 6) Correction is half-hearted.
 - 7) Inconsistent.
 - 8) Delay (Eccl. 8:11).

7. Training a child is most successful in an environment of love.

- a. The vine is the healthiest and most productive when it has all the conditions favorable to it.

- 1) Good weather.
- 2) Plenty of water.
- 3) Nourishing soil.
- 4) Gentleness.

b. Remember how the love of God has helped each one of us grow, and seek to build your child in the same atmosphere.

II. TO BE THE BEST PARENT:

- A. First be a son or daughter of God.
- B. For we often rear our children by the example we have had.
- C. If God is your Father, you have an infallible guide who has all the answers.
- D. He will help you build a man or a woman of God out of your child.
- E. To become a Christian, a child of God:
 1. Believe that Jesus Christ is Lord, the Son of God - Mk. 16:16.
 2. Repent or turn away from sin - Lk. 13:3.
 3. Confess your belief in Jesus - Mt. 10:32,33.
 4. Be baptized in water - Mk. 16:16.

III. REMEMBER THE SONG, "THE CAT'S IN THE CRADLE" BY HARRY CHAPIN.

THE CAT'S IN THE CRADLE

A child arrived just the other day
He came to the world in the usual way
But there were planes to catch and bills to pay
He learned to walk while I was away
And he was talking 'fore I knew it
And as he grew he'd say
"I'm gonna be like you, dad
Ya know I'm gonna be like you."
And the cat's in the cradle and the silver spoon

Little boy blue and the man in the moon.
"When you comin' home, dad?" "I don't know when.
But we'll get together then, son,
You know we'll have a good time then."

My son turned ten just the other day
He said, "Thanks for the ball, dad, come on let's play
Can you teach me to throw?"
I said, "Not today, I got lots to do."
He said, "That's okay."
And he hit me walkin' 'way
But as he did he said,
"I'm gonna be like him, yeh
Ya know I'm gonna be like him."
And the cat's in the cradle and the silver spoon
Little boy blue and the man in the moon.
"When you comin' home, dad?" "I don't know when.
But we'll get together then, son,
You know we'll have a good time then."

Well he came from college just the other day
So much like a man I just had to say,
"Son I'm proud of you, can you sit for awhile?"
He shook his head and he said with a smile,
"What I'd really like, dad, is to borrow the car keys,
See ya later, can I have them please?"
And the cat's in the cradle and the silver spoon
Little boy blue and the man in the moon.
"When you comin' home son?" "I don't know when.
But we'll get together then, dad,
You know we'll have a good time then."

Well I've long since retired, my son's moved away,
I called him up just the other day,-
I said, "I'd like to see you, if you don't mind."
He said, "I'd love to, dad, if I can find the time -
You see my new job's a hassle
And the kids have the flu
But it's sure nice talking to you, dad,
It's been sure nice talking to you."

And as he hung up the phone it occurred to me,
He'd grown up just like me
My boy was just like me.
And the cat's in the cradle and the silver spoon

Little boy blue and the man in the moon.
“When you comin’ home son?” “I don’t know when.
But we’ll get together then, dad,
You know we’ll have a good time then.”