

The
Plain Truth
About
Child Rearing



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PREFACE

There is an old proverb that says, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and even when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Prov. 22:6, Jewish Publication Society translation).

Yet many have believed they followed that advice, only to discover when the child became an adult that he (or she) had departed from it completely. They think that Solomon meant training as

was not a "soul." The breathing physical man was the soul (Gen. 2:7). The spirit in him did not impart life to him. His breathing imparted the breath of life to his circulatory system. So says God.

Adam was made to need KNOWLEDGE that no animal can know. He was made to need three kinds of knowledge: 1) knowledge for contact and relationship with God, 2) knowledge to have relationship with other people, and 3) knowledge to deal with things—matter.

Adam was created with a human spirit by which of himself he could acquire knowledge. Man has acquired by himself knowledge to build houses, make and operate automobiles, airplanes, computers. He has developed a sense of good and evil, right and wrong. Yet in nearly 6,000 years man has never learned how to get along—to live in peace—with fellowman.

And man has not learned—and doesn't seem to want to know—how to have a close association with his Maker.

WHY? Because man was made with a human spirit, unlike animals, but he was made to need another Spirit—the Holy Spirit of God.

The Creator freely offered his Spirit, which also begets eternal LIFE, to Adam. The Holy Spirit would have imparted to him knowledge for contact and relationship with God—how to get along with his fellowman—how to treat his mate and rear his children. But Adam rejected the Spirit of God (tree of LIFE) and took TO HIMSELF the knowledge of good and evil. He decided to acquire and produce by himself his own knowledge. But God had not created in him the tools (his Holy Spirit) by which he could decide the right knowledge. Without the addition of God's Spirit, man with his own mind could only produce selfish, self-centered knowledge. Adam's mind, as a result, was only HALF COMPLETE. He was not mentally "all there"!

But, even though LIMITED to only the human spirit, he still had a MIND that

could think, reason, calculate, make decisions. What an animal does is by instinct. What a human does is by THOUGHT—by REASON—by CONSCIOUS DECISION!

Now see where this leads us. You train a growing child as you would train a dog or an elephant to do certain things a certain way. In some cases, because it has become habit, he may not change it. BUT he has a MIND that CAN THINK, REASON, DECIDE what to do and DIRECT his actions differently from parental teaching—especially if an attitude of resistance, hostility, resentment of authority or prejudice—or if conformity to custom of his peers—causes a change of mind. In later life because of DISAGREEMENT he may entirely depart from childhood training. Where, then, does this lead us?

Satan—the invisible spirit ruler of this world—begins to work on the child's mind in earliest childhood. He broadcasts NOT in words, sounds or pictures, but in ATTITUDES of selfishness, hostility, disagreement, resentment and self-will. Many parents NEGLECT TEACHING THEIR CHILDREN'S MINDS. THEY WAIT UNTIL TEACHERS AT SCHOOL can teach them.

BUT SATAN DOES NOT NEGLECT YOUR CHILD'S MIND! Satan begins broadcasting into it, when the child is only a few months old, attitudes of selfishness and self-centeredness.

HOW, THEN, should you train up a child in the way he should go? NOT ONLY by habit to do certain things a certain way, as you would train a dog, but by teaching the child to THINK FOR HIMSELF OR HERSELF!

Train a child to think and decide according to the spirit and attitude of GOD'S LAW—love toward others, consideration for the good and welfare of others—and teach that Satan's way of selfishness and jealousy, envy, antagonism toward others, is wrong. Teach a child to HONOR his parents. Teach the principle and ATTITUDE of God's LAW of LOVE to God and LOVE to other people.

The psychologists who reject the revealed Word of God cannot rightly teach you how to rear children. They do not KNOW what the human mind is. Unless they have the Holy Spirit—and I know of no such psychologists—they are incompetent to teach authoritatively on the subject of child rearing.

What Psychologists Don't Know About Child Rearing

one would a dog, by teaching a child to do certain things, enforced by a system of rewards for performance and punishment for disobedience.

But what almost no one understands is the difference between a dog's brain and a child's MIND.

The human brain is accompanied by a spirit in connection with it. This human spirit enables a human to THINK—to REASON—to CALCULATE—to MAKE DECISIONS.

Animals, by contrast, are equipped with instinct.

Now understand the difference!

The child's mind can think and reason. It can acquire knowledge a dog or an elephant cannot know. It is stated in I Corinthians 2:11, the *Authorized Version*, "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save [by] the spirit of man which is in him?" A dog or an elephant cannot know what a man knows.

Man's KNOWING, and power of self-decision, is imparted to the brain by the spirit that is in man.

Adam, the first created human, was created with a spirit in him. The spirit

The Truth About CHILD ABUSE

Why do some parents beat and abuse their own children and others never do so?

CHILDREN are daily brought to the attention of the public and health officials having been beaten, burned, stabbed, electrically shocked, stamped on, thrown violently against walls or raped—by parents or other adults in charge of them.

A great portion of these victims are less than three years of age, and many of them die. All this in our civilized world!

Fractured skulls, broken legs and arms, blackened eyes, bruised bodies and whiplashed necks are commonplace. Even hardened law officers often break down emotionally after finding such abused children.

What Has Gone Wrong?

Only a small proportion of parental or adult child abusers are criminal psychopaths. Many abusers after being counseled say they don't want to hurt their children, but somehow they lose control of themselves and do it anyway when child-rearing problems or frustrations arise.

Most incidents of child abuse stem from crude and improper attempts at discipline. Parents become provoked by a child's apparent inability to follow instructions, by misbehavior or rebellion. They

lose their tempers and punish a child in violent anger or by verbal abuse. To call this child rearing is a tragic misnomer.

Numerous physically abused children are permanently damaged, physically and intellectually. Many suffer handicapping emotional disturbances. Others run away from homes and turn to sordid life-styles and crime. Most vicious murderers and rapists were seriously abused children.

A spokesman for one organization for the prevention of child abuse says: "The residue of today's child abuse will be seen in the hospital emergency room tomorrow, in the juvenile court in a decade, and in a whole new future generation of abusing parents and abused children."

Child abuse is an improper use of physical or psychological force or discipline on a child, often administered out of uncontrolled emotional whim or ignorance. CHILD ABUSE IS CAUSED BY PARENTAL OR ADULT LACK OF EMOTIONAL CONTROL.

What Research Has Found

Research into the backgrounds of child abusers has discovered that while there is no perfect profile of a child abuser, an adult's potential for child abuse can be estimated.

What researchers have found is that most cases of child abuse occur when critical factors come together with sufficient force. Cer-

tain parents under duress may say or do something they later see was inappropriate and take steps to avoid losing control again. But repeated child abusers with bad emotional habits in reacting to problems in life and to difficulties with their offspring fail to regain self-control.

Following are critical factors that determine a parent's potential for child abuse:

• *How the Parents Themselves Were Reared.* Almost invariably, parents who physically or emotionally abuse their small children were reared in similar manner. Battering parents often say that is how they were raised, and that while they may not always like the results, they know no other way to "keep the kids in line."

Abusing parents usually lacked proper imprinting by their parents or other adults with the loving, tender attitudes, knowledge and techniques needed to "mother" or to be a considerate father.

Parents who abuse children often have a poor self-image and try to rise above problems and irritations with brutal force and power. Since their own feelings as a child were discounted, they have a strong tendency to discount the importance of others' problems or feelings. Their feelings and problems of the moment are paramount.

Many battering parents confess they *never* obtained from their parents the feeling that they were spe-

cial, or cherished or worthwhile individuals. Their parents were usually inconsiderate of their feelings. And punishment for infractions of rules seemed to be distinctly excessive.

- *The Quality of Parental Relations.* The mutual support (or lack of it) between mates has great influence on the treatment of the children. The relations between abusing parents are marked by frequent strife and arguments, commonly about child rearing and money matters. There often are recriminations between spouses for failure to live up to responsibilities.

Many abusing, feuding parents married young, before they had a chance to prepare for the responsibilities of marriage and children. One parent often feels he or she takes all the load while the other does nothing. These frequent irritations, stresses and dissatisfactions spill over into resentment of children.

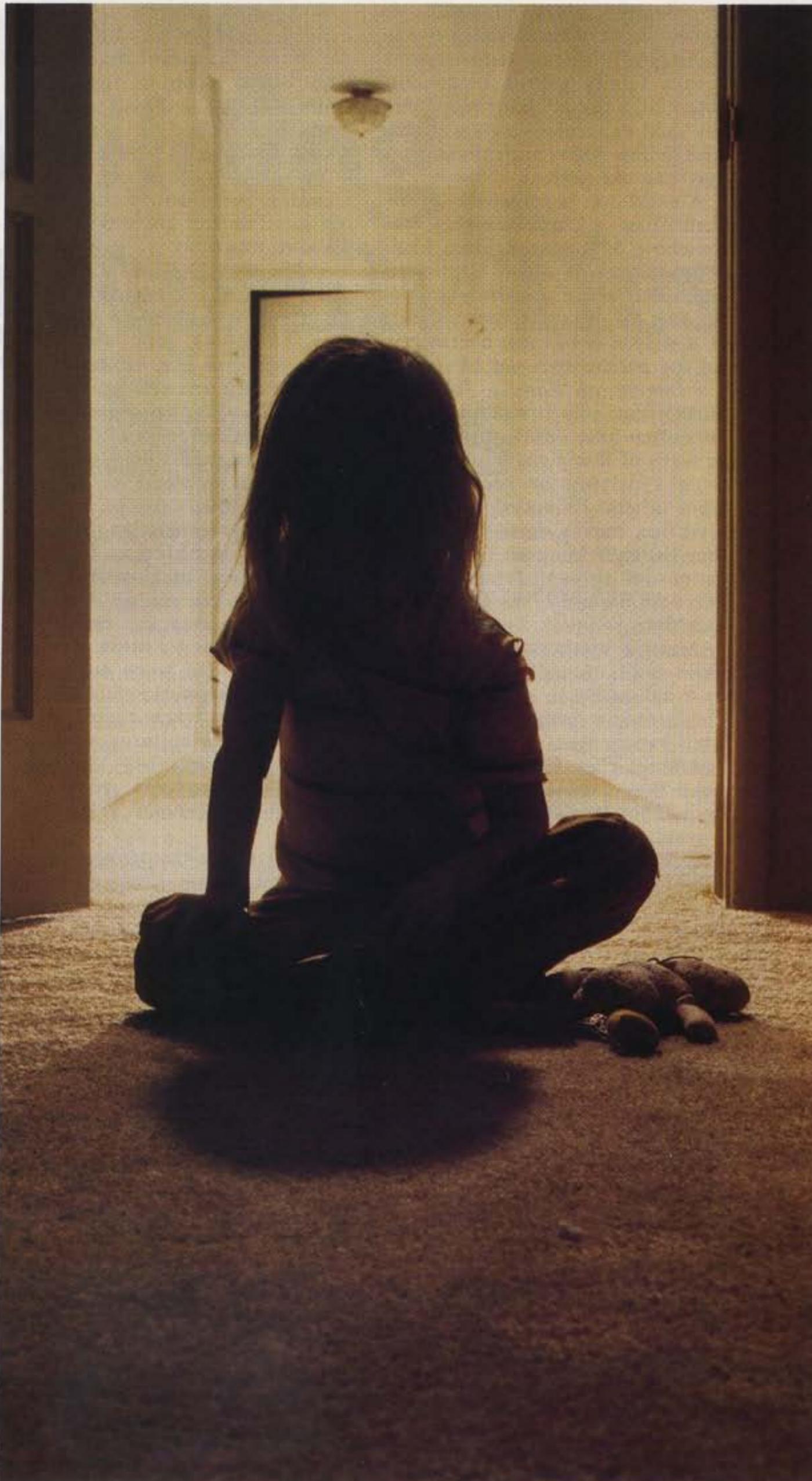
The childhood background of the person one marries or lives with has strong influence on a family's child-abuse potential. If an adult with a low level of abuse in the background marries someone with good family rearing, the chances of physical child abuse are quite low.

If on the other hand, one parent with high child abuse in the background marries someone who is a passive individual, then the risk of child abuse is significantly higher. And if two individuals marry who both have a history of child abuse in their background, then the child abuse potential is very high.

- *How the Parent Sees the Child.* It is important to know how a parent, or even a culture, views children. Are children loved and cherished? Are they wanted or not? Are they to be treated equally and fairly or not?

Many abused children were unplanned and unwanted. Numerous of them were conceived out of wedlock, or were the product of a forced marriage.

