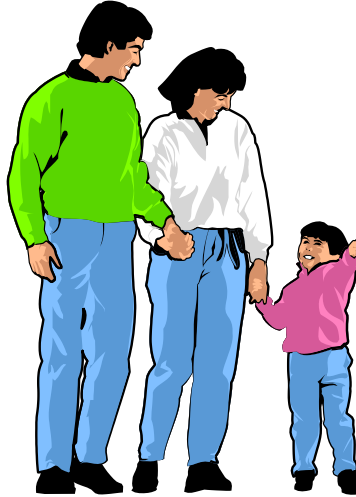


MARRIAGE AND FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

Enriching Values & Strengthening Relationships



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Brent Hunter served as an Associate Professor of Communications and Marriage and Family at Florida College in Temple Terrace, Florida from 1978-1997, and from 1997 until October 2004 served as the college's Director of Development. Brent worked for twenty-one years as the evangelist for the North Street church in Tampa, did four years of evangelistic work for the Oldham Woods congregation in La Grange, Kentucky, labored three years for the Johnson Ave congregation in El Cajon, CA, and has been working full time for the Kirkland church of Christ since September 2013. Brent combines a high level of training as a minister, counselor, and teacher. Since the early nineties, he has directed his efforts on marriage and family enrichment with a focus towards *preventing problems*. He believes that couples who commit themselves to God and to each other, and who are willing to learn to better communicate their love, can experience the fulfillment and intimacy that God intended. Successful parenting is also based upon an understanding and proper application of Biblical concepts. Brent also holds meetings on the following topics: Personal Evangelism 101, True Spirituality, Restoring the Spirit of New Testament Christianity, The Life of Christ, and Glory Days—studies from the book of Joshua. Brent has two children, Amy and Allison, and four grandchildren. He has been happily married to his wife Gail since 1978.

April 7-9 • Friday - Sunday

Tyngsboro church of Christ

27 Old Tyng Road
Tyngsboro, Massachusetts 01879 USA

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A MARRIAGE MADE IN HEAVEN

Introduction

- A. “Holy **Head**-lock” or “Holy **Wed**-lock”? (Is love the **wine of life** and marriage the **hangover**?)
- B. A “marriage made in heaven” (not perfect, but highly satisfactory) **IS** possible!
 - 1. “It takes two to tango---three to marry”
 - 2. “What GOD joins together...” Matt 19:6
 - 3. GOD invented marriage. It’s the only part of **Paradise** left!
- C. KEY: Return to the **beginning** (source, blueprint)
- D. The Garden of Eden provides **4 MUSTS** (pillars) for a **successful marriage**
 - 1. When building, concentrate on YOURSELF, not your spouse!
 - 2. “*Marriage is not so much **finding** the right person as **being** the right person.*”

The 4 PILLARS FOR A SUCCESSFUL MARRIAGE ---

#1 SEVERANCE

- a. “Leave & cleave” --- breaking the parent/child bond is ESSENTIAL!
- b. Weddings are simultaneously sad and beautiful --- there is a loss!
- c. When there is no severance, there is trouble.
 - 1. Adam & Eve represent the perfect family (no problems)
 - 2. Adam had no mother-in-law! (no parent/child conflicts)
- d. If one can’t leave, one shouldn’t marry!
Illus.: The song “Billy Boy” shows that if the girl is “a young thing and cannot leave her mother,” ...it’s a good reason to not take her for a wife.
- e. “A man SHALL leave...” is strongly stated. It’s not might or may.

#2 PERMANENCE

- a. Cleave means “to cling to, to grab or hold with firmness”
- b. It’s not drifting from the dock and tying up somewhere else!
- c. **IT IS FOR LIFE!** (Not masking tape, but super glue!)
- d. KEY: Never consider divorce an option!
- e. “What GOD has joined together...” Matt 19:6
 - 1. Don’t prematurely sever marriage by divorce, but only by death.
 - 2. **Embalming & divorce**: 2 things not to be done before their time!
- f. We must learn to live with and just accept some things like our bodies, the day of our death, and the people we have chosen to marry.
- g. **Choose your love and love your choice!**

#3 UNITY

- a. "Shall **become** one..." It's a PROCESS designed perfectly by GOD for us.
- b. "Marriage is two becoming one and the whole time you are trying to figure out which one you are becoming!"
- c. This is a growth process you work **toward**.
 1. It's not just liking the same things (though that helps)!
 2. It's more than just **uniformity**.
- d. There must be **surrender**, or it becomes **uniformity, not unity!**
Illus.—Picture two cats with tails tied together thrown over a fence... is this union or unity???
- e. Unity involves the willingness to **blend wills**, YOURS with your MATE's!
 1. KEY: Look for mutual goals.
 2. "Love is not so much looking into each other's eyes, but looking in the same direction!"
 3. Only then will you become one!

THE GOAL: To grow closer to each other by molding each one's will to GOD's!

#4 INTIMACY

- a. They were "*both naked and not ashamed.*"
 1. This is literal, but broader than physical.
 2. It means no emotional barriers --- no covering up.
 3. Be emotionally naked and open before each other...not afraid!
- b. It's tragic when one can't share his/her life with the other.
 1. KEY: **Meaningful self-disclosure!**
 2. This requires some T.V. --- Transparent Vulnerability!
- c. Being totally open with each other's faults, knowing you are still loved anyway, and trusting this information will not be misused, then you will truly discover a **MARRIAGE MADE IN HEAVEN!**

CONCLUSION:

**THESE ARE GOD'S PRINCIPLES --- THEY WILL WORK TO BLESS US
IF WE WILL WORK TO USE THEM!!!**

“Unity”

**Man satisfies the woman;
Woman satisfies the man;
GOD blesses the union.**

**Man plants the seed;
Woman bears the child;
GOD gives the spirit.**

**Man sets the discipline standards;
Woman sets the love standards;
GOD balance discipline with love.**

**Man is the bread winner;
Woman is the bread warmer;
GOD is the bread provider.**

**Man is woman’s hero;
Woman is man’s cheerleader;
GOD is the coach.**

**Man leads as the woman’s head;
Woman follows as the man’s body;
GOD makes them become one flesh.**

**Man presents a picture of Christ;
Woman presents a picture of the church;
GOD makes them joint-heirs.**

MARRIAGE AS A SPIRITUAL COVENANT

Revised and adapted from Dr. Clark Warren's "The Triumphant Marriage" and Bill Gothard's "The True Significance of the Wedding Covenant."

"Set me as a seal upon thy heart..." Song of Solomon 8:6

INTRODUCTION: REFRESHING & INSTILLING MARITAL COMMITMENT

A. We have not entered into a "marriage contract" but a "marriage covenant!" (Mal 2:14, Prov 2:16f)

1. What exactly is a covenant?

a. A Hebrew word: "In the sense of cutting; a compact made by passing between pieces of flesh"

b. Examples are found in Gen 15:9-10, 17-18 and Jer 34:13, 18

2. Our forefathers began many wedding traditions and understood this well. Over time, the original meanings have been lost.

a. "The True Significance of the Wedding Covenant" booklet opened my eyes.

b. One covenant symbol: the different sides for seating the guests of the bride or groom represents the covenant relationship and the guests as "living sacrifices."

3. A marriage is sacred. It is spiritual...heavenly. (Matt 19:6)

a. A "holy triune not a human duet!"

b. If you break your vow to your mate, you may still have to keep your vow to God ("until death do you part" not "until divorce do you part").

c. "It is a snare to a man to say rashly, 'It is holy' and then to later make inquiry."
Prov 20:25 (½ of all divorces in 1997 occurred within the first two years!)

d. The difference between a **covenant** and a **contract**:

1) A covenant is based on **trust**---a contract on **distrust!**

2) A covenant is based on unlimited responsibility --a contract on limited liability.

Illustration: God's promise to Abraham and all He went through to keep His Word demonstrate unlimited responsibility. Just as the traditional words "...for better or for worse, for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health."

3) A covenant is lifelong and not to be broken --a contract can be voided by mutual consent.

Illustration: The rainbow in the sky reminds everyone that God's promise has no statute of limitations.

II. COVENANT SYMBOLISM IN THE WEDDING CEREMONY

- A. **The groom enters first—why? He is the initiator of the covenant.**
- B. **The father walks the bride down the aisle—why?**
 - 1. The parents are an important part of the ceremony.
 - 2. The father's duty is to present his daughter as a pure gift. (Deut 22:13-21)
 - 3. The white dress symbolizes purity.
- C. **The father gives the bride away to show the full blessing of the parents. This is the formal transfer of authority from the father to the groom after he has asked for the daughter's hand in marriage. (Num 30:4-8).**
- D. **The ring is a “token of the covenant.”**
- E. **The couple is introduced to establish the changing of names.**
 - 4. *Illustration:* Abram's name was changed to Abraham.
 - 5. Spiritually we wear the “new name” of Christian once we enter into a covenant relationship with God upon baptism.
- F. **What is the significance of the guest book?**
 - 6. It should be signed after—not before. It indicates there are witnesses to the covenant who have a vested interest in supporting the marriage.
 - 7. The Armenians have a low divorce rate. When a couple gets in trouble, the godparents move in until they get it settled!
- G. **What is the purpose of the receiving line? To give a blessing to the couple as in Ruth 4:11, 14f.**
- H. **The food at the reception is for the covenant celebration. This is very similar to the Lord's supper.**
- I. **The couple feeds each other cake and they become “one flesh” in the eating of the cake, just as we become one in the eating of the bread. (I Cor 11:24f)**

III. DO WE HAVE A PROBLEM WITH KEEPING VOWS & COMMITMENTS TODAY?

- A. **A lax attitude in general makes the taking of our vows seriously difficult.**
 - 1. Ronald Reagan in 1981 fired the air traffic controllers because they broke a contractual agreement. Doubtful that would happen today.
 - 2. During the revolutionary war both sides respected vows so much that they avoided taking prisoners. Instead they simply made them promise they would not return to fight again. If they violated their honor and did so, then they were executed.
- B. **Examine these scriptures that apply to the taking of vows:**
 - 1. Ecc 5:2-7
 - 2. Ps 15:4b (Zion dweller - swears to his own hurt and changes not!!!)
 - 3. Num 30:2
 - 4. I Sam 1:11-21 (Hannah's vow)
 - 5. Josh 9:16-20

C. Commitment: the cornerstone of a triumphant marriage!

1. Consider the following quote about the nature of commitment:

“**COMMITMENT** ... is what transforms a promise into reality. It is the words that speak boldly of your intentions. It is the actions that speak louder than words. It is making the time when there is none, coming through time after time, year after year. Commitment is the stuff character is made of, the power to change the face of things. It is the daily triumph of integrity over skepticism.”

2. “*Marriage demands toughness, and toughness proceeds out of commitment. No marriage will ever be stronger than the commitments that serve as its infrastructure.*”

D. We ask couples to say some hard-hitting, heavy-duty vows before they get married. So where do we go wrong?

1. Are vows **treated superficially** with the preacher left to “perform” the ceremony? The couple is so nervous they hardly think about or realize the significance.

- a. I encourage couples to **write their own vows** and wedding ceremony.
- b. Suggestion: Save the ceremony and go over it ...at least once a year on your wedding anniversary.

2. It is important that what you have vowed to each other be kept current and fresh! It is so easy to forget.

E. What matters is your current level of commitment

1. Often, the vows seem less vital and are less passionately held as time passes.

2. Sadly, many only vaguely remember what they said.

3. The commitment should be *active* not passive!!

Illustration: One may stay in a marriage by being passive. S/he doesn’t leave, but doesn’t *do anything* to make the marriage better either. Don’t forget the *positive*, radical part of **active commitment**.

IV. WE NEED THOROUGH, INSIGHTFUL UNDERSTANDING OF MARITAL PROMISES

A. We need a “promise orientation” that is highly enlightened.

B. The traditional vows have 6 separate parts:

1. I will **love you** as long as we both live (kindness, sacrifice)

2. I will **cherish and honor** you as long as we both live (thoughtfulness, attentiveness)

3. I will be to you what a husband or wife owes to a spouse (dedication to doing my part and meeting the other’s needs)

4. I will **take you as you are** (acceptance)

5. I will **forsake all others** (faithfulness!!)

6. I will do all these things **for better or worse, in sickness and in health** (unconditionally serve and stay with you for as long we live)

C. WOW! What does that mean, practically speaking??

- 1.If we disagree, frustrate, disappoint, or hurt each other....?
- 2.If I think I don't get what I deserve...?
- 3.If I express how I feel, regardless of hardship...? I will keep my vows!

D. Now, REHEARSE THE PROMISES until they are BURNED INTO OUR BRAINS.

- 1.Marriage vows are usually spoken a single time, thus they have very little value in a marital crisis.
- 2.Dr. Clark Warren, author of "The Triumphant Marriage", suggests a change in frequency of the marriage vows.
 - a. Instead of "once-in-a-lifetime", 2 or 3 times a week for the first 10 years, and at least once a week for the rest of the marriage.
 - b. Verbalized regularly over a long period of time for tremendous power!!
 - c. HOW? Find a way that is natural, meaningful, and even fun! BE CREATIVE!!
- 3.What about you?
 - a. The more you can find **new and creative ways** to affirm the commitment the better.
 - b. **Recite it over and over** so that when troubles come the brain will trigger new ideas on how to fulfill these vows!!

CONCLUSION:

- A. **Do your homework! Write your own concise summary of your vows.**
- E. **Your marriage will benefit dramatically from a simple exercise designed to help both partners clarify and articulate promises.**

Here is a sample of what Gail and I came up with after looking over our original ceremony and thinking about the basic, most important needs that we each share.

I PROMISE...
(A renewal of our vows from Brent to Gail)

I promise I will do everything in my power to help you get to heaven,
to **accept you**, and to **remain loyal** to you **always**.

I promise to put **you and our marriage second only to God** and to be **open**
and honest with you always as we strive for **oneness**.

I promise I will **cherish, honor, and support you in good times and bad**
and strive to love you **selflessly, like Christ loves the church**, as I
meet your **deepest needs**.

I promise to **pilot, provide, and protect** you and our family and to do these things
unconditionally until death do us part...so help me God!!

I PROMISE...

(A renewal of vows from Gail to Brent)

I promise I will do everything in my power to help you get to heaven,
to **accept you**, and to **remain loyal** to you **always**.

I promise to put **you and our marriage second only to God** and to be **open
and honest with you always** as we strive for **oneness**.

I promise to **admire, honor, and obey you in good times and bad**
and strive to be an excellent **keeper at home** and be **sensitive to your deepest needs**.

I promise to **love you** and to do all these things
unconditionally until death do us part...so help me God!!

(Since God has provided us with *role-based relationships*, I suggest you have different vows which focus in on each role. For help look at the handout of scriptures on pages 14-16 that I have provided for you entitled "**The Most Important Words about Husband and Wife.**")

Refreshing and Re-instilling Marital Commitment (Commitment and Vows in Marriage)

WORKSHEET: STEPS TO RECONSTRUCT AND REFRESH YOUR VOWS

(Your marriage will benefit dramatically from this simple exercise designed to help both of you clarify and articulate the promises you have made to each other.)

1. What do you remember most about your wedding vows from memory? Quickly brainstorm together on a separate sheet of paper and see what you can piece together.