Often only one child of a family is the subject of abuse while the others are not. The potential for child abuse is also influenced by individual or cultural beliefs that tolerate abuse for certain categories of children: e.g., adopted children,



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illegitimate children, females, retarded or deformed children, or children of a certain temperament.

In a family with a high abuse potential, a "good" baby may "luck out" and be treated fairly well; but a fussy one that is more demanding may provoke serious abuse.

A child that is perceived as "difficult," or a "troublemaker," or somehow deficient, is more likely to be subject to abuse. Sometimes a child is more abusively treated because the child reminds a parent of someone, or of some characteristic the parent does not like.

• *Degree of Family Isolation.* Authorities note that abusing parents often have developed attitudes or ways of living that isolate them from receiving or seeking help from others. Extended family ties are often broken down or nonexistent through frequent family relocations, or through feuds with extended family members or neighbors.

Abusive mothers often have no close associations, no close friends or social outlets to relieve or reduce child-rearing pressures. Through past experiences with parents or guardians they have come to believe they cannot trust others for help. Therefore they seek none. As a result, frustrations with personal problems or children build up. A limit is reached and the resentful parent ends up lashing out at the children.

• *Level of Understanding Child Capabilities.* Child abusers frequently have a distorted perception of what a child is capable of doing or understanding at a particular stage of its development.

They tend to feel a very young child should automatically be more mature in its years than it is actually capable of being. Some parents expect young children to automatically perceive their adult feelings, and to understand and respond as an adult. When the child is not able to perform as expected, the misled or ignorant parent feels insulted by his or her "inferior" offspring and may be triggered into an abusive reaction to "make him grow up."

Some mothers grew up foolishly believing babies were to be a "bundle of joy": a clean, cuddly baby who would sleep in their arms, smile at them and give them the love they lacked in their lives. There is often a rude awakening when the baby turns out to be demanding, fussy and smelly, requiring sacrifice and attention at inopportune times.

• *The Family Crisis Level.* Too many problems too often will start to wear down anyone's ability to cope. Families practicing child abuse seem to live life-styles that provoke frequent crises—and they fail to handle the crises wisely. Some make major incidents out of incidents of minor importance. At other times problems are often ignored until they can't be, and then there is an overreaction.

Marital problems, financial problems and employment difficulties seem to pile up. Decisions to relocate may be made frequently—causing a sense of family rootlessness. (In some cultures in the developing world child abuse is a rarity. But when these peoples move to urban cultures or strange foreign cultures, they lose traditional family support systems and child abuse becomes a big problem.)

Other crises that frequently intrude into some abusing families are frequent health problems or abuse of alcohol and drugs.

As family crises and tensions mount, a little thing like a child not eating right, a soiled bed or a child that is slow to respond to instructions suddenly becomes a big crisis provoking a parent's abusive response.

Whose Life Is It?

There is an awesome purpose in every human life—an awesome potential in every child's life. Parents and other adults need to know this great purpose and potential so they can guide children—and themselves—toward it.

God has made it possible for human beings to have powers of mind no animal has—powers of intellect

to reason, think, plan, design and make decisions.

God's ultimate purpose in humans is the creation of *godly character*. Children are not chattel to be abused. Right child rearing is essential to help make this awesome purpose more possible and successful.

Children are deeply impressionable clay models. They can be imprinted with right parenting examples and values or imprinted with wrong ones.

A parent's first responsibility is to *set the right example* of how humans ought to live. The parent must also guide and discipline the child until the child in turn is qualified to become a parent and continue the process God is performing.

The parent who torments or beats a child in the name of discipline is not, by any stretch of the imagination, properly disciplining a child. A parent who succumbs to fits of rage and lashes out at a child in an uncontrollable outburst of hostility is sowing the seeds of great problems in the future.

We speak out in the *Plain Truth* magazine (to which you may subscribe, free upon request) in the loudest terms against an adult losing his or her temper and striking or shaking a child in uncontrolled anger or rage.

Discipline for wrong acts or attitudes should *never* involve pushing or slapping on the face, strapping with a belt buckle, twisting arms, boxing or pulling ears, kicking with feet, hitting about vital organs or any other physically damaging action.

If you are a parent and you've made mistakes with your children, if you feel you have fallen short in some way, don't despair.

You can drop down on your knees and ask God to forgive your mistakes. You can beseech God to help you have the right attitudes, love and wisdom to teach and discipline your children. It is not too late—ever—to learn and change and grow! □

Building Strong Family Ties for the '90s

TODAY the reality of a *generation gap* stares society in the face.

Many parents frankly confess that they do not know their own children. They are like strangers. And this gap seems to have happened overnight.

Parents may appear to be close to their children when they are small. But with the advent of teenage something tragic happens. Communication breaks down. Alienation begins. Thus a generation of children has commonly become at odds with its own parents!

Why?

Examine your own situation. When does *your* whole family—every member—get together and talk—really have a good conversation and family communication? Chances are—seldom, if ever.

Many parents today really do try to provide the best for their children. They want to give them happiness and security. They consequently spend their time and energy in the acquisition of material possessions. Little time or energy, however, is spent to provide for the family's spiritual and emotional needs.

Do you know why children are so inclined to learn from television, whether for good or for bad? Because a television set is never too busy to talk to children. It never brushes them aside while it does

household chores or becomes involved in other pursuits. Television programming goes to considerable lengths to attract and hold the attention of youngsters. And it succeeds!

Meanwhile many fathers and mothers spend a minimum amount of time and effort maintaining direct contact with their children. And then they wonder why their children do not turn out as they would like.

Where were you when your son's class at school had its open house? Or when your daughter's dance team won the trophy? Were you just too busy to be there? Was the extra money earned by working overtime that important? Did you really have to clean the oven? A few less dollars and a few specks of dirt at home, is a small price to pay toward an investment in one of your greatest treasures—your children.

If you've been negligent in involving yourself with your children, changing that relationship may not be accomplished overnight, but with diligence and patience it can be done. It *must* be done. You would be surprised how many young people today are

deeply yearning for a closer relationship with their parents.

Controlling Youthful Energy

"The glory of young men," says the Bible, "is their strength" (Prov. 20:29). One of the greatest problems in any society is the harnessing of the energy and vitality of its youth. It is also one of the greatest difficulties of parenthood! "Johnny! Please *sit still!* Stop jerking and jiggling!" shouts the



exasperated mother of a 10-year-old. "What's the matter?" she fumes. "Can't you *ever* be still and quiet?"

Parents have been saying things like that for centuries.

Virtually all "normal" children

are bundles of pent-up, explosive energy. And that energy must be released! When it is bottled up, suppressed and thwarted, it builds up *incredible* pressures in children. The longer energy is suppressed the more frustrated the child becomes.

Have you ever experienced this? You are driving along the freeway or the motorway. It's an extended trip of several hours. There are few stops except for gasoline or "rest" stops. The faces of the children in the backseat may be seen in the rearview mirror as they sit, squirm, struggle, wrestle, tussle, tug and pull away at each other.

The longer they have to sit there, the worse their attitudes will become. Sometimes they will fall asleep in sheer frustration. They may keep saying, "When are we going to get there, Daddy?" "How much longer?" "I have to go to the bathroom." (He just went 15 minutes earlier!)

The longer this agitation continues, the more irritable the parents become. After all, they would like a nice quiet, relaxing trip!

Before long an explosion takes place.

"Will you kids shut up!! Just sit still and be quiet! We'll get there when we get there and I don't want to hear any more about it!"

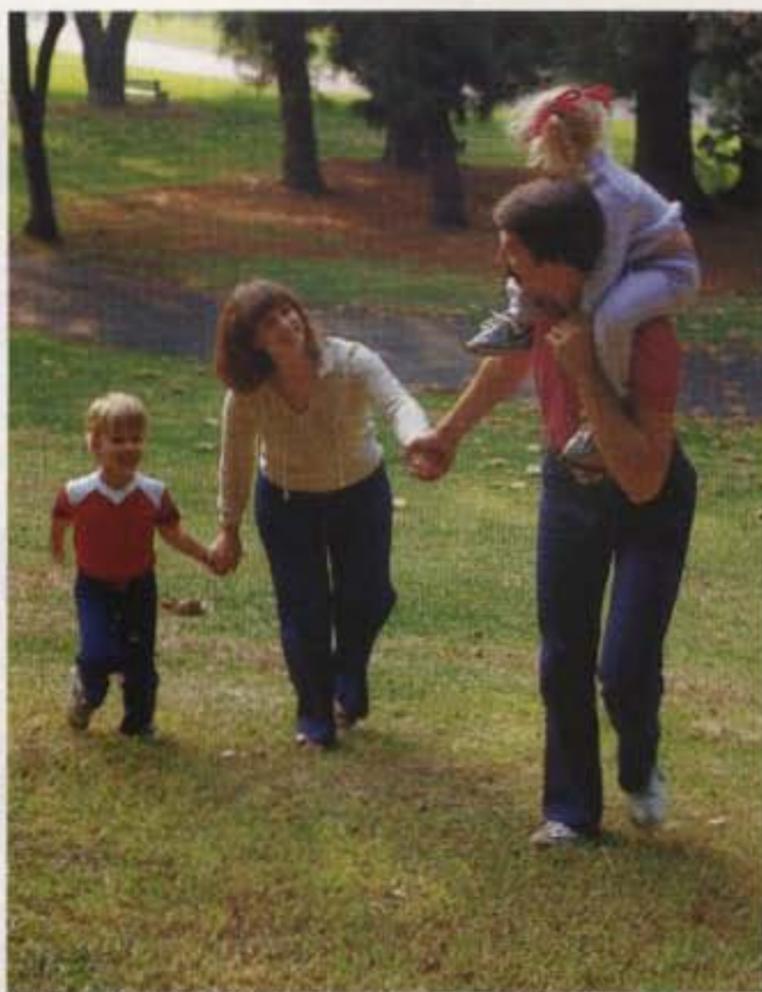
Sulk. Pout. Fume. Resent.

The atmosphere in the car has degenerated considerably since the trip began.

Why?

Simply because the parents did not understand, nor know how to cope with the factor of their children's *energy!* It's a law of nature—*energy must be released*. It must be burned up, utilized.

Yet children often lack the wisdom to know how to rightly utilize their own vast energy reserves. We are told that "a child left to himself brings shame to his mother" (Prov. 29:15). Children, left to



Family outings, hikes, camp-outs, building projects, hobbies, wrestling matches with Dad, exercising together are all invaluable and constructive outlets that can be shared by all of the family.

their own devices, often use their energy in a *destructive* manner.

This is one of the principal reasons why children cooped up and left alone in a big-city environment often resort to acts of violence and vandalism. Children cut loose from the warm and creative environment of a close and loving family unit frequently become youthful vagrants prowling the streets of cities looking for destructive outlets for those pent-up energies. Such neglect on the part of parents is one of the key factors involved in the formation of adolescent street gangs.

A child should never be cut totally adrift from his family unit. He should be able to find expression *within* it. He should never be left *exclusively* to his or her own devices during those formative years. (This is not to say a child should not be taught independence, self-reliance and responsibility.) Parents must strive to understand their child's need for constant activity and provide ways for the release of that energy.

Family outings, sports activities, hikes, camp-outs, musical endeavors,

building projects, hobbies, wrestling matches with Dad, walks and runs, jogging as a family, exercising together are all invaluable and constructive outlets that can be shared by all of the family.

Children should be taught and encouraged to "think family." Ideally, the family environment should be the *most* enjoyable place for a child to be. It should be the most interesting, the most satisfying. A child who cannot find satisfaction and activity within his family unit will seek it elsewhere. Responsible, perceptive parents will recognize this need and seriously strive to provide the right kind of exciting, interest-filled environment for their children. Granted, it takes time and planning. But it pays off.

Being a Family

The Creator God does not take the responsibilities of maintaining strong family ties lightly. After all, he created this oldest of social institutions—the FAMILY. But pressures from the world are tearing this institution apart. Seldom do families get together anymore.

In this hectic society it seems there is little time for simple yet meaningful occasions like dinner with the grandparents or a family reunion. And because we haven't taken the time for such things, the glue that holds families together doesn't hold firm.

It's time to revive some old-fashioned values and build more permanent family ties. It might just save your family.

Let's take for example the old custom of gathering the whole family together on a weekend afternoon for a big meal. If you ever had such wonderful dinners in your family, you can almost taste the delicious meals still. And who could ever forget the fun of playing outside with your cousins and neighborhood children while your parents sat and talked for hours?

If that has been a part of your life you cannot forget it. But why is it gone today? Doesn't anyone care anymore? And why can't you start or reinstate such family get-together customs now?

Well, you can.

Of course, if the grandparents live very far away, you can't have

dinner together frequently. But if they are nearby, you can certainly make it a fairly regular practice. Even if they are a great distance away, all is not lost.

Another great old-fashioned tradition used to be getting the extended family—the entire family: the brothers and sisters and all the cousins—together once a year or every other year. There is nothing like it.

We in the Western world live in very mobile societies where people move often. Sometimes these moves are hundreds or sometimes thousands of miles. When such moves happen, the children grow up without any sense of stability.

This separating of families has created a whole generation who don't know "who they are." When you grow up under the influence of your parents and your grandparents, there is little doubt of who you are. If you have a quick temper as your grandfather did, you'll know it if you saw him yell at the cow when she kicked over the pail. If you have a fine voice for singing,

heritage seems to be missing in so many families today. Grandpa may have been forced into early retirement while he still had years of productivity left in him. Perhaps he died prematurely from the lack of purpose and inactivity. Like as not Grandma was put into a rest home to rock away her final years of life in boredom. What a tragedy! And all the time they could have helped so much.

Don't let the opportunity for your children to know and love their grandparents go by. Plan a family reunion as soon as it is practical. If the grandparents are not living, make it a practice to visit the cemetery where they are buried. Tell the children stories about their grandparents and the "good old days." You'll be surprised at the greater sense of identity it gives them.

Instead of positive traditions, do you know what families in today's society have? Nontraditions. What are nontraditions? Let me give you an example.

The typical Western breakfast.

and eggs. Dad outlined the day's chores. That was a tradition.

A nontradition is quite the opposite. Today, Dad probably grouches his way through the morning preparing to fight the traffic jams. He may or may not bolt down a cup of coffee and a piece of toast.

Where's Mom? She may have a job of her own and hurries through the blow dryer and hair curlers to be ready for her ride to work.

And the children? Left to themselves, they take the easy way out and gobble down a bowl of presweetened cold cereal. That's breakfast. That's hardly conducive to the kind of bonds that build strong family ties.

And lunch these days is no memorable occasion either. It is usually eaten by each member of the family separately. Dad eats lunch on the job. The children eat lunch at school. And Mom perhaps at home with the babies or at work.

That's what we mean by a *non-tradition*. Nothing of lasting value comes out of this life-style. There is nothing here to pass on to the next generation. No positive family relationships are built.

Dinner Together

Today everyone seems to be so busy. All the members of the family are involved in so many activities. With school, work, play and television—is it any wonder members of a family can seldom be together at the same time?

Usually there is only one occasion during the day when the entire family is in one place at one time. This is the *evening meal*. And this mealtime *at least* ought to be family time. But what do we see? A trend toward the no-cook-eat-in-front-of-the-television idea. City boulevards are ablaze with signs beckoning the customer to stop in and carry out a quick, already prepared meal. Society seems geared to the eat-on-the-run syndrome. Snack shops, sandwich stands, drive-in restaurants have greatly proliferated.

People in today's fast-moving society grow up without any importance being placed on family dinner. Yet in many countries and among certain ethnic groups it is considered *essential* that all the



In many countries it is considered *essential* that all the family be seated at the dinner table together. Here a meal represents far more than just food and nutrition. It is a time for family fellowship, conversation and enjoyment.

you well may have inherited it from your grandmother. If you heard her singing lullabies, you will know for sure where you got your voice.

The knowledge of one's family

Years ago when societies were mainly agrarian, breakfast was quite an affair. The entire family sat around the table. Mom prepared a hearty meal of cooked cereal, toast from homemade bread, fresh fruit

family be seated at the dinner table together. Here a meal represents far more than just food and nutrition to the body. It is a time for family communion—fellowship, conversation and enjoyment.

Is it this way in your home? Do you have each and every member of your family gathered together at least for the evening meal? This seems like such a simple thing, but it has great importance. Why pass up the opportunity to gather your entire family—the most beloved people to you—around you in an atmosphere of love?

The sharing of food has always connoted the sharing of love. Sharing food together is a sure way to increase bonds between people.

And remember: It is important to make sure the conversation at the table is *pleasant*—no bickering, arguments, unpleasant topics or controversial matters. Mealtime should be a pleasant experience filled with goodwill. This promotes family closeness and love.

Passing on Traditions

Some of the strongest bonds in many families are passed on from generation to generation as a result of cultural heritages from the land of their ancestry. Those customs often retain cultural tastes in food, dress, dance and even in professions.

Another passing on of custom can be that of a trade or profession. Throughout most of history, children learned the trade of their fathers that had in turn been learned from their fathers.

Because many modern societies have given up such practices altogether, crafts that have endured for centuries are being lost.

Even if a youngster does not wish to follow in his father's footsteps, if a trade, craft or profession has been learned, he will have something to fall back on.

It's amazing today how few boys do any household jobs, paint or mend things, change the oil or tune up the car. Only a small number of girls know how to sew, quilt or even cook for that matter.

You see, in order to learn many



Another passing on of custom can be that of a trade or profession. Throughout most of history, children learned the trade of their fathers that had in turn been learned from their fathers.

of these skills, you have to spend time with your father or mother or with grandparents.

Since most of us are not living on a farm, we don't know how to plant, cultivate, harvest, can, bottle or freeze vegetables and fruits. Even if many families wanted to have a vegetable garden, they wouldn't know how to. Yet many middle-aged parents have known how to plant a garden—and almost every grandparent had one; probably grew up on a farm or in the country. Why haven't we passed on these fun and useful skills?

If you have not learned any skills that should have been perpetuated in your family, why not take a little time to backtrack and learn from your father or mother in order to pass them on to your son or daughter?

Building New Traditions

Maybe you are part of a family that just does not have a long fam-

ily history. Perhaps you have no knowledge of your ancestry or even of a craft of your parents.

But that should not stop you from establishing bonds in your family now. Actually, whether you have realized it or not, there are really only two courses of action to take. Either build meaningful and lasting traditions in your family, or drift into nontraditions that will cause your family to split farther and farther apart from one another.

Why not sit down this evening and talk over what kind of relationships will best benefit your family? Get out the old picture album. Recall Granddad and Grandma—even your great-grandparents. Maybe you'll bring up some long lost part of your family past that your children have never even heard before.

Then talk about what kind of new customs you would like to incorporate into your family. Some of the most meaningful family experiences can be worked around vacation. Perhaps visiting national parks, or taking up camping, fishing or other outdoor activities, will be something your family can enjoy.

One of the best ways to spend vacation time is to hold regular family reunions such as have been mentioned earlier.

So whether you decide on special vacation trips, outdoor camp-outs, dinners or nothing more than a quiet afternoon in your own backyard, make up your mind to build strong family bonds. You'll always be glad you did. Not only will it pull your family together as a team now, but someday your grandchildren will thank you for establishing family bonds that will be passed on to their children and to generations yet to come.

Growing Healthy Babies

It's no accident. Healthy babies don't just happen. Many birth defects can be prevented with simple planning. And the result will make child rearing easier.

ONE of the most important factors in successful child rearing is producing an alert, healthy child to begin with.

Many factors are involved in whether the outcome of a pregnancy is favorable or not—genetic, biological, social and psychological.

No one has control over all the elements necessary to ensure a successful pregnancy and an alert, healthy baby. But in one vitally important area the majority of pregnant women *do have control*. That area is *nutrition*.

Think Before You Act

There is overwhelming evidence that women who smoke or who consume alcohol regularly and poorly nourished women with poor diets during pregnancy have more complications than do well-nourished women with good, well-balanced diets.

Low birth weight is the major cause of infant mortality in the world. Even the well-fed United States is ranked 13th in infant mortality rates, according to 1981 statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Tragically, it has also been demonstrated that mental defi-

ciency in newborns is related to low birth weight and prematurity rates.

"Cell division is most rapid and, therefore, most vulnerable from one month before birth until five months after. Never again will the baby's brain experience such an incredible proliferation of new cells. All of the eleven billion neurons, the cells which process and analyze information, are formed before birth. Inadequate nutrition during gestation results in permanent, irreversible deficits in the number of cells which make up the baby's brain" (*What Every Pregnant Woman Should Know/The Truth About Diets and Drugs in Pregnancy* by Gail Sforza Brewer, page 95).

If you are a pregnant woman, you are responsible for the good nutrition that will enable your child to reach his or her maximum genetic potential. You can give your baby a head start that no one else can. Your baby is what you eat. Your baby is also what you drink, smoke and otherwise ingest into your system.

The U.S. Surgeon General has

plainly reported that smoking during pregnancy brings about a significantly greater number of spontaneous abortions, stillbirths, and neonatal deaths.

As well as the matter of smoking, the decision by a pregnant mother to drink alcoholic beverages should be arrived at by taking into consideration metabolic and other factors such as weight,



diet and drugs used, illicit or otherwise.

Alcohol flows easily from a mother's bloodstream through the placenta into her unborn child. The odds of damaging the fetus are even higher when drugs are com-

bined with alcohol by the pregnant mother.

What if your doctor recommends a low-salt, low-calorie diet sometime during your pregnancy? Weight or salt restriction in pregnancy is no longer routinely advised at the forefront of the obstetrics community, neither is routine use of diuretics (water pills).

Some physicians are now referring their patients to registered dietitians whose training has prepared them to advise patients as to their nutritional needs.

More and more we need to come to understand that pregnancy and childbirth are normal, natural processes and begin to treat them so, instead of like illnesses. God is the Master Designer of our bodies and bodily functions, including the reproductive processes.

Remember, it's your responsibility to protect the health of your unborn child.

Human Milk for Human Babies

God also designed the human breast to produce and provide milk for the human infant. The perfect food for the newborn child, it follows, is its own mother's milk. No other food or liquid is necessary for the breast-fed infant until generally about six months of age.

Few mothers are physically unable to breast-feed their babies, and, indeed, breast-feeding is becoming more popular, especially in the more advanced countries.

Even premature babies thrive better on the milk expressed by pump from their own mother's breasts. Recent studies show that pre-term mother's milk contains substantially higher concentrations of protein, sodium and chloride in amounts necessary for the well-being of the premature infant.

But for those who choose not to breast-feed, realize that human milk has yet to be successfully duplicated by formula, and whole cow's milk is even further removed.

If at all possible, breast-feed your child for the first week or two so that it will benefit from the immunization properties of colostrum, a clear yellow liquid the nursing infant receives before the milk actually comes in. Colostrum

not only gives the newborn a natural immunity against many diseases, it also is an important factor in preparing the young child's gastrointestinal tract to most efficiently assimilate the nutrients from the milk that will follow. This valuable gift to a baby—the future ability to thrive—can only be given by its mother.

Solid foods can be introduced to an infant at about six months of age. Earlier introduction of solid foods increases your baby's chance of developing food allergies. There is also a tendency to overfeed the young infant, paving the way for tomorrow's overweight child and adult.

Six months is not the time to change breast-fed or B formula bottle-fed babies to whole cow's milk. Most infants at this age are still not mature enough to tolerate cow's milk well.

More and more mothers are preferring to prepare their own baby foods at home. This is fine if fresh food is used and proper precautions against contamination are taken. Pureed processed foods to which salt and sugar have been added are worse than using the commercial baby foods now on the market. In the last few years, under pressure from consumer agencies, commercial baby food companies in the United States have removed the added salt and sugar from the baby foods now being sold. After one year of age there is no need to continue feeding babies baby food. About this time most should be able to eat from the table.

This is a good time for parents to consider their own dietary practices. If father or mother consumes too much sugar or salt, the child is sure to repeat the example.

Great care should be taken not to encourage the infant to consume more baby food than it desires. There is a tendency among many parents to try to get the baby to eat all the food presented. This is also a problem many times with bottle-fed babies. Allow the babies to take only what they desire and need of formula or baby food. Again, you are establishing eating habits that can be valuable or detrimental for the lifetime of your child.

The bottle-fed baby should also be held while one of the parents

holds the bottle for feeding. Babies should not be left in their cribs with propped-up bottles dribbling formula into their mouths. Not only is there danger of middle-ear infections, the erupting teeth of the older infant will be more prone to cavities.