2. What vows have you heard said by others that you liked? Reflect upon what you have come to understand as vitally important to you and your marriage since your wedding day that could be added to a new, updated set of vows that you decide to commit to each other. Brainstorm together. Ask your mate for ideas as to what is important to him or her.

3. Look over the 6 parts listed on the handout for the traditional marriage vows and use this as a guide to help you reconstruct your vows. Can you put them in your own words that will have special meaning to you?

4. Given the different roles that God gives the man and the woman in marriage, look over the handout "The Most Important Words about Husband and Wife". Select from the scriptures some key concepts that reflect your unique roles that God would have you to commit to each other.

5. Condense all this into a brief list that you can both memorize and say to each other on a regular basis!! Periodic rewrites of the commitment statement will make it stronger and more meaningful.

Congratulations--you have done it!

Now write it out on a card, commit it to memory, and say it to each other regularly. You will crave and enjoy hearing your mate talk about the special kind of love you both share as you repeat your promises to each other. And let the kids overhear you say it or say it in front of them--it will teach them valuable lessons about marriage!!

The Most Important Words About Husband & Wife

*“As therefore **God’s** picked **representatives**, purified and beloved, put on that nature which is **merciful** in action, **kindly** in heart, **humble** in mind. Accept life, and be most **patient** and **tolerant** with one another, always ready to **forgive** if you have a difference with anyone. Forgive as freely as the Lord has forgiven **you**. And, above everything else, **be truly loving**, for love binds all the virtues together in perfection. **Let the peace of Christ guide all your decisions**, for you were called to live as one, united body; and always **be thankful**. **Let the full richness of Christ’s teaching find a home among you...***

~ Colossians 3:12-16a (Phillips)

“Let all bitterness and indignation and wrath [passion, rage, bad temper] and resentment [anger, animosity] and quarreling [brawling, clamor, contention] and slander [evil speaking, abusive, and blasphemous language] be banished from you, with all malice [spite, ill-will, or baseness of any kind].

~ Ephesians 4:31 (Amplified)

*“Wherefore, **accept one another**, just as **Christ** also accepted **us** to the glory of God.”*

~ Romans 15:7 (New American Standard)

*“**Be subject to one another** [“fit in with” each other] out of reverence for **Christ**...You **WIVES** must learn to adapt yourselves to your husbands, as you submit yourselves to the **Lord**, for the husband is the head of the wife in the **same way** that Christ is the head of the church and savior to the body. The willing subjection of the church to Christ should be reproduced in the submission of wives to their husbands in everything.”*

~ Ephesians 5:21 (Amplified)

*“In a similar way you wives should be submissive to your own husbands, so that if any of them will **not** be persuaded by the **message**, they may without message be won over by the **conduct** of their wives, as they observe your **chaste** and **respectful** behavior.”*

~ 1 Peter 3:1,2 (New Berkeley)

* * * * *

*“...Let the wife see that she **respects** and **reverences** her husband, that she **notices** him, **regards** him, **honors** him, **prefers** him, **venerates** him and **esteems** him; and that she **defers to him**, **praises** him, and **loves** and **admires** him exceedingly.*

~ Ephesians 5:33 (Amplified)

*“For this cause a man shall **leave** his father and his mother, and shall **cleave** to his wife; and they shall become **one** flesh.”*

~ Gen. 2:24 (New American Standard)

*“Consequently, they are no longer **two**, but **one** flesh. What therefore **God** has joined together, **let no man separate.**”*

~ Matthew 19:6 (New American Standard)

*“**Take heed** then, to your spirit, and **let no one deal treacherously against the wife of your youth.** For I **hate** divorce, says the Lord...”*

~ Malachi 2:15b, 16a (New American Standard)

*“The **HUSBAND** must give his wife the **same sort of love** that **Christ** gave to the church, when **He sacrificed Himself for her**...So men ought to give their wives the love they naturally have for their **own bodies**. The love a man gives his wife is the extending of his love for **himself** to enfold **her**. Nobody ever hated his own body; he **feeds** it and **looks after** it.”*

~ Ephesians 5:25,28-29a (Phillips)

*“...Let each man of you [without exception] **love** his wife [as being in a sense] his **very own** self.”*

~ Ephesians 5:33a (Amplified)

*“Husbands, **love** your wives - be **affectionate** and **sympathetic** with them - and do **not be harsh** or **bitter** or **resentful** toward them.”*

~ Colossians 3:19 (Amplified)

*“...You husbands need to live **understandingly** with your wives as with a **weaker** vessel, rendering them honor as **joint heirs** with you of the grace of life, so that your **praying** may not be **hindered.**”*

~ 1 Peter 3:7 (New Berkeley)

*“Love **endures long** and is **patient** and **kind**; love **never** is **envious** nor boils over with **jealousy**; it is **not boastful** or **vainglorious**, does not display itself **haughtily**. It is **not conceited**, arrogant and inflated with pride; it is **not rude** [unmannerly], and **does not act unbecomingly**. Love [God’s love in us] does **not insist** on its **own rights** or its own way, for it is not self-seeking. It is not touchy or fretful or resentful; it **takes no account of the evil done to it** - pays no attention to a suffered wrong. It does not rejoice at injustice and unrighteousness, but rejoices when right and truth prevail. Love **bears up under anything** and **everything** that comes, is **ever ready to believe the best of every person**, its hopes are fadeless under **all** circumstances, and it **endures everything** [without weakening]. **Love never fails** - never fades out or becomes obsolete or comes to an end... And so faith, hope, love abide; [faith, conviction, and belief respecting man’s relation to God and divine things; hope, joyful and confident expectation or eternal salvation; love, true affection for God and man, growing out of God’s love for us and in us], these three, but the **greatest of these is love.***

~ 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a, 13 (Amplified)

*“Do two walk **together**, except they...have **agreed**?”*

- Amos 3:3 (Amplified)

*“**Two are better than one** because they have a good return for their labor. For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up.”*

~ Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 (New American Standard)

*“So let us then definitely aim for and eagerly pursue what makes for **harmony** and for **mutual upbuilding** [edification and development] of one another.”*

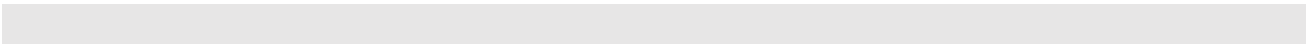
~ Romans 14:19 (Amplified)

*“...Being of the **same** mind, maintaining the **same love, united**, intent on **one** purpose. Do nothing from **selfishness** or **empty conceit**, but with **humility of mind** let each of you **regard the other as more important than himself**; do not merely look out for your **own** personal interests, but also for the interests of **others**.”*

~ Philippians 2:2-4 (New American Standard)

*“Whether, then, you eat or drink or **whatever you do**, do **all** to the glory of God.”*

~ I Corinthians 10:31 (New American Standard)



THE MARRIAGE CREED

- **COMFORT EACH OTHER...**Provide a refuge and sanctuary for each other from the chill winds of the world. Your marriage is a hearth, from whence comes the peace, harmony, and warmth of soul and spirit.
- **CARESS AS YOU WOULD BE CARESSED...**Warm your loved one's body with your healing touch. Remember that as babies can die with lack of touching, so marriages can wither from lack of closeness.
- **BE A FRIEND AND PARTNER...**Friendship can be a peaceful island, separate and apart, in a world of turmoil and strife. Reflect upon the tranquility of the many future years you can share with a true friend and beware of becoming battling enemies under the same roof.
- **BE OPEN WITH ONE ANOTHER...**Bind not yourselves in the secretness that causes suspicion and doubt. Trust and reveal yourselves to each other, even as the budding rose opens to reveal its fragrance and beauty. **REALLY LISTEN...**and hear not only words, but also the non-language of tone, mood, and expression. Learn to listen in order to understand rather than listening to argue.
- **RESPECT EACH OTHER'S RIGHTS...**Remember that each is a person of flesh and blood, entitled to his or her own choices and mistakes. Each owns himself and has the right to equality.
- **ALLOW FOR INDIVIDUALITY...**Seek not to create for each other a new mold that can only fit with much discomfort and pain. Accept the other as he or she is, just as you would have yourself accepted.
- **GIVE MUTUAL APPROVAL...**Remember, criticism divides while compliments encourage confidence in the other. Hasten not to point out the other's mistakes, for each will soon discover his own.
- **CHERISH YOUR UNION...**Let no one come between your togetherness...not child, not friend, not worldly goods. Yet maintain enough separateness to allow each other his or her own uniqueness.
- **LOVE ONE ANOTHER...**Love is your river of life---your eternal source of re-creating yourselves. Above all else---love one another.

HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER

Exodus 20:12, Ephesians 6:2

INTRODUCTION

- A. Key Foundational Principle
- B. Definition:
 - 1. Webster's: "High **respect** as to someone's worth or rank. Official dignity, to hold someone in **public esteem**, to give credit, fame, or glory."
 - 2. Vine's: "Putting high value upon a person, esteeming them highly, includes financial support if needed" (1 Tim. 5:3, 17).
 - a) Parents deserve honor simply because they are parents and God has put them in a position of authority over their children. If you have worthy parents that deserve respect it is a wonderful blessing, but if not, the command is still applicable!
 - b) A good example of this is how David treated Saul.
- C. Honor is to be found everywhere – Rom. 13:7.
 - 1. Wives & husbands – 1 Peter 3:5-6
 - 2. Husbands & wives – 1 Peter 3:7
 - 3. Citizens – "King" – 1 Peter 2:13-18
 - 4. Young – elders – 1 Peter 5:5
- D. Lack of Honor is age old problem. We must learn the lessons of history!
 - 1. Greeks – Socrates 2400 yrs. ago!
"Children have bad manners, show disrespect to elders and love chatter in the place of exercise. They have become tyrants, not servants of the household; they contradict their parents, and tyrannize their teachers!"
 - 2. Job – Job 19:18, 30:8ff
 - 3. Ancient Israel
 - a) Mocked Elisha – II Kings 2:23.
 - b) Reason for the fall – Isa. 3:5, 30:1, 8-9.
 - c) Explains why it was the "*first commandment with promise.*" God knew if they did not honor their parents they would not honor Him and that they would violate the law, which would cause them to not live long upon the land which God had given them.
 - 4. Top offenses in Public Schools – how times have changed!
 - a) 1940 – Talking, chewing gum, making noise, running, cutting in line, dress code violations, littering.
 - b) 1990 – Drug abuse, alcohol abuse, pregnancy, suicide, rape, robbery, assault.

5. Wm. Bennett's "Index of Leading Cultural Indicators." Comparison 1960/1990.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| a) 80 point drop SAT scores | d) 200% increase in teen suicide |
| b) 419% increase illegitimate births | e) 560% increase in violent crime! |
| c) 300% increase in single mothers | f) 300% increase of welfare children |

III. PARENTS MUST CULTIVATE AN ATTITUDE OF RESPECT & HONOR

- A. Do not allow nonverbal defiance. "The eye that mocketh at his father and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out and the young eagles shall eat it." Prov. 30:17
1. "Fear every man his mother and father." Lev 19:3
 2. Watch tone of voice talking back!
 3. Train children to say "Yes, Dad," and "Yes, Mom," not "What?"
- B. Key principle: Discipline, attitudes and behaviors will take care of themselves.

IV. HONORING PARENTS IS THE FOUNDATION OF SOCIETY

- A. Placement in the Ten Commandments (#5) is significant. After one gets their relationship with God right then the very first step in getting along with your fellow man is to learn respect for authority at home.
- B. If not, what about teachers, policemen, elders, marriage vows?
- C. Ever known a vandal or delinquent who honored his/her parents?
- D. If children are not taught to respect us (who they can see), how do we expect them to respect God (who they can't see)?

V. NOT RESPECTING PARENTS IN THE O.T. WAS A CAPITAL OFFENSE

- A. See Deut. 21:18-21; Matt. 15:4.
- B. Why? The punishment fits the crime! This is the reason why today we should save the most severe punishments for willful defiance!
- C. Nave's - Eight ways to dishonor parents:
- | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Stubbornness (Deut. 21:18-20) | 5. Strife in household (Micah 7:6) |
| 2. Lack Respect (Deut. 27:16) | 6. Failure to provide (Mk. 7:11) |
| 3. Despising mother (Prov.15:20) | 7. By disobedience (II Tim. 3:2) |
| 4. Cursing their father (Prov. 30:11) | 8. By striking (Ex. 21:15) |
- D. What does it mean for today? God would approve of capital punishment for young adults thirteen and up (the age when the Jews considered someone accountable under the law).

CONCLUSION:

- A. Dishonor is a serious infraction – it is something we should focus on!
- B. Remember we are not talking technical obedience, but attitude.
- C. It is the parent's responsibility to teach. If they don't learn it from us, who will they learn it from? True Respect Can't Be Demanded, But Earned! Live a righteous life!

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

1. One **GOD**
2. **GOD** is Spirit
3. **GOD** is Holy
4. **GOD** of deliverance

RELATIONSHIP WITH MAN

5. Honor Father and Mother
6. Respect for life
7. Respect for Marriage Vows
8. Respect for others' property
9. Respect for truth
10. Guard all thoughts

HOW TO INSTILL HONOR & KEEP YOUR CHILDREN UNDER LOVING COMMAND

(Exodus 20:12)

INTRODUCTION

- A. Rodney Dangerfield quips: “I just don’t get no respect.” When a parent feels that from his children, there is no greater pain.
 - 1. Shakespeare – “Sharper than a serpent’s fang is a thankless child.”
 - 2. Prov. 19:26 – “He that disrespects his father, and chaseth away his mother, is a son that causeth shame, and bringeth reproach.”
 - 3. Prov. 17:21 – “The father of a fool (scoffer) hath no joy.”
- B. Honor is such a *key principle*. Teaching children to honor us as parents is foundational to help them show honor and respect to all authority figures—including God Himself. A key principle of successful parenting to make sure the children learn I Peter 2:17 well – “Show proper respect to everyone.”

I. WHAT CAN A PARENT DO TO PRACTICALLY INSTILL HONOR?

- A. Treat *them* with respect. Practice the golden rule. Matt. 7:12
 - 1. Discipline but don’t humiliate – there is a huge difference.
 - a) Don’t discipline in front of peers or others. Discipline, criticize in *private*.
 - b) Don’t flick on the mouth or slap on the face. With younger children use a switch on the back of the legs/rear-end. “Mourning” needs to take place on the part of the child but it needs to be induced in a way that is not abusive.
 - c) I do not recommend exercising corporal discipline once children get into their teens. Phase it out as they get older. Use reason and the revoking of privileges instead. It is much more appropriate as they become young adults.
 - 2. Don’t eavesdrop or open their mail. (Only exception would be unless trust has been seriously violated.)
- B. **Respect each other** – talk respectfully *to them* and *to your spouse*.
 - 1. Children often talk to the mother and father the way they observe the father and mother talking to each other. How the mother submits to the husband will speak volumes as to how the children will submit to the parents.
 - 2. Show honor to your own mother and father. Do you talk about and treat them in the way you want to be treated?
- C. **Teach them about the gift of honor** as it relates to other people and especially older people (Lev. 19:32; Prov. 16:31). *People must be valued above things*.
 - 1. Teach them to be *courteous* and to practice good manners. Remember: “Good manners begin at home.”
 - 2. *“I am a little thing with big meaning. I help everybody. I unlock doors, open hearts, and dispel prejudice. I create friendships and good will. I inspire respect and admiration. Everybody loves me; I bore nobody. I violate no law. I cost nothing. Many have praised me: none have condemned me. I am pleasing to those of low and high degree. I am useful*

every moment of the day. IAM COURTESY.”

3. Nothing is as inexpensive yet as priceless as courtesy.
 4. Examples: Say “Excuse me,” “Pardon me,” “Thank you,” “You are welcome,” “Nice to meet you.” Teach them to look people in the eyes when they meet someone. To let guests go first, give your seat to a lady, open doors, practice good table manners, etc.
 5. Stress that the point behind all of this is to be thoughtful and considerate and to honor others in treating them respectfully. The point is to make people feel comfortable ... not “stuffy.”
- D. Be Real. Matt. 5:8 “Blessed are the pure in heart.” Pure – Genuine!
1. Admit when you have made a mistake and ask their forgiveness, just as you expect them to apologize to you. Jesus in the Lord’s prayer says, “Forgive us our trespasses even as we forgive those who have trespassed against us”(Matt. 6:12).
 2. Our ultimate faith must be in God, not people – and that includes parents who will at times make mistakes. Always point your children to a higher standard!
- E. Avoid Double Standards. Jas. 1: 8 “A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.”
1. “Don’t do as I do, but do as I say” brings rebellion.
 2. Kids see through hypocrisy – it breeds resentment.
- F. **Be a parent, not a buddy.** Concentrate on being *respected* in the *long run*, not being *liked* in the *short run*. We are to “raise them up” to a higher standard – not to lower ourselves to their immaturity. “Train them up” (Prov. 22:6) connects the same idea.
1. **Objection:** “I don’t want to discipline my children because I love them too much.” Translated: “I have such low self-esteem I can’t stand even the short-term rejection that discipline might bring.”
 2. Prov. 29:15 – “The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother.”
 3. Prov. 13: 24 – “He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him *diligently*.” Heb. Diligent = “to the point of exhaustion.”

SOMEDAY I’LL TELL MY CHILDREN:

“You don’t love me!” How many times have your kids laid that one on you? And how many times have you as a parent, resisted the urge to tell them how much? Someday, when my children are old enough to understand the logic that motivates a mother, I’ll tell them ...

- I loved you enough to bug you about where you were going, with whom, and what time you would get home.
- I loved you enough to be silent and let you discover your hand-picked friend was a creep.
- I loved you enough to make you return a Milky Way with a bite out of it to a drugstore and confess, “I stole this.”
- I loved you enough to stand over you for two hours while you cleaned your bedroom, a job that would have taken me 15 minutes.
- I loved you enough to not make excuses for your lack of respect or your bad manners.
- I loved you enough to ignore “what every other mother did.”
- I loved you enough to figure you would lie about the party being chaperoned but forgive you for it after discovering I was right.

- I loved you enough to let you stumble, falter and fail so that you could learn to stand alone.
 - I loved you enough to accept you for what you are, not what I wanted you to be.
 - But most of all, I loved you enough to say “no” when you hated me for it. That was the hardest part of all.
4. Don’t underestimate your children. They can be shrewd, clever, and insightful. Don’t be *naïve* – if you allow them, they can manipulate you.
 5. Your children are of *equal worth* – *but not rank*, and the distinct role of parent and child should not be blurred. Your child needs a respected authority figure more than he/she needs another “buddy.”
- G. Don’t let your children ignore you – it is disrespectful!
1. Little children – Gentle reminder at first: “Where are your ears?”
 2. Be very skeptical of “I forgot.” Some things you don’t forget. Discipline will help them to “remember.”
- H. Teach them to respect your word by keeping it and to expect the same from you.
1. Dad: “Make promises sparingly and keep them faithfully.”
 - a) Prov. “A liar is an abomination to Jehovah, but he that deals truthfully is His delight.”
 - b) I Peter 3:10-11 “Let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips should speak no guile (deceit) ... let him seek peace and pursue it.”
 2. What if you threaten your kids with things you never intend to follow through on? Illust. “Knock your block off,” “Ring your neck,” “Grounded for a month.”
 3. Children have a keen sense of fair play. If you make a habit of idle threats where you break promises – you **break trust**. Don’t back down on your word once given.
 4. Expect your children to come the first time, not the third time after you have had to yell and get upset.

II. KEEPING YOUR CHILDREN UNDER LOVING COMMAND

INTRODUCTION

FOUR BASIC TYPES OF PARENTING

- A. The *Dominant* Parent – Authoritarian – “Do as I say, because I say so.”
- B. The *Neglectful* Parent – “Too busy with my own life to care.”
- C. The *Permissive* Parent – “No rules – do mostly what you want.”
- D. The *Loving and Firm* Parent – Authoritative – Firm guidelines that must be followed, consequences when they are not, but love and acceptance is the environment in which it all takes place. You can be both *tough and tender* at the same time!

- A. The scriptures teach the necessity of starting while children are young.
AN IMPORTANT KEY IS: **GRAB THE REIGNS OF AUTHORITY EARLY.**
 - 1. “Discipline your son while there is hope, and do not desire his death.” (Prov. 19:18)
This implies a time will come when hope may be gone!
 - 2. “He that spares his rod *hates* his son, but he that loves him chastens him betimes.”
Note: “betimes” = “diligently, early, immediately.”
- B. By starting young, you will better be able to *break their will but not their spirit*. The longer you wait the more difficult it becomes. Why is this so important?
 - 1. Illustration: Have you ever wondered why young children can learn to speak perfect Russian, Chinese, Spanish, Hebrew or any other language to which they are exposed? No trace of an accent will be manifested.
 - 2. Yet 20 or more years later most individuals will only be able to approximate the sound made by natives of the particular region.
 - a) Researchers now know why this is true. It is explained by a process known as “phoneme contraction” (or “sound dropout”).
 - b) The larynx of a young child assumes a shape necessary to make the sound he is learning to use at the time. It then solidifies or hardens in those positions, making it impossible or very difficult to make other sounds later in life.
 - 3. Thus, there is a brief *window of opportunity* when anything is possible, linguistically. It will soon be history.
 - a) A child’s attitude toward parental authority is similar. He or she passes through a brief window of opportunity during late infancy and toddlerhood when respect and “awe” can be instilled.
 - b) That pliability will not last long.
 - c) If the child’s early reach for power is successful, he or she will not willingly give it up.
 - d) CONSIDER: Prov. 22:15 - “Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; but the rod of discipline will remove it far from him.” THE LONGER YOU WAIT TO “DRIVE IT FROM THEM” THE HARDER IT WILL BE!
- C. This is not accomplished by being harsh, gruff or stern. Instead, the **relationship is produced by confident and steady leadership**. You are the boss. You are *in charge*. If you believe it, the child will accept it also.
 - 1. Illustration: Mother of a six-month-old child who could not tell the doctor for sure whether or not her child had a fever because “he wouldn’t let me insert the thermometer.”

2. If the parent is insecure, the child will sense it and step into the power vacuum that is created.
3. Consider the following: Susannah Wesley, mother of the eighteenth-century evangelists John and Charles Wesley, reportedly raised seventeen healthy godly children. Toward the end of her life, John asked her to express her philosophy of mothering to him in writing. Consider carefully what she has to say:

“In order to form the minds of children, the first thing to be done is to conquer the will, and bring them into an obedient temper. To inform the understanding is a work of time, and must with children proceed by slow degrees as they are able to bear it; but the subjecting of the will is a thing which must be done at once, and the sooner the better!