Bottle-fed babies should receive the same amount of cuddling and

If you are a pregnant woman, you are responsible for the good nutrition that will enable your child to reach his or her maximum genetic potential. You can give your baby a head start that no one else can. Your baby is what you eat.

affection as the breast-fed baby. Even at night, the baby should be removed from the crib and held while feeding. Try to break the pattern that has been so prevalent in the Western world of denying infants the close contact they need with their fathers and mothers.

A Virtual Conspiracy Against Emotional Maturity

Even from birth the newborn infant is usually taken from its anesthetized mother, washed and weighed. Then, after a few brief minutes with mother, the infant is placed in a crib in the nursery, where it spends most of the first few days of life—alone.

Yet it is in these first critical minutes and hours of life that we form our initial emotional attachment to another human being. The crucial importance of close contact between father and mother and their child right after birth has been prevented or denied in the West for more than a generation.

Doctors, nurses and psycholo-

after birth, are more likely to be abused than full-term babies.

In our "enlightened" modern society where only 20 percent of mothers experience natural childbirth, babies generally are taken from their mothers just at the time when they most desperately need to be together. And studies today show a father's relationship with

are appreciated and cared for.

Children of such families grow up feeling insecure, inhibited, afraid of being hurt, and therefore afraid of seeking intimacy with others. They may have a hard time in their dating and marriage relationships. They may feel cold and emotionally flat, without knowing why. Later, as parents, they will have hang-ups about expressing love to their own offspring.

This is not to say that there is no love in such nontouching families—the love is there, usually, but it seems stunted, repressed or hidden. And hidden love is not much better than no love at all.

Humans who are deprived in infancy and childhood suffer drastically from it. From surveys of prisoners and of 49 different primitive cultures it has been concluded that deprivation of physical affection "is the principal overriding factor . . . in the development of alienation, psychopathy, violence and aggression, and . . . drug abuse and alcoholism."

Lack of love and affection in the earliest years has long-range negative effects. Perhaps you yourself come from a family background that was cold, unemotional and lacking in displays of physical affection. Perhaps you were ignored or even abused as a young child. Therefore, you may find in yourself certain fears or inhibitions that are difficult to overcome.

If you or your mate have experienced these or other difficulties that have caused a lack of outward affection in you, talk it out, be understanding and patient with each other. Prepare yourselves mentally, physically and spiritually before you decide to have a baby.

Then, when the infant does arrive, by cuddling, embracing and loving your baby, you are giving him or her the foundation that you may have lacked—the knowledge that he or she is loved, accepted, secure. You can give your children the inner resources that will make them more confident, more properly assertive, more affectionate and outgoing as adults.



gists are only now becoming aware of this tragedy.

When mothers are allowed direct skin-to-skin contact with their newborn children, they respond to this early, intimate contact with their babies differently from mothers denied such needed contact.

A remarkable study reported that babies of early-contact mothers gained more weight, cried less and laughed more than the other infants. It was also found that premature babies, who are separated from their mothers for long periods

infant children is much more important than previously believed. Even the younger infant benefits from the physical stimulation of father's more rousing play.

Unfortunately, no matter the benefits, this early separation of parents and child is many times only the beginning of a pattern that carries on into later life.

In many families, parents allow their children to mature without those all-important physical expressions of life—the warm hugs and caresses that show them they

Five Basic Rules of Parenting

Do you know what the five basic rules of parenting are?

Some parents practice none of these basic rules — they in fact aren't rearing their children. Others practice only two or three!

1

Love Your Children

No one needs and requires love more than do children. Parents can demonstrate that love and concern daily, whether for a newborn or a youth just turned 15.

Parents soon learn that physical requirements vary with a child's age, but they often forget that love is required continually. Affection, attention, outgoing concern are key ingredients in all relationships. Children most assuredly shrivel up and die inside—and sometimes literally, too—without these ingredients of love.

Most parents believe they love their children a great deal. Some, however, knowingly or unknowingly compete with their children; others live their lives vicariously through them. Others will not let go of their children and allow them to develop and mature.

The needs of children are ever changing. *Love makes the growth transitions possible.*

Loving parents produce loving children! A father who is overbearing cannot expect affectionate sons and daughters. The apostle Paul

cautioned: "Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged" (Col. 3:21, *Revised Standard Version*).

When a mother yells at her son, "You dummy! Why did you do that?", she is not only discouraging her son, she is encouraging a brother or sister to think of the child in a disrespectful manner.

Little babies and small children require affection, kisses, hugs and tenderness in order to grow and develop at a normal rate.

The effect of love on children—and adults, too—is as important as clothing and good food, sunshine and fresh air all put together.

Babies and children *must* have constant affection and encouragement to develop the right kind of confidence and sense of worth and the capacity to feel and express affection themselves. Even though this may seem obvious to some, it is, sadly, one of the most neglected areas of child rearing.

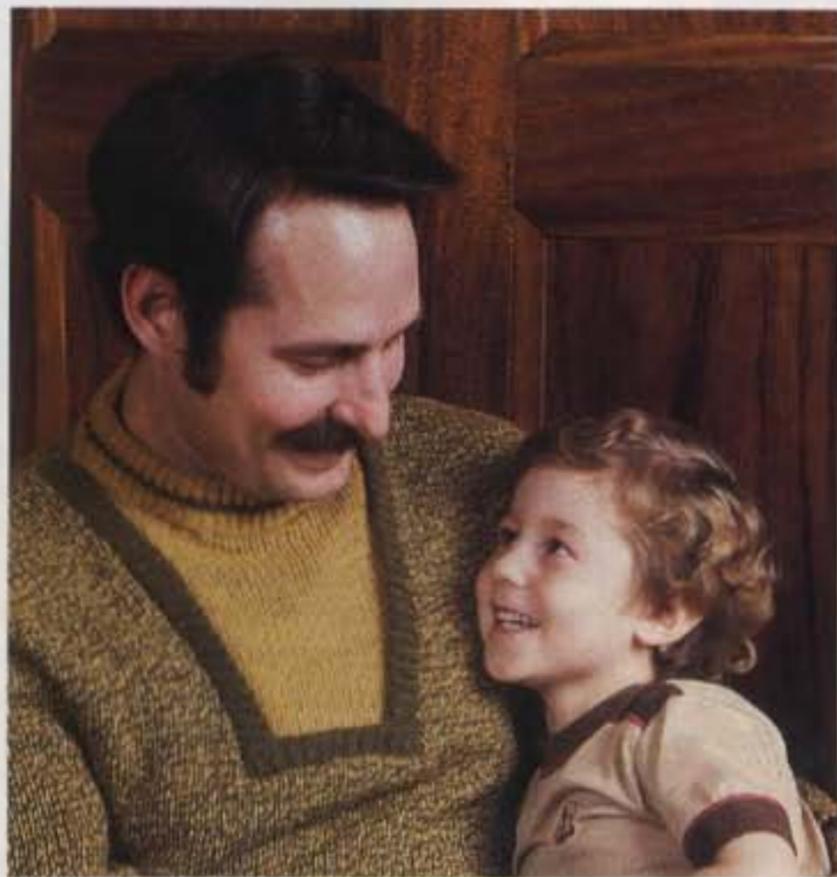
You who are parents must learn to hold, kiss, cuddle and *encourage* not only your babies but your younger children as well.

The habit of touching, hugging and physically expressing affection to children is something one should never outgrow! Yet how many parents have been emotionally crippled in this respect?

Men, especially in the United

States, too often have been taught to be the strong, silent types. By example and *inference*, males were taught that it is not proper for he-men to kiss and cuddle their young children—especially their boys. Perhaps we do not realize that for centuries it has been customary for countless millions of fathers in the Middle East and in the Latin world to kiss and embrace even their grown sons on occasion!

You who are fathers and mothers should learn to *regularly*



hug and kiss your children. Take them in your arms and hug them when you have been away from them for a while. Play with them, teach them, read to them while they are sitting on your lap, and then hug them and kiss

them again as you put them to bed.

Tell them: "Daddy and Mommy love you. We are proud of you. We are very glad to have a little boy (or girl) like you."

With such love and encouragement, your children will bloom before your eyes. Your love and assurance and the sense of security it provides will nourish them as surely as physical food.

And in doing all this, you will be building a deep bond of affection and trust that will make it much easier for your children to *want* to respond to your training and to please you even when you are not present to supervise them.

Always let your children know that you will love them and try to help them no matter what. You may disapprove or even correct them for the genuine mistakes they will certainly make. But that does NOT change the underlying *love* and affection you will always feel for them.

But what is love? Many have false concepts of love. They think love is to let their child do whatever he or she wants to do at the moment. This is not love—it's permissiveness, the antithesis of what the Bible calls love.

"Love," says God, "is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. 13:10).

Jesus said God's law could be thus summarized: " 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself' " (Matt. 22:37-39, *Revised Authorized Version*).

Your relationship to God will manifest itself to your children in numerous ways. You will show love and mercy, because God shows us love and mercy.

Demonstrating respect for your children is a basic quality of love. Demonstrating that respect is much easier when we realize that children—and other persons—are members of the God-created human family and are potentially members of the God family. That in turn helps children approach others in a similar way.

Parents need to realize that love does not negate firm discipline.

There is a *right* time to discipline children. But parents should never allow themselves to go on a yelling, storming rampage. That is not discipline. Nor does it show self-discipline. Such wild, uncontrolled parental emotion will only produce disrespect in a child for his or her parents.

If you are to really love your children, you must learn to know them as individuals. When children know that you understand their feelings and wants, they are much more willing to respond positively to discipline.

Nothing frustrates children more than to be told to do something when they feel that parents don't understand. This does not mean catering to a child's demands or whims. It simply means listening so that children don't feel you have ignored their thoughts and feelings when you use your authority. This will lessen anger and resentment that could come back to haunt you. In-focus listening requires eye contact, with physical contact if appropriate. Acknowledging that you understand a child (even if you disagree) is usually helpful. Many parents mistakenly do not accept *the fact* that a child may have a different opinion. Repeating a child's thoughts is a good way to ensure mutual understanding.

We all lose our tempers at times. When this happens don't be afraid to apologize after things have calmed down. It is possible to create a beautiful thing out of a bad experience. It's amazing how pleasant communications can become when a family member is big enough to apologize when wrong. You are teaching your children by example how to admit and handle their own mistakes.

The times of warmth and closeness that usually follow such episodes are among those special memories that children and parents never forget.

Showing care and concern for others is an additional value you can demonstrate and encourage in

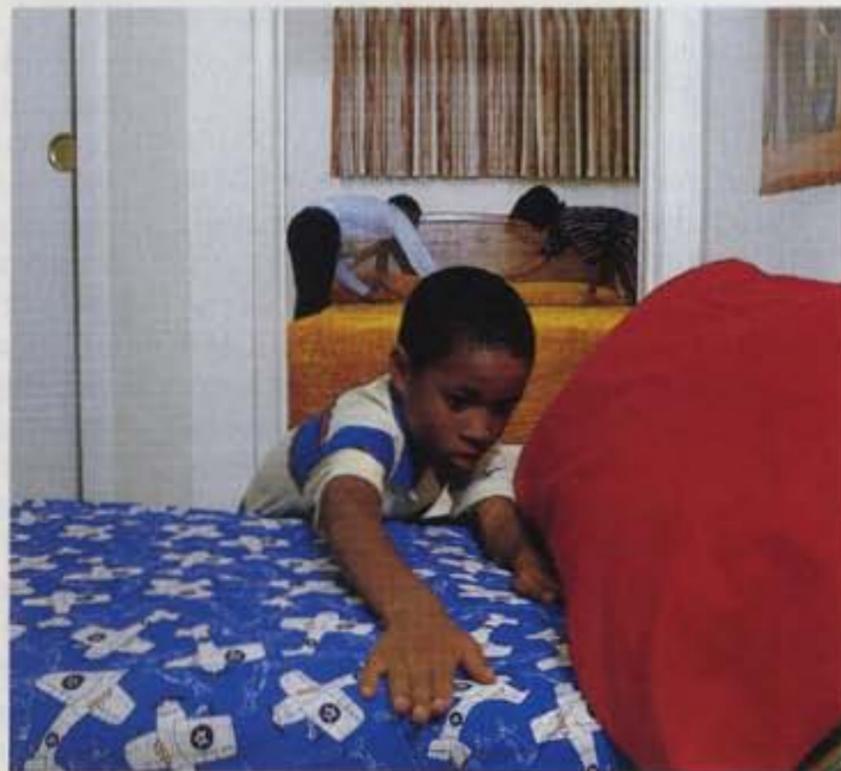
your children. Take an active interest in your children's activities and their friends. *Take time to play with your children.*

Caring is also reflected in the family members' affection for each other. Men who believe they should show an unemotional image to their children deceive themselves. Moms and dads who take their children up in their arms and express warm affection are laying the foundation for love, compassion and caring in their children.

2 Set the Right Example

Parental example is a critical factor in right child rearing. Nothing renders a parent's efforts in child rearing more ineffective than parental hypocrisy. Children cannot be expected to adopt standards their parents are unwilling to practice.

Children and teenagers who smoke pot or take drugs will often point to their parents' addiction to alcohol, tobacco or prescription drugs. If children observe one spouse verbally attack, criticize or ridicule the other, they are likely to



think this is the appropriate way to respond.

Children learn from example more than from words. They are natural mimics. A child's personality often mirrors that of parents. Mannerisms, habits, vocabulary

and opinions will reflect those of the parents—for better or for worse!

Learning takes place through the five senses: seeing, hearing, smelling, feeling, tasting. The right example, therefore, is important in *all* aspects. The way we learn is through repetition, perception, association. Your children learn from the whole range of words you use, how you use them, the attitudes you express, the situations you explore and the information you share. Therefore, you would do well to evaluate what your example is teaching.

Take for instance a little boy and girl observed fighting and screaming at one another in the yard. The girl's mother came out to stop them. She asked why they were fighting. The explanation: "Oh, we weren't fighting; we were playing family. He's the father, and I'm the mother." Some may find that humorous, but it's a sad commentary on the condition of many families these days.

Parents also need to set the right example in providing for their children's needs. The children, after all, did not ask to come into this world. The parents, whether on purpose or accidentally, produced them. When a man and woman embark on such a course, they are obligating themselves to provide for the child until the child is grown.

If anyone does not provide for his own, including children, "he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" (I Tim. 5:8, RAV).

Basic provisions that children need include wholesome, balanced food; appropriate, quality clothing; cheerful, well-kept living quarters; proper education; and wholesome entertainment.

Remember that children will follow parents' examples more than parents' words.

Do you keep your word? Are you obedient to God? Do you respect law and those in authority? Or, on the other hand, do your children see in you an individual who criticizes, complains and talks back? Do you say nice things to other people's faces and then speak critically of them in private? Do you claim to be one thing in public and then do just the opposite in

private—even in your own home? You will be a successful parent only if you *are* a right example.

3

Take Time to Teach

Some persons slap their children because it is so much easier than teaching or training.

God instructs you to teach your children. "And thou shalt *teach* them [God's commandments] diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" (Deut. 6:7).

The Scriptures also admonish, "Train up a child in the way he should go . . ." (Prov. 22:6, RAV). Teach and train. What's the difference? They're similar but not exactly the same. Teaching involves gaining a child's undivided attention and taking time to give instruction about how to do something or how to act in various situations.

Training, however, is repeatedly and diligently guiding children to apply what you have taught until it becomes a part of their character. Training may involve such simple things as developing the habit of being clean or of washing hands before eating. It also involves developing the habit of respecting elders and the property of others.

Teaching and training require time, patience and repetition. Begin by setting the right example. Show principles and examples from the Bible. Use your own experiences and those of others to relate the proper way. Children, remember, learn by association. Often the best time to instruct a child is when he or she asks a question.

Most children, especially young children, love to be read interesting and exciting stories. Reading aloud as little as 10 minutes a day from sound educational materials more than teaches specific facts. It stim-

ulates a young mind's mental, intellectual and language development.

Children need to be taught and trained in positive skills—for example, social and cultural manners. They must be taught how to develop their bodies and minds. Point out the positive results of right actions and the negative results of wrong actions in language your children will understand.

For example, children should be warned about the tragedies of illicit sex. Explain what is happening in



the world around us because of violating God's law against adultery and fornication. Point out the toll that is being reaped in unwanted pregnancies and the epidemics of social diseases. If the people now suffering from these penalties had obeyed God, they would not have these unpleasant and painful problems.

You can illustrate to your children the bad results of smoking, drug abuse, lying and stealing, watching the wrong kind of movies, reading the wrong kind of literature, listening to degrading music and participating in the wrong kinds of activities.

Children are not yet equipped to make right decisions in these areas. They need clear explanations and continuous encouragement as they learn to make right decisions. It is your responsibility to know God's way well enough to be able to effectively impart it to your children.

All of this training takes time—

lots of time. Try to spend time each day with your children. Talk to them, teach them, get to know them and let them get to know you.

Go places and do things with your children. You can attend cultural events or visit places of natural or man-made beauty. Teach them to appreciate and enjoy the finer things life has to offer. Go on family outings or camp-outs. Such activities will be memorable for your children—and for you. They will help to bind your family together as a unit.

The necessity of parental involvement cannot be overemphasized. Too many parents rely on others to fulfill this God-given responsibility.

4

Discipline Your Children

You may have seen it—a young mother, wrestling with her small children. She tries to be nice to them and reason with them. She even tries to bribe them with candy and other treats if they would only “be good.”

But they seem to delight in throwing tantrums and embarrassing their mother in public. They seem totally uncontrollable.

Part of that mother's problem is that she—along with millions of other parents—has no definite *plan* or program in rearing children.

Much of this comes from parents having been led to believe that in rearing children your choice has to be either love *or* discipline.

That is utterly and tragically wrong! In truth, the correct approach to child rearing involves both love AND discipline. They are not opposites, but go hand in hand.

If your little child keeps running out in the street—laughing at you because you either can't or won't discipline for this foolishness, you may one day *lose your* child under the wheels of a passing automobile. And all the permissive sociologists and psychologists on earth won't be able to bring your child back to life! That's why it is important to teach children the meaning of “no” in advance of problems.

Little children, for their *own* welfare, must be taught to obey

their parents. In any number of dangerous situations, it could spell the difference between life and death.

God's Word clearly admonishes to correct and discipline our children for wrong actions. However, discipline involves not only appropriate punishment for wrong behavior but *rewards for right behavior* (Prov. 22:15 and 29:15).

Unfortunately too many view discipline in a negative manner. They have seen so much child abuse that they reject the principle of proper discipline altogether. They adopt, instead, a destructively permissive stance in respect to their children's attitudes and actions.

But proper discipline for wrongdoing must *never* take the form of child abuse! Discipline for wrong acts or attitudes should never involve verbal insults or degrading put-downs. It should *never* involve punching or slapping in the face, strapping with a heavy belt, twisting arms, boxing or pulling ears, pinching, kicking, or hitting about vital organs.

We speak out in the loudest terms against an adult losing his or her temper and striking a child in uncontrolled anger or rage.

The word *discipline* comes from a Latin word that literally means “instruction.” That instruction must begin at a very young age.

A small sapling can easily be trained to grow in the right direction, but once that sapling becomes a mature tree, it is not possible to change it. In a similar way, children can be trained when young, but there comes a time when parents may no longer be able to teach a child.

While children are young, teachable and pliable, they can be trained by proper instruction and correction. This includes approbation or reward for doing well.

Never injure a child. Do NOT lose your temper or strike the child on or about the head or any vital organ.

Your child should learn *early* in his or her life—that you the parent are in charge, that discipline must and will be carried out for the child's good if wrong attitudes or rebellious, disrespectful behavior occur.

Discipline can take *many* forms. One of the most effective, especially for older children, is the *withholding of privileges*. Banning use of television for a certain period, for example, or withdrawing permission to play with a friend, to go to a movie or to use the family automobile can be effective.

In most cases it is better to withdraw privileges for relatively short periods (a few days or a week or two depending on the age of the child). Long periods—especially with young children—are usually ineffective. Giving children a



chance to have the privilege reinstated by the correct behavior can help underline the lesson being learned.

Making a child of any age realize the *consequences* of his wrong action or attitude is a form of punishment in itself. Suppose, for example, a young boy throws a rock and injures his little sister or brother. The parent may then give the offending child the opportunity to “care for” the wound.

Make him sit beside the injured child and hold a cold cloth against

the wound. Or have him administer the adhesive bandage. Let him "suffer" (see I Corinthians 12:26) *with* the injured child a little, and he will soon feel remorse over what he has done!

Children must be made to realize that wrong actions *hurt* other people. Undesirable conduct is such because it hurts everyone involved—including those who perpetrate it.

Remember, too, that any correction should fit the infraction, and that children vary in temperament and aptitude. Use wisdom and discretion, and make sure all disciplining is done out of proper concern for the child.

Parents should always seek to *explain* their actions to the child who is receiving correction. A child must be made to realize *why* he or she is being disciplined. He or she should understand the *justice* of that correction. Don't overdiscipline for a minor infraction. Don't underdiscipline for a major one.

Correction should be greater, for example, for stubbornness, tantrums and wrong attitudes than for careless oversight or an accident that did not involve a wrong attitude. And remember, discipline should never be revenge!

Vindictive parents are ineffective.

Poor child rearing produces maladjusted, unfulfilled, insecure children. Proper child rearing bears the good fruit of bright, responsive, well-adjusted, happy children. Remember, proper child rearing is built upon the bedrock of these critical principles: love and open affection; right parental example; intelligent, balanced teaching; and effective, appropriate discipline.

And always remember each child is different. Some children respond positively to a great deal of love and encouragement—and not so much punishment.

Get to know your children. Realize each one has different needs.

5

Accept Your Responsibility

How many parents today know that God has ordained government in the family unit? How many know God holds fathers responsible for properly leading, guiding and providing for their families?

This husband-father leadership in no way demeans a mother's role. Mothers often carry more of the day-to-day load of teaching and

training of children, especially when they are young. But God holds fathers accountable to see to it that the home is being guided by God's child-rearing instructions.

Of course, if a husband isn't physically present because of death, divorce or desertion, the mother has to do the best job possible. (Part seven of this publication is devoted to instructions for single parents.)

God's instructions on family government are clear. "For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church. . . . Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything" (Eph. 5:23-24, RAV).

That doesn't mean a father should rule his family in a dictatorial, selfish, inconsiderate manner. God's Word commands, "Husbands, love your wives [and families, we could add], even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Eph. 5:25).

Ephesians 6:4 also emphasizes parental responsibilities: "And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord" (RAV). How contrary to today's practices!

Preschool Years: Preparation for Life

We've covered the importance of the family, healthy babies, good parenting. Now we take you through the real-life experiences of childhood.

PARENTING begins with that wonderful moment you first hold your baby in your arms.

It is then that the educational process starts that molds and shapes the child into what he or she will be in later life.

Make no mistake about it—the early months and years are the most critical in guiding and rearing of children. Here is how you can make the most of this vital period of time.

Talk to Your Child

Beginning right after birth, talk to your baby. As much as possible avoid baby talk. Use clear speech. Talk while caressing him, bathing him, dressing him, changing him. Hearing the sound of your voice and the language you speak is necessary to his development.

Changing the position of the baby's crib from time to time is important, too, as he begins to distinguish differences in seeing as well as hearing. He begins to become familiar with different colors and shapes.

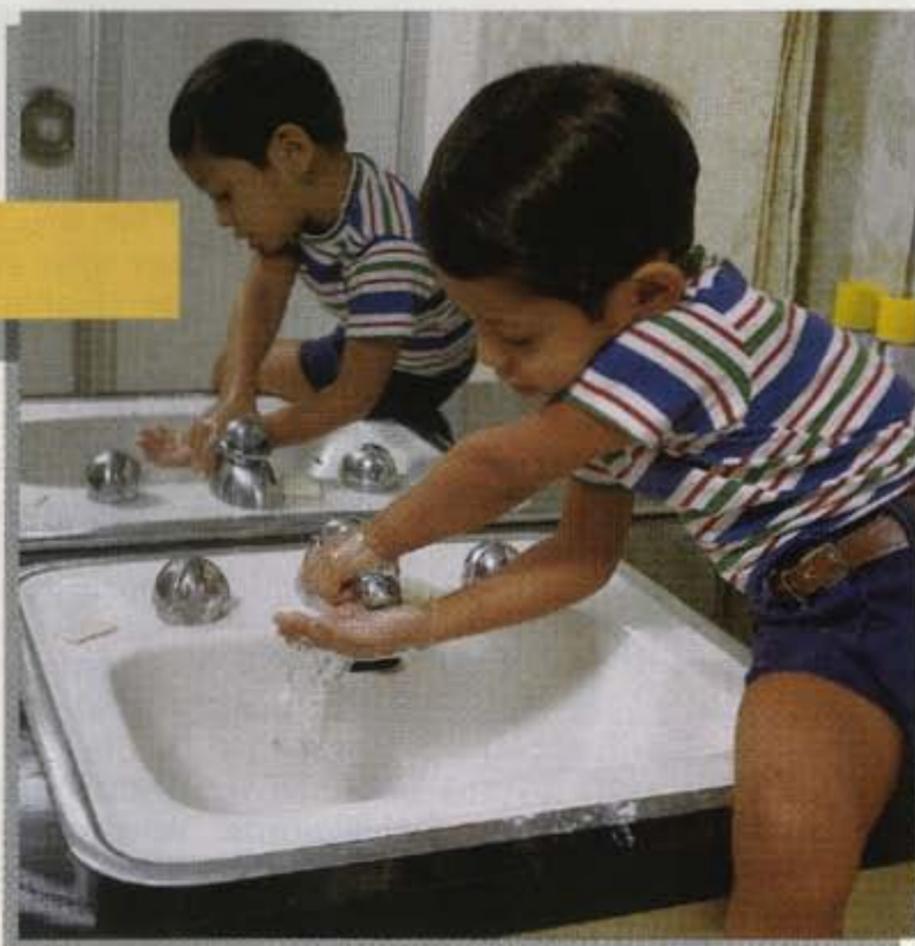
By the time your child is 8 or 9 months old you will notice that he has more of an understanding of what you are saying. When you see

this spark of enlightenment, fuel it! Use carefully selected words and phrases—but speak normally.