For by neglecting timely correction, they will contract a stubbornness and obstinacy which is hardly ever after conquered, and never without using such severity as would be painful to me as to the children. In the esteem of the world, those who withhold timely correction would pass for kind and indulgent parents, whom I call cruel parents, who permit their children to get habits which they know must afterward be broken. Nay, some are so stupidly fond as in sport to teach their children to do things which in the after a while, they must severely beat them for doing.

Whenever a child is corrected, it must be conquered; and this will be no hard manner to do, if it be not grown headstrong by too much indulgence. And, if the will of a child is totally subdued, and if it be brought to revere and stand in awe of the parents, then a great many childish follies and inadvertencies may be passed by. Some should be overlooked and taken no notice of, and others mildly reprov'd. But no willful transgressions ought ever to be forgiven children, without chastisement, more or less as the nature and circumstances of the offences shall require.

I cannot dismiss this subject. As self-will is the root of all sin and majesty, so whatever cherishes this in children insures their after wretchedness and faithlessness. Whatever checks and mortifies, promotes their future happiness and piety. This is still more evident if we further consider that Christianity is nothing less than doing the will of God, and not our own; that the one grand impediment to our temporal and eternal happiness being this self will. No indulgence of it can be trivial, no denial unprofitable.”

- a) Does that sound harsh by twentieth-century standards? Different words might need to be used to guard against parental oppression and overbearance, but her understanding agrees with that of Dr. James Dobson:

“If the strong-willed child is allowed by indulgence to develop ‘habits’ of defiance and disrespect during his early childhood, those characteristics will haunt him for the next twenty years.”

- b) Note how Mrs. Wesley recommended overlooking “childish follies and inadvertencies,” but never to ignore “willful transgressions.” Notice what James Dobson had to say in his book Dare to Discipline. This part was dealing with what Mrs. Wesley called “follies and inadvertencies.”

“The issue of respect can be a useful tool in knowing when to punish and how excited one should get about a given behavior. First, the parent should decide whether an undesirable behavior represents a direct challenge of his authority - to his position as the father or mother.

Punishment should **depend on that evaluation**. For example, suppose little Walter is acting silly in the living room and he falls into a table, breaking many expensive china cups and other trinkets. Or suppose he loses a bicycle or leaves Dad’s best saw out in the rain. These are acts of childish irresponsibility and should be handled as such. Perhaps the parent should have the child work to pay for the losses – depending on the age and maturity of the child, of course. However, these examples do not constitute direct challenges to authority.

- c) This is what Mrs. Wesley referred to as “willful transgressions.” Here is what James

Dobson recommended concerning this:

“The things that emanate from willful, haughty disobedience are in a different category altogether. In my opinion, spanking should be reserved for the moment a child (age ten or less) expresses a defiant, “I will not!” or “You shut up!” When a youngster tries this kind of stiff-necked rebellion, you had better take it out of him, and pain is a marvelous purifier. When nose to nose confrontation occurs between you and your child, it is not the time to send him to his room to pout. It is not appropriate to wait until poor, tired old Dad comes plodding in from work, just in time to handle the conflicts of the day. You have drawn a line in the dirt, and your child has deliberately flopped his big hairy toe across it. Who is going to win? Who has the most courage? Who is in charge here? If you do not answer these questions conclusively for the child, he will precipitate other battles designed to ask them again and again. It is the ultimate paradox of childhood that a youngster wants to be controlled, but he insists that his parents earn the right to control him. This is not a philosophy born of harshness, it is conceived in love.”

- d) Corporal punishment is reserved specifically for moments of **willful, deliberate, on-purpose defiance** by a child who is **old enough to understand what he is doing**. These challenges to authority will begin at approximately fifteen months of age and should be met with loving firmness. A single stinging slap on the upper leg will be sufficient to say, “You just listen when I tell you no.” But in your persistence you will establish yourself as the leader to whom the child owes obedience. At the same time, however, you must seek numerous and continual ways of telling this youngster how much you adore him. That formula of love and discipline has been tested and validated over many centuries of time and it will work for you!

CONCLUSION

- A. One of the fundamental keys to parenting is “**Grab the reins of authority early.**”
- B. Consider using corporal punishment specifically to deal with willful defiance. Be determined to **win every conflict of the wills** and your job as parent will be much easier.
- C. Couple tender love and affection with strong discipline and you will earn your child’s love and respect for a lifetime! *The Key is Balance.*

TURNING PAST FAILURES INTO PRESENT SUCCESSES

“Replication or Repudiation plus Responsibility”

INTRODUCTION

- A. Jonathan Edwards/Max Duke comparison: “In the early 1700s, two men developed distinct reputations for themselves—one was Jonathan Edwards, a man of integrity, refinement and Christian character, and the other was Max Duke, a well-known criminal. During the last two hundred years, their descendants have been traced. In Jonathan Edward’s line of descendants are 13 college presidents, 200 preachers, 60 prominent leaders, 90 physicians, 32 authors, 6 professionals and 300 farmers. On the other hand, Max Duke’s descendants include 90 prostitutes, 100 criminals, 145 confirmed drunkards, 300 delinquents, and 285 who contracted various evil social diseases.”
1. It is **amazing** – the effect of one person’s influence!
 2. The Ten Commandments establish this principle. (Ex. 20:4-5)
- B. It is easiest to simply blend in, BUT we are **free moral agents!**
1. We can **replicate** (repeat).
 2. We can **repudiate** (consciously choose NOT to repeat).
 3. We can be **responsible** (make the right choices).
- C. THESIS: I. Replication – powerful!
 II. Repudiation – pitfalls!
 III. Responsibility – key!

I. REPLICATION

- A. Background and overview
1. Each of us has 2 families:
 - a) A family of *orientation*
 - b) A family of *outcome*
 2. How we respond to “a” determines “b:”
 - a) We either *replicate* – repeat.
 - b) Or we *repudiate* – change.
- B. We see the overwhelming strength of replication:
1. In MARRIAGES AND FAMILIES!
 2. It is *easier* to replicate/repeat what you are used to than to change.
- C. It’s so influential that we often repeat even things we hated while growing up!
1. Paul’s struggle: *“For the good which I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I practice.”* Rom. 7:19
 - a) Example: Divorce tends to be contagious.

- b) Example: Child abuse is often carried out by those abused.
- 2. Abraham *lied* (half truth), Isaac & Rebecca, Jacob & Esau.
- 3. There is amazing comfort in **familiarity** – even if it’s painful.
- D. The children of Israel came out of Egypt.
 - 1. They left bitter bondage. (Ex. 1:11, 13-14)
 - 2. They wanted to return – but why? (Num. 11:5)
 - 3. Their fixation on the **past** destroyed the possibility of a **better future**.
- E. We tend to raise our children EXACTLY THE WAY WE WERE RAISED.
 - 1. Small wonder Ecc. 6:11 says, “Wisdom is good for an inheritance ...”
 - 2. And the psalmist says, “... more to be desired than fine gold.”

II. REPUDIATION

- A. “We are all affected by our past, but we are **not prisoners of it**.”
 - 1. “Repent and turn to God, doing works worthy of repentance.” Acts 26:20
 - 2. Overcoming sinful habits is not easy! **BUT IT IS A MATTER OF CHOICE!!**
- B. Major pitfall: the tendency to over-react (extremes!)
 - 1. Illustration: Corinth first refused to withdraw from someone that they should have; and then to correct it, they refused to accept him back into fellowship as they should have! This is a typical example of repudiation.
 - 2. Illustration: the children of Israel
 - a) 1st generation – **zealous!**
 - b) 2nd generation – **apathetic!**
 - c) 3rd generation – **rebellious!**

(They “*forsook Jehovah!*” They decided to be independent of their parents by repudiating too much. – Judges 2:12)

III. RESPONSIBILITY

- A. Learn from the past – make choices, NOT EXCUSES!
 - 1. Adam and Eve – With their first sin, both tried to blame the other.
 - 2. Today no one seems responsible for his own actions.
- B. Don't blame your parents!
 - 1. Ezekiel said, “The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are *set on edge*.” That generation used this excuse. But God replied, “*This saying will be heard NO MORE!*” Ezek. 18:2-4
 - 2. See following handout (“Don’t Blame Your Parents”).
- C. What makes a man or woman great? Those who have the courage and character to repudiate bad parenting and make the right choices!
 - 1. Hezekiah’s father was a very wicked king.
 - 2. Abraham’s father was an idolater.
 - 3. Gideon’s father was an idolater.