Don't use baby talk that will only have to be unlearned later. Remember, a child will revert to early learnings, and any faulty constructions you have instilled will come out later—to the child's embar-

roughly and as correctly as you can. It is wise also to avoid the other extreme—once the child can comprehend. Some parents talk above the child's level of understanding. If this happens the child may

Children should be learning cleanliness from the home environment.



rassment in front of classmates.

Work on your own grammar. You are your child's first teacher and you are transmitting the language with which your child will think and express his ideas. You surely want to transmit it as thor-

“switch off,” later impairing concentration in school.

Encourage Curiosity

Don't confine your baby to a playpen for overlong periods. It may be more convenient, but it can

curtail interest and curiosity—and curiosity is essential to learning.

As your child is crawling, he learns by feeling the surroundings. Muscles and coordination are being developed. Coordinated movements early in life have a critical role in

ent. They have a strong desire to please parents who are truly interested and excited about their accomplishments.

Parents must show the child how to give and share. The child must not be allowed to snatch toys away

self-confidence in children—a positive eagerness toward new opportunities, rather than a withdrawing, doubtful, discouraged inferiority complex.

Children should be learning *cleanliness* from the home environment. They should be learning *friendliness* by social contacts and events—from group outings to home entertaining to dining out. They should be building confidence, enthusiasm, a happy, positive approach. By their actions, they should be displaying a deep honoring of parents and respect for all elders.

They should be learning to follow instructions by completing household chores and tasks. At their level, they should be learning to *work* for results, staying with a task until it is completed successfully.

Children should be taught to *accept criticism*. Your child will need your comfort when criticized, but he or she must learn to make necessary correction when wrong and forget the sting of criticism. Your love and encouragement will help.

If parents let down in these areas, the child will become unresponsive both to his parents and his teachers at school. He'll become an expert at tuning out—he'll ignore directions and adjust poorly to situations.

Be Highly Interested

Parents should be highly interested in their child and all his interests. This shouldn't be just a casual display—young minds quickly discern the difference: When "Daddy, will you play with me?" is asked, the response, too often, is usually a weary, "Not now, I'm too tired." Or "In a minute, son," hoping some other interest will soon occupy him.

Take time to play with your child. It shows your child that you love him and accept his world. Also, you can see the progress he's making—on a regular basis.

Children should be allowed to play near you when you are working, even though this leads to interruptions. Our job as parents is to teach and train our children. Answering their questions is a neces-

Children should be allowed to play near you when you are working, even though this leads to interruptions.



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from others. He must learn not to take anything that isn't his. He must not shade stories to his own advantage.

Above all else is the parental model for these traits. This will determine the child's character. And character is the real key to later success in school and life. Character and good study habits are what every parent first needs to be teaching his children at home.

A child needs to be learning order and organization. No boy or girl should be brought up in household confusion. A neat, ordered home with regular mealtimes will help develop order, trust and confidence in a child.

Praise builds confidence in your children. Don't talk demeaningly to others about your children's faults and inner feelings. If a child knows that what he or she reveals to you from the heart goes out to others, the child will stop being open with you. Don't lay the foundation for a generation gap. Begin building family loyalty now.

Activities—not necessarily expensive activities—when done together are the concrete, personal experiences that draw parent and child to each other. Such shared experiences will also develop right

the development of the brain.

All dangerous things should be put out of baby's reach, but allow for a certain amount of minor mishap. Don't be overprotective.

Limits in certain areas should be set for the child's own good. Refrain from saying "no" continually, but set definite limits to establish self-discipline early.

Remember that children will test their parents and will push to the limits they can go. But they will accept authority if parents are firm.

Character Development

The child's character traits, personal values and personality are decided basically by the home environment. Parents are the prime teachers—or should be! But often the development of character is left to the school in hopes that teachers will impart to the child the discipline and respect the parents couldn't.

A parent should realize he or she has a host of advantages with which to succeed. Young children will unquestionably believe a par-

sary part of this God-given responsibility.

When the questions come at a moment that you cannot answer, have the child wait. This is valuable training for school and later life. It develops patience and control. It is good, too, because the child has to remember the question, which is excellent preparation for school. If, however, these questions are left unanswered, we have let valuable learning experiences go by.

Children of all ages benefit by being included in the day's regular activities. Shopping, painting the fence, visiting friends, planting the backyard garden are all helpful educational experiences.

Personality and Language Development

As time goes on you will notice your child's personality developing. At age 2, some children are capable of using expressive language. Building compound and complex sentences can be handled at this age, though some youngsters do take a bit longer. At age 2, a child has a speaking vocabulary of about 200 words, but during the next three years it can reach 2,000. This shows the steady, rapid progress that can be made during these crucial preschool years.

Help your child put immature responses into words. Don't let him get away with nodding or pointing. Have your toddler speak in correct, full sentences.

In all teaching, remember: A child will strive to live up to our expectations. If we have a low standard, the child will settle for that. If it's a high one, he will reach for it.

Teach and train in a positive, happy, warm, loving way. You shouldn't allow yourself to get so overburdened with other tasks that impatience sets in. Have time for laughter and fun. Make family life enjoyable.

Your Child's Play

Play is the child's work! It is important in his or her life and development. Far from being an extra, it is vital to growth. From the earliest days, play experiences help develop coordination, tastes, maturity and

personality. Character is largely formed in early play experiences.

Through play a child rehearses patterns of living. Play doesn't always have to include toys. Teaching your child to perform household chores can be equally fun and constructive. If proper play experiences are offered, a child is likely to transfer much of the pleasure of play into what adults call work.

Toys are important, though. They are a child's tools for learning. They can be used to develop a strong, healthy body and an alert mind. They can help form a child's personality and creative skills.

When purchasing toys, parents should select those suitable for the child's age, sex and temperament.

Up to one year children enjoy and profit from toys they can look at, feel, safely chew on, hold in their hands and drop. They should be washable and unbreakable and have no sharp edges.

One-to-two-year-olds often like toys they can take apart and put together again, and toys they can push and pull around. Balls,

The manipulative skills of 4- and 5-year-olds need toys that stimulate their coordination and mental abilities.

blocks, little airplanes, cars and dolls would generally interest them.

For toddlers and younger children, toys that can be assembled, that give children the chance to learn different colors, and help them learn to count, are good.

As a child grows older, he likes to turn pages (teach him how) and experiment with newly discovered

abilities. Nontoxic modeling clay, safe vegetable dye paints, various balls (which help coordination, timing and agility) and construction sets are good, depending on the child. If a child has difficulty catching balls, toss things to your offspring, such as soiled laundry to put in the hamper.

Girls enjoy dolls that can be dressed and have underclothes changed. Boys, too, should be familiar with the procedure.

The manipulative skills of 4- and 5-year-olds need toys that stimulate their coordination and mental abilities, speed and accuracy. Trains, hobby materials in arts and crafts, construction or model sets, tricycles and games that can be played out of doors are appropriate here.

Outdoor play is excellent for health and coordination. A swing, jungle gym, outdoor tub (under your supervision) are good, as is a sandbox, replete with shovel, bucket and sieve.



Good educational experiences and toys should involve active personal participation. This is essential to the whole pattern of development.

Be sure the toys are safe and durable. Some suggestions of the U.S. National Commission of Product Safety include:

Test doll heads. Twist and turn the head, as well as the arms and

legs, as a child might. Look for sharp edges.

Make sure the eyes and ears of toy animals are firm.

If a toy comes only in a package, ask the retailer for a sample you can examine.

Be wary of electrical toys.

Get assurance that paint on toys is nonpoisonous.

Above all, use good common sense! Remember—children are your priceless gifts from God. Make their playtime safe.

Toys do not have to be the purchased variety exclusively. Some can be made from wood or cans with plastic tops. Children enjoy cardboard boxes too—they make fine trains and buses. Creative toys provide the child the excitement and satisfaction of learning. They challenge the child to use his imagination in a constructive and creative way.

Scissors should be round ended, but really cut. This is the time to teach proper use of sharp objects, and your child should soon be quite safe with them. (If giving pencils you should observe how the child is holding the pencil and forming letters.)

From your cloth remnants have your child cut odd bits of material and match the pieces, feeling as well as seeing the differences.

Don't expect perfect results from your child's craft activities. It is the activity that counts at this time, not the result.

Be sure to have your child clean up and put toys away. That is each child's responsibility—in having toys one must learn to take care of them! Failure to do so is allowing a breakdown of character.

In games with others, a child should be taught the importance of sharing and that winning is not as important as being a good sport. Games will help teach good sportsmanship and how to face disappointment gracefully.

A child should be taught to always put forth his best effort and

to cheerfully cooperate with others. These points should be learned early!

Television

Many preschoolers are practically weaned on television, in some cases spending more than half of their waking time with eyes glued to their "teacher."

In the United States, before reaching age 5, a child may have already spent more time in front of a television set than the average student in a liberal arts program

this possibly weakened eyes from staring at one point (sometimes without blinking for long periods, whereas the normal eye movement is from side to side).

Television should not fill the vacuum created by a parent's neglect. It should not be a baby-sitter. Children need to be talked to and listened to in their formative years.

The television set itself, however, is not the problem—if control is exercised. Watch good programs *together*. Parents can then com-



Children enjoy cardboard boxes too—they make fine trains and buses.

ment on any fallacies or wrong actions that can creep into "good" programs.

The Importance of Listening

Children need to come to school with the *habit* of giving their undivided attention to the teacher—or any elder who is speaking. This is far too often not the case, as we have said, because of the impact of television, and because parents themselves are failing to set the example. The child's future is thus *already* at a very sad disadvantage.

Listening is a vital key to learning. Start developing this skill early. It will take work, diligence and self-discipline, but your child's future success depends on it.

Have your child sit still and be quiet at certain times of the day. Start by having him or her listen to you for a minute or two at a time. Make sure the child's eyes are on you. Then ask a question concerning what you have just covered.

Praise the child with: "What a good boy (or girl) you are! Those ears just catch every one of Mommy's (or Daddy's) words!" A big hug will be in order.

You will develop by experience the ability to know how much your child is able to take in and reiterate in answer form. Add information when you feel it's too easy for him, always expanding your offspring's knowledge and understanding. Extend his listening time to several minutes by the time he's about 5 years old.

Literature for Reading

In teaching to listen, read to your child! Take your child to the library even by age 2. A love of books will begin to develop by so doing.

Choose books that have proper information. Avoid too many talking animals and fairy tales. Keep to subjects relevant to your children's experiences and interest.

Through books your child's vocabulary will increase and he will learn the flow and rhythm of words. Synonyms and antonyms will enter his ears. Nouns and adjectives will parade before his mind.

Poetry is important for the rhythmic pattern children enjoy, and for speech development (by repeating words that may initially be difficult to pronounce). Have your child learn several from memory. Memory work aids in the proper development of mental organization. Be sure the selections cover a wide spectrum of facts and experiences. Introduce your child to the rhythm of language with all its richness and beauty.

Show your child how you read. As you read, use expression—make the story or poem exciting, interesting. Use inflection and vocal color—but be balanced!

Don't continue reading something in which your child has no apparent interest at the time. He has *so many* of his own interests going, build on these. His knowledge in these subjects will rapidly increase and other areas will open from this.

Open the world to your child—teach, instruct, nourish, add to the ideas and interests he or she has.

Try to look at the world through a child's eyes. View the folded rosebud, the billowing clouds, the tiny twigs of trees. Appreciate and enjoy God's creation with your child, and you will be teaching him "while you're walking by the way."

Don't Rush Reading

Don't be a parent who is over anxious to get his child reading! Parents *often* like to put great emphasis on this while leaving other *more valuable preschool work* undone. Children often can "read" before they go to school, but have poor comprehension and eyesight and can do little else. They have learned to identify words, but without the depth of meaning that takes added maturity and life experience to comprehend.

To some parents, other areas are not so obvious or readily tangible as reading, and therefore are overlooked. These are the important attitude areas covered earlier. This is the foundation upon which everything else will rest.

Reading at a *very* early age can be accomplished, but it is not necessary. If your child does show interest in reading before his first year at school, expose him to familiar words all around us—"STOP," "TELEPHONE." In a natural way, have your child point out signs as you walk and ride. He or she will have such pleasure in recognition! Select books to read that contain these words. It is much easier for a child to understand ideas that are familiar than a book in which there is little interest.

Have your child tell you a brief story. Using *large dark letters*, print what he or she has said. You can make up a book this way, using *large* sheets of paper. Praise your child for each word recognized.

If you choose to buy your child books, make book buying a real event. Buy one at a time. With this incentive, a child will not only experience joy in reading, but may want to try out writing.

Preschool Writing Development

Again, remember it takes tremendous coordination to write. This can be developed by picking berries, folding napkins, sorting out Daddy's nails and bolts, work-

ing with clay or kneading pastry with Mother.

Encourage your child to do *much* cutting and pasting. Cut out pictures and paste them by topic in a scrapbook or montage.

Use cardboard upon which to paste a picture and cut into shapes—an endless supply of jigsaws!

These activities develop strength in hands and fingers. Good penmanship begins here.

If your child strongly favors use of his left hand, make no issue of it.

Be sure to teach your child not to write in books that should not be written in.

Mathematics

Preschool years offer a made-to-order situation for teaching elementary mathematics. Have your child measure how many times a certain toy will fit on a chair, how many steps it is to certain objects. Have your child set the table and count out the spoons, forks, knives and plates needed.

Make a clock using numbers found in magazines. Have your child gather acorns, stones, pebbles, sand, shells, and weigh them against each other on a scale.

On shopping trips, have your child find round and oval fruits and vegetables, rectangular packages. Let him or her have experience with proper handling of money, especially small change.

Music

Acquaint your child with music. From earliest days let him hear a rich variety of music in the home.

Play recordings, both classical and children's, along with a rich selection of other types, including ethnic compositions from around the world. Include music that is majestically inspiring, peaceful, pleasurable, joyous—and even sad. Have background music at special meals.

Point out the instruments of the orchestra.

Let your child participate in making music and keeping time to it. Let him or her sing, dance, skip, jump, march and learn left and right by so doing. Through rhythmic activities a child gains coordi-

nation, confidence, social skills and knowledge. Music helps in discipline and development of creative skills. Be careful not to ridicule or in any way put down the musical attempts of your child. Encourage, and help instead. Make music fun. Enjoy it as God intends.

The Important First Day at School

As your child gets closer to school age, prepare for that important first day. See that he or she has been playing with other children, is having contact with other adults who have authority—and responds to them.

Talk positively about your child's school. Problems of excessive shyness can be avoided if the child is allowed to stay with relatives and later a close friend or two for the odd morning or afternoon during toddlerhood or soon after.

Some experience of a well-supervised and structured playgroup for

a morning or two (avoid more than this) can help prepare the child for the school setting. Build it up as a joyous experience—a place where he or she will meet new friends, new challenges and have a lovely time. Take your child to visit the school before enrolling.

As your child enters on the first day, and all succeeding days, he or she should enter without you, have a cheery "Good morning" for the teacher, put the lunch pail neatly in the space provided, walk in an orderly manner to the desk and sit quietly, waiting for the class to begin.

When the teacher speaks, a child should respond instantly, not when he's ready to! He should not wave his hand frantically when asking or answering a question. He should be trained in finishing lunch within a half hour and sit properly during it. He should have been independently toilet-trained and not embarrassed to ask a teacher for permission to

use the toilet in emergencies.

Any questions or misunderstandings you have should be directed to the teacher directly, not through your child. You will be laying groundwork for an effective future relationship with the school.

Uphold the teacher in your child's eyes. If you don't, you are undoing principles you have already taught. When school and home work together, progress is steadily and rapidly made.

To help reassure your child, be sure to be prompt in picking up him or her at dismissal time.

With God's principles as a foundation, your child will have the start of a giant blessing that will grow day by day. He or she will please all who come in contact with your family, reflecting your training and, by extension, God's truth, for "even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right" (Prov. 20:11).

Overlooked In-Between Years

Why should child rearing be the most misunderstood issue facing parents today? We pick up the story, here, with the preadolescent or early school years.

THE preschool years are crucial in a child's development. So are the earlier school-age years—roughly ages 6 to 12. These are the preadolescent years, just before the stressful time of puberty when a child begins his or her transition from childhood to adulthood.

The preadolescent years lay the foundation for the teen years. It is an important time that in large measure determines the course for subsequent years.

At this age, children are still young and pliable. You, the parent, will at this time set them on the road to either success or failure. When children become teenagers, it will be much more difficult to alter already established patterns of behavior. By instilling right habits in your children *before* they become teenagers and young adults, you will make it easier on them—and on yourself—later on.

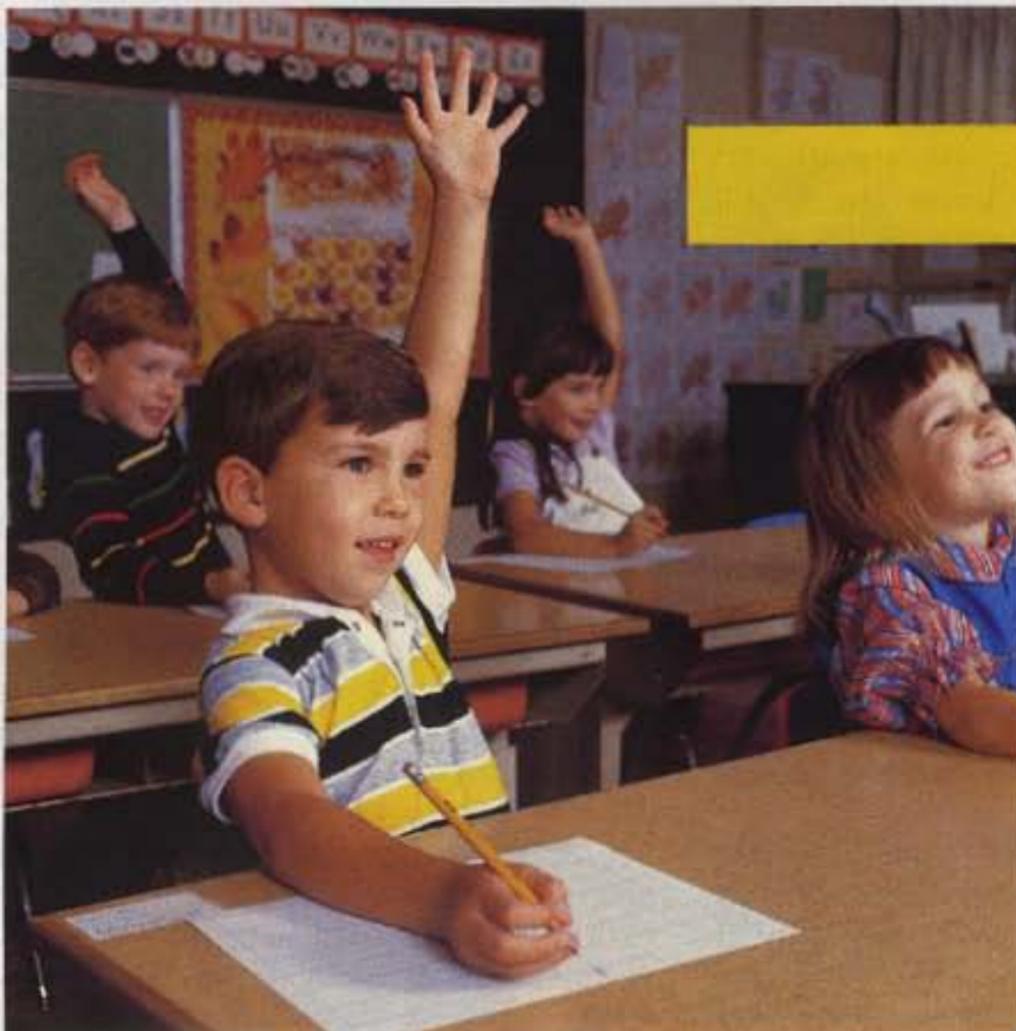
It's Never Too Late to Start

If you have neglected your child-rearing responsibilities up to this point, **NOW IS ABSOLUTELY THE TIME TO START!** Your responsibility has become a serious one.

In this chapter we focus on selected areas of concern in preadolescent child rearing and show how these principles can be specifically tailored to this age group. We will examine the areas of communication, general education, sex education and character morals.

"No one listens." "No one understands." "No one cares." These are the prevalent feelings of most children and teenagers today. And such attitudes can be a great barrier to a parent's child-rearing efforts.

Parents must foster an atmo-



Help establish right attitudes about school. Show enthusiasm over homework and school achievements.

Possibly the most important aspect of child rearing at this or any age is proper communication. The need for effective communication cannot be overemphasized!

sphere of openness and approachability. Children must not be made to feel afraid to come to you as a parent.

Establish contact with your chil-

dren. Don't let job, activities, selfish interests or other matters interfere with this need. This is too often neglected—with disastrous consequences!

Communication must be two-way. Parents usually communicate

views. Youngsters won't always agree with parents about what's best for them, but if you give them a fair hearing and genuinely consider their views, they will realize that you have been fair.

Help them understand why some-

ments of our time has been a rather general declining quality of education.

The foundation for educational success is built in the elementary years—and before. If proper attention and guidance are given in the early years, those years that follow will be much more productive and rewarding.

Instill a desire for education in your child. Help establish right attitudes about school. Show enthusiasm over his homework and school achievements. Be concerned and interested in your child's progress—and *show it*.

Establish a dialogue with his teacher. Discuss his progress periodically. Listen to the teacher and take the instruction to heart. If there are problem subjects requiring additional attention, help your child in these areas. Don't allow your child to simply coast through school, doing just enough to get by. Be actively concerned. It will pay off handsomely in so many ways.