4. Jephthah's mother was a harlot, yet he became a mighty man. (Judges 11)

CONCLUSION:

- A. Replicate the good...Repudiate the bad! (II Cor. 5:10)
- B. We must all STOP MAKING EXCUSES & BE RESPONSIBLE!
- C. Repent! With God's help, be a Hezekiah, a Gideon, or a Jephthah.
- D. Do the 3-part assignment that follows. It is never too late to increase your insight and turn things around.
- E. *"Too many of us lose our peace of mind and security by allowing ourselves to be nailed on a cross between two thieves. On the one side is the thief of regrets over the past, and on the other, fear of the future."* Turn to God, receive forgiveness, put regrets behind you, and with His power take your past failures and transform them into present successes!

ASSIGNMENT TO APPLY THE PRINCIPLES

THREE PARTS:

Spend some time thinking seriously about these 3 items. Then on a separate sheet of paper write out your answers. Be as specific and thorough as possible.

I. Think about what things you *liked* about your upbringing and would like to **replicate or repeat**.

II. Think about and list the things you would like to *repudiate* and **take responsibility to change**.

III. Discuss how you will avoid the tendency to **over-react and simply go from one extreme to the other**.

This assignment is especially effective when done at a **young age**. I have felt very good about the results achieved when given to 18-19 year olds who have **only been out of their family of orientation** for a **short while**. They are able to **think clearly about what they would like** in their **new families of outcome** before they begin to **repeat or replicate bad habits**.

However, it is **never too late** to increase one's awareness in this area and with God's help become a **"transition person."** **Negative traits stop by choice** with this type of person and successive generations are spared the **negative consequences** of the bad traits being passed down to their descendants.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if each generation analyzed its past and decided to improve its family so that every generation got better and better instead of just repeated over and over the mistakes of the past?

You can be a part of making this happen!

DON'T BLAME YOUR PARENTS

by *Jacob H. Conn, M.D., Assistant Professor of Psychiatry, Johns Hopkins University Medical School.*

The unsuccessful, the unhappy at various periods in history have blamed their plight on numerous things - fate, the gods, demons, innate cussedness, or heredity. Today it is the fashion to hold one's parents accountable for every flaw, from plain laziness to mental illness: "I can't save money because my parents never taught me economy." "I'm a hypochondriac because my mother fussed so much about my health when I was little." "In childhood, I wasn't permitted to think for myself."

A woman I know actually blamed her parents for her unattractive appearance. Asked why she didn't wave her hair, powder her nose, or occasionally get a new hat, she answered plaintively, "When I was a child Mother always told me I wasn't good looking." It did not occur to her that as an adult it was up to her, and nobody else, to make the most of her looks.

The current notion is that little children are emotionally fragile, that you can wreck a child's whole future by loving him too little or too much, by teaching him the facts of life too late or too soon, by being too strict or too indulgent. Such half-baked misinterpretations of the importance of the formative years ignore the fact that most human beings are blessed with an inner strength. Actually, the average child is as tough psychologically as he is physically. Just as the body repels germs and viruses, so the mind has similar immunities and resistances to the unwise or unkind doing of parents.

History is full of examples of men and women who had unhappy childhoods and yet made a success of their lives. John Stuart Mill became a great philosopher and led a harmonious married life despite a father who never praised him, never allowed him to associate with other children, and relentlessly forced him to study night after night. Beethoven's ne'er-do-well father drove and exploited him shamelessly. Florence Nightingale's parents hemmed her in by all the restrictions that went with Victorian gentility and bitterly opposed her going into nursing.

Ordinary mortals likewise have the capacity to build worthwhile lives despite a past full of psychological handicaps. I do not deny that "parental rejection" or "over-domination" may genuinely handicap some individuals. But a human being is not a machine that once set rolling in the wrong direction is unable to change its course. The essence of maturity or "adjustment" is to make the most of yourself with whatever you have, which includes your physique, your mental endowments, your social opportunities, and your parents.

Almost daily in my practice I see patients who blame their failure to meet life on their parents instead of on themselves. A fearful, immature spinster wept that she "couldn't leave Mother." Yet her mother told me: "Doctor, I wish to goodness you'd help her, so that she'd go and get married." Nothing tied this woman to her mother's apron strings but knots of her own making.

"No wonder I'm the way I am," a seriously depressed man said to me. "Look!" He pulled from his pocket a yellowed newspaper clipping that told of his parents' double suicide twenty years before. He admitted that he had carried the clipping all those years. The heart of his problem was not the shocking memory but his compulsion to dwell on it.

Contrary to popular notion, mental illness or neuroticism is not caused by an event but by the way a person reacts to it. A disturbing incident is only the match which sets off the firecracker; it's the gunpowder within the cracker which actually causes the explosion. It is good old-fashioned character -- a compound of inherited tendencies and our ability to tolerate disappointments -- that determines whether we withstand childhood tragedies or whether they keep us down all our lives.

If it were true that what happens during childhood fixes us once and for all, everybody would be neurotic. Certain events in childhood are genuinely upsetting, among them weaning and a new baby in the family. But the normal individual outgrows his baby shoes.

The great majority of normal, healthy-minded youngsters manage, without special help, to cope matter-of-factly with their parents' antics. Just try to spoil a child who has such innate common sense that he doesn't need or want to be spoiled! Or try to dominate the average three-year-old. Children who do not have the neurotic need to be dependent will not be dominated. Maybe they react with tantrums. Maybe they argue. Maybe they are sullenly silent. But whatever the technique for maintaining their integrity, "Mom-ism" won't and can't wreck them.

The psychiatrist's job does not consist -- as many of my patients think -- of breaking apart a person's past so that he can lay his failings, weaknesses, and peculiarities right at his parents' door. All that a psychiatrist can do is to lead the patient to face the truth about his own wish to be dominated or sheltered or what not, and help him take a stand by himself. Once that point is reached, his past life matters very little. As Dr. Franz Alexander, a distinguished Chicago psychoanalyst put it, "The patient is suffering not so much from memories as from the incapacity to deal with the actual problems of the moment."

A single experience in adult life can so change human beings that it is sheer nonsense to maintain that their natures were immutably determined years before by what their parents said or did to them. A short illness turned St. Francis of Assisi from a frivolous, extravagant young man into a devout ascetic. Gay young blades marry and become serious and responsible husbands; gadabout young wives turn into settled stay-at-homes after the birth of a baby. The human organism is a going, changing concern, with the motives of the present its propelling force.

Too many of us with shortcomings are interested in asking, "How did it start?" Too few ask themselves, "Why do I keep it up"? A person must first make the frank self-admission, "I am worrisome -- or thriftless, or hypochondriac, or irresponsible -- because it suits some purpose of my own to be that way."

The cliché, "There are no problem children, only problem parents," is as extreme and fallacious a swing of the pendulum as the idea that all children were imps of Satan. Even a little child can be responsible for his own bad upbringing, for it takes two to make an emotional bargain. When a father is too authoritarian it may well be that he is so because the child craves being bossed. When a mother prolongs treating Junior like a baby it may be because she responds to his own need for protection. Children are not mere lumps of clay which adults mold. In the parent-child relationship, as in marriage, one personality modifies and plays upon another.

Parents can set the stage for the drama of their children's lives. They can supply inspiring or uninspiring examples of conduct, which will influence basic mental, physical, and spiritual growth. But acceptance or rejection of the background they give is a matter of the child's individual character.

PASSING ON VALUES TO THE NEXT GENERATION

INTRODUCTION:

Moody Monthly reports that only 20% of children growing up in denominational homes continue in their faith. Flavil Yeakly finds among churches of Christ that the average is about 50%. This is **DISTURBING ... TRAGIC ... WRONG!!!**

A. How do we instill beliefs and pass them on?

1. GOAL: churches of “**regeneration**”! God has no grandchildren. Each one must be a child of faith with his own convictions.
2. If our children’s faith is not their own, it is no different than an “inherited faith” from a denomination!
 - a) This lesson is for anyone who lives and works with children!
 - b) Everyone touched by the gospel will be concerned about all children, not just their own. (Mal. 4:6)
 - c) I want to go to Heaven where all of the children will be!
 - d) Considering the stats, we must do better!
3. To please God, we must teach His values.
 - a) Abraham (a friend of God) was diligent to “command his children and his household after him that they may keep the way of Jehovah and do righteousness and justice.” Gen. 18:19
 - b) Solomon declared, “A child left to his own shall grow up to bring shame to his mother.” Prov. 29:15

B. God, not humans, created values. They affect quality of life in the “here and now” as well as in the hereafter.

C. President Bush said the real crisis in our country revolved around values. I agree.

D. Tough choices become easy when you **decide** first what your values are!!!!!!

I. VALUES

A. Def.: “Those beliefs to which you attach worth.”

1. Some are more highly ranked than others. (Prov. 22:1)
2. Some are attached to supreme worth.

B. Values may focus on different areas.

1. Experiences (ex. Recreation)
2. Relationships (ex. David Gates’ song “Everything I Own”)
3. Objects (Remember: “**Things**” can be replaced!)

4. Abstract truth (Prov. 23:23) (“Never put passion above principle” -- from The Karate Kid)
- C. Determine your values.
1. First: Should be knowing and loving God. (Matt. 22:36f)
 2. Second: Should come from valuing what God values.

II. PASSING ON GOD’S VALUES (SEE DEUT. 6:1-8)

A. By **modeling**

1. “*That ye might do them*” BEFORE passing them on. (v. 1)
 - a) First and foremost, it’s our example. (v. 17)
 - b) Think: “Not taught, but caught!”
 - c) “Practice what you preach!”
2. What we live communicates powerfully!
 - a) Jesus: a **teacher** and a **doer**. (Acts 1:1)
 - b) The disciples were *transformed* by His modeling. (Acts 4:13)
 - c) “Don’t do as I do, do as I say” is a waste of breath.
 - d) Emerson stated, “What you are thunders in my ear so loudly, I can’t hear a word you’re saying!”
 - e) There is no substitute for godly living!

B. By **instructing**

1. “Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children.” (v. 7)
 - a) Hebrew root: “to whet or to sharpen.”
 - b) GOAL: Whet their appetites and sharpen their minds!
2. **Creativity** is essential! We’re competing with so much today!!!
3. Make God’s Word a **part** of them! (Deut. 6:8)
4. Resources available to help us teach godly values are better than ever!

C. By **discussing**

1. **Talking** is different from teaching.
 - a) Listen as much as you teach. Discuss with give and take.
 - b) This process helps our kids “internalize” their own values.
2. Don’t give “pat answers” and lectures. Help them think through erroneous ideas for themselves.
3. Jesus answered questions with questions – very effective teaching!

D. By **spending time** (v. 7)

1. Spiritual time goes beyond worship.
 - a) Teach when you “*sitteth in thy house.*”
 - b) Guide when you “*walketh by the way.*”
 - (1) Take walks and talk with your children.
 - (2) Today’s version: “When thou rideth down the road ...”
 - c) And don’t miss opportunities when you “*lieth down at night.*”
 - d) When you “*riseth up*” should not be forgotten either.
2. Make the time to do these things – it takes an effort to be available.

- a) Ben Franklin: "Time is the stuff life is made of." I can't give you anything more than my life! How powerful is that?
- b) "Quality vs. quantity time" --- A MYTH!
- 3. *"The most serious problem of TV is not poor programming but that it has destroyed the average family conversation at the evening meal. People are anxious to see their favorite programs and rush through the meal. What happened through the day, both big and small, is never discussed."* --- a quote from Dr. Graham Blainey, Chief Psychiatrist, Harvard University.
- 4. A National Merit Scholar study found the one common denominator of their recipients was that everyone reported having regular evening family meals. Parents spoke frequently about the value of education. Will our children's family-time memories be the same?

CONCLUSION

- A. If we commit to doing a better job of passing on godly values to our kids:
 - 1. We can save most rather than losing **HALF!**
 - 2. We gain zealous first-generation Christians, not a lukewarm second generation with no personal faith of its own!
- B. **BONUS:** When we are successful we are blessed to see our children and grandchildren personally choose to serve the Lord and live by His values! What a privilege.

BRITE MUSIC, Inc <http://www.britekids.com>

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Standin’ Tall



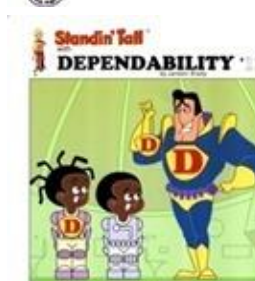
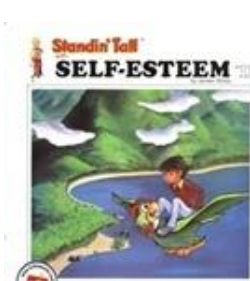
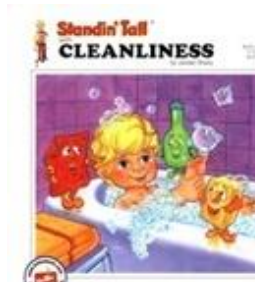
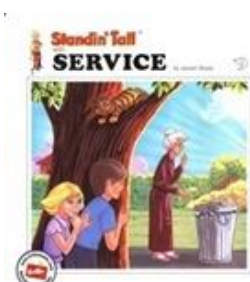
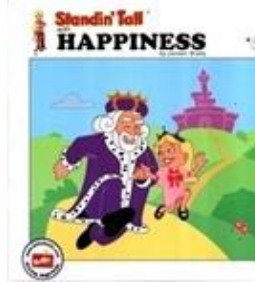
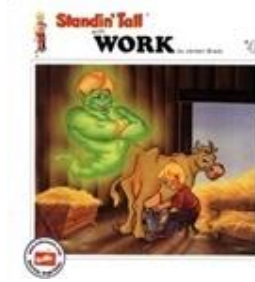
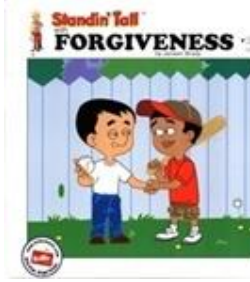
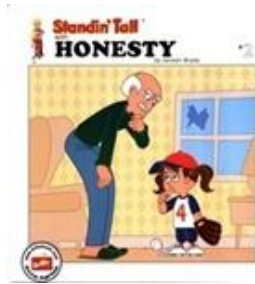
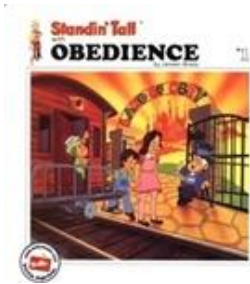
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