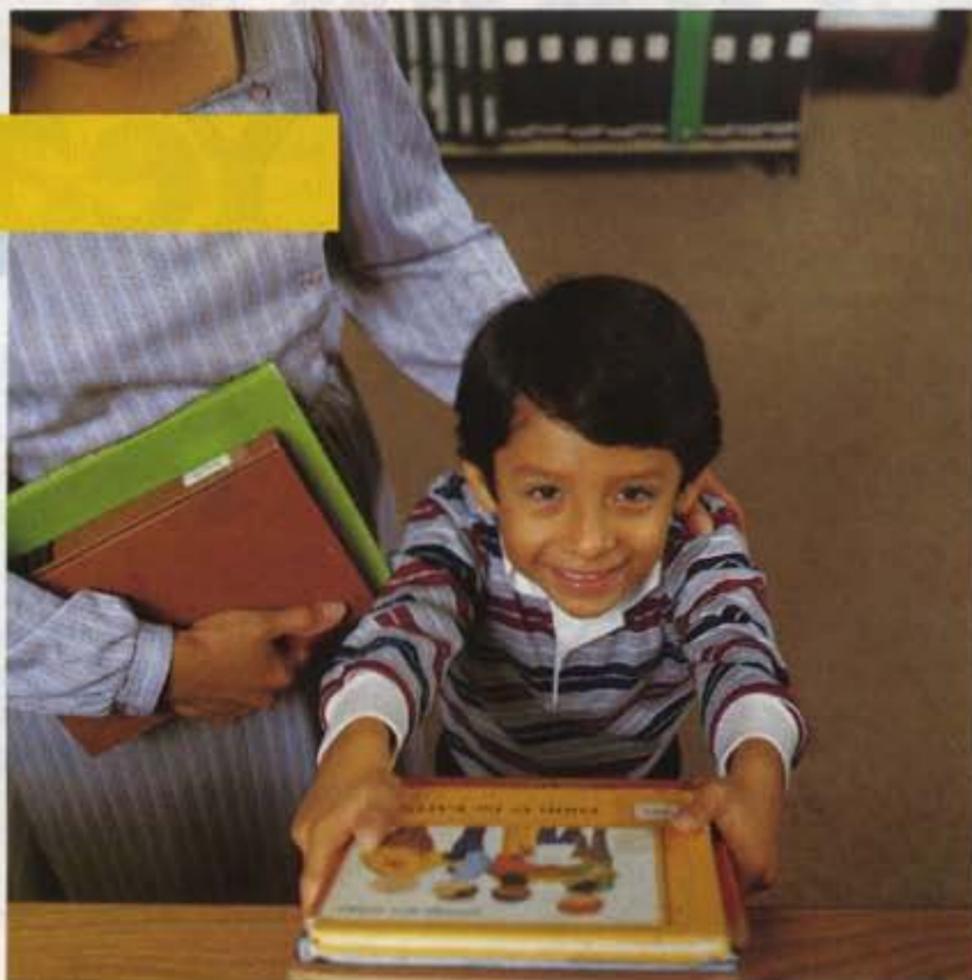
Remember, too, that your child's education doesn't begin and end with the school day. Education takes place throughout one's waking hours. There are many ways of fostering this continuous learning process. One of the important roles of a parent is that of *teacher!*

Instill in your children a love of books and reading. Take them occasionally to your public library. Help them select interesting and informative books on a wide range of subjects. Go through these books with them, as time allows.

Create an atmosphere of dynamic interest in the huge world around us. Encourage them to want to know more about it—about its people, places, wildlife, history and so on. Read *with* them. Set an example by letting them see you reading.

Television can also be an effective tool for education, if used wisely. Supervised viewing of educational and informative programs can add a visual dimension to learning and stimulate additional interest and understanding. Be careful not to allow indiscriminate use of the set. There is nothing wrong with occasional viewing for entertainment, as long as wrong influences are guarded against by

Instill in your children a love of books and reading. Help them select interesting and informative books.



to their children, but not *with* them. Your children have their own ideas, dreams, plans and goals. Some are right. Some are wrong, or inadvisable. If your children develop the habit of coming to you with their thoughts, you will be able to direct and advise them in their thinking, and often prevent problems before they arise.

Answer honestly: Do your children come to you for advice? If not, you need to begin talking more with them. Ask them questions about school, their friends, their interests, problems they might be having. Not in a prying manner, but in an attitude of genuine interest and concern.

Show them that you are interested. Be understanding. Be fair. Let them know that they can always come to you, even if they've done something wrong. Soon your children will want to take you into their confidence and share their problems, joys and sorrows.

Do you really *listen* to your children's viewpoints? Don't automatically close your mind to their

thing is either wrong or inadvisable. Don't just say "No!" and leave it at that. Provide instruction and guidance. Take time to *teach*. If they choose to do what is inadvisable, let them learn the lesson. Don't rub it in by saying, "I told you so."

Occasionally have an evening of family discussion, a round-table in which all are involved. On such an occasion, allow each member of the family to air his or her views and make suggestions about possible change that might need to be made in various areas of family life. This will be an excellent time to get to know your children and how they are thinking—and for your children to get to know *you*.

Get to *know* your child at this age. If a pattern of open communication is established in these years, you'll be on a much better footing when the teen years arrive. Don't let a generation gap develop in your family. Close that gap by *communicating* with your children!

Educating the Whole Person

One of the most tragic develop-

proper supervision. Point out wrong values and actions on television. Discuss what is going on in the show. Remember, television is a privilege, not a right.

Family trips can also be a valuable method of education. Take your children to museums if any are accessible. Museums hold a great fascination for young people. Planetariums are also of great interest to children. They can open wide vistas of interest in the universe and the world in which we live. Trips to historical sites or natural points of interest can also provide valuable learning experiences. Such experiences at an early age leave lasting impressions. Your children want and need family activities of this nature.

The more a child knows, the more he or she will want to know. Helping to develop an inquiring mind in your child is one of the most important efforts you can make during preadolescent years.

Sex Education

During the preadolescent period, questions about sex inevitably arise. Children at this age want to know the simple answers to their questions—and they *will* find out—one way or the other!

Parents often don't know how to go about telling their children the facts of life. They become tongue-tied and embarrassed when confronted with their children's sexual questions. They become uncomfortable and uneasy. They grope for words or they change the subject. Most children are thus left to pick it up on their own, to put two and two together for themselves. More often than not, they pick it up in the proverbial gutter, usually from classmates in the form of dirty jokes or magazines.

Don't allow this to happen to your child! You should have begun teaching your child in the preschool years, while he is still young, about birth, the nursing of babies and sex before he hears it from misinformed sources. Educate your child in stages about birth and sex as early as possible, before other influences come to bear. Do not allow other children to play the role of sex educator for your child!

How should you proceed? First, make sure you are sufficiently versed on the subject to be able to provide simple, but correct and accurate answers to their questions. It is often surprising how much parents don't know about their bodies and the reproductive process!

Create an atmosphere of open communication. Candidly and openly answer according to a child's level of understanding. Don't worry that children will be embarrassed or frightened by explicit answers, thoughtfully presented. The embarrassment and apprehension are usually only on the part of the parent!

And don't wait until your children ask about sex. Almost all want to know, but some are too shy to ask. If they don't inquire, don't assume they have no interest or are not old enough to deal with the subject. Take the initiative and teach them when they are young,

Attitudes acquired early in life tend to be retained. Impart the right kind of wholesome, responsible Bible-based attitudes about sex to your children.

A few books, carefully chosen, can also be helpful. Go through a simple book about sex with your children. Photographs of the human body and explicit diagrams can often help clarify what words sometimes fail to convey.

Why not also request our free book *The Missing Dimension in Sex* for this information?

There has been much controversy in recent decades about sex education in public schools. If sex information is imparted first in the home, the negative aspects (if any) of the school's presentation can be overruled. When your child's teacher covers human sexuality in class, your child will be able to take that information and view it through eyes that have already been trained to discern good and

Teach your children about birth, babies and sex before they hear it from misinformed sources.



G.A. MELLUCHE JR.—PT

before wrong attitudes develop because of outside influences.

Be careful not to associate human sexuality with feelings of guilt or shame. Let your children know that sex is sacred and wholesome. Don't convey—consciously or unconsciously—a negative view of the opposite sex. Regardless of your own innermost feelings, don't create wrong attitudes in your child.

bad according to the Bible's value system.

Remember, too, that a large portion of your child's understanding of sex and love in marriage will come from their viewing the relationship between you and your spouse. If you are unaffectionate with your spouse—if your child never sees you hug, kiss or hold hands with each other—chances

are that he or she will grow up to be an undemonstrative and unaffectionate adult. Set the right example! A levelheaded approach to sex from the early years will produce an adult able to handle his or her sexuality wisely and responsibly.

The preadolescent years are also a time when attention must be given to developing right attitudes about being a boy or girl, attitudes that will carry over into adulthood.

Possibly the most important aspect of such teaching is strong example. Young people want and need someone to copy. If parents are setting the right examples of masculinity and femininity, most of the battle is already won.

If a father treats his young daughter with respect as a feminine young woman—opening doors for her, respecting her privacy, treating her with love and kindness—this is the type of behavior she will look for and expect in a man later on. If her father does not show love and fatherly affection and concern toward her, she will have no standard by which to judge proper masculine behavior.

Mothers, too, must exhibit the proper kind of feminine character traits to their sons—traits that they would like to see in their future daughters-in-law. Young men are often drawn to women who remind them of their mothers whom they dearly loved and admired. As the song from yesteryear observes: "I want a girl, just like the girl, that married dear old dad." If a mother fails to set a proper feminine example, her son may later have difficulty in evaluating and choosing a suitable mate.

In single-parent families, it is important that the children—regardless of their sex—be exposed to adults representing the sex of the missing parent, adults who can set a right example of masculinity or femininity to the children. Such adults can be relatives, friends, co-workers, neighbors. Single parents must not neglect this important aspect of their child-rearing responsibilities.

A girl needs to understand what she is and her potential as a woman. She has to be taught to exhibit those characteristics that

make for true femininity—characteristics such as virtue, industry, outgoing concern for others, generosity, understanding, helpfulness. She should be taught how to conduct herself in all situations as a lady.

Instruction in etiquette and manners is essential. If slovenly conduct and deportment are allowed to flourish in these early years, it will be difficult to break those bad habits later on. *Begin early* to set right standards! Work now to mold your daughter into a woman of personality and charm.

Practical skills such as cooking, sewing and cleaning can also be taught beginning in these early school-age years. Do not wait until the high school years, or hope that home economics classes will do the job for you. Give your daughters a head start by early instruction at home.

Proper grooming habits should also be established at this age. Mothers should take time to instruct their daughters in hair care, proper dress and personal hygiene. The habits of proper diet and a regular program of exercise should be stressed in these early years. Your children will thank you for it later.

Your daughters are the wives and mothers of tomorrow. They will be the examples for your grandchildren. Be diligent to give them—and future generations—the right start!

Boys must understand that the purpose of being a boy is to become a *man*. Today, one finds far too many teenage boys and young men who are out-of-condition weaklings—sallow-faced, sunken-chested and wimpish. This should not be.

Boys should be motivated and taught to develop courage and strength, to be fit physically. They should be encouraged, as should girls, to take an active part in sports and athletic programs to get in shape and stay that way. Basketball, tennis, soccer, softball, volleyball, swimming, jogging—the possibilities are endless. Such physical activity will develop strength and coordination and stimulate mental agility.

Boys should also be provided

with chances to work. They should be taught to work *diligently* and *conscientiously* at whatever job they are given and to enjoy it. Hard work is a trait that has been rapidly on the decline among young people—but one that is an essential for later success as an adult.

Boys should also be trained in proper etiquette and grooming. Manners and a clean-cut appearance are essential. Mothers should help their sons develop good habits of neatness and cleanliness. If a mother constantly picks up after her son, he will not learn the habit of personal cleanliness. Encourage in him the habit of hanging up his own clothing, of keeping his own room neat.

Both boys and girls should be given chances to develop an appreciation for good music. Music today is a big part of every child's life. Children should be encouraged to develop their musical abilities, vocal and instrumental.

Finally, it is helpful to supplement parental example with biblical examples. Read to your children examples of real men and women from the Bible. Discuss with them why these men and women were examples of true masculinity and femininity. And read also the bad examples, explaining why those men and women failed.

Developing Character and Morals

The home is an essential element in the instilling of right character and morals. You can have a profound effect on how your children will conduct their lives after they leave home.

Children want guidelines. Most young children earnestly desire help from their parents. It gives them a sense of security. They know you are concerned for them if you give them guidelines. Let children know how you expect them to behave. Give them clear standards of conduct.

When it comes to instilling character and morals, realize again that example is of paramount importance. Your actions speak louder than your words. Do you lie, cheat, swear, follow a double standard, gossip, complain, criticize? Your children see it! How can a parent

expect to be credible to his children if he does not follow his own advice?

Other forces, however, are also trying to shape your children's character. Television, radio, music—these are powerful influences. Any potential wrong effects of these forces need to be offset. It will take time and effort to successfully do battle with them when necessary. But it is worth it.

Teach your children to respect you, their teachers, their elders, the laws of the land and the rights of others. Be sure, too, that you are personally living your life in such a manner to deserve their respect and honor.

Develop within your child the belief and practice of proper values. Explain the positive and negative results of right or wrong actions, in language your child will understand. Vividly paint the picture. Explain the bad results of smoking, lying, drug use, too much television, degrading music, the wrong kind of friends, laziness, self-pity and irresponsibility. Help him realize why certain actions and conduct are wrong and harmful.

Parents should teach their children that there are absolute, living, spiritual laws that govern all life, and that these laws exact penalties if they are broken. Teach your children obedience to God and his laws. Teach them the Ten Commandments. Explain how they apply to everyday life, to situations your children encounter in their day-to-day existence. These great laws of life summarize the way of giving, the way of outgoing concern to fellowman and of honor to God.

Bible study should be a part of every family's schedule. Under-score the principles you have been teaching your children with examples from the Bible. Show them examples of right behavior, explain why this behavior pleased God, and point out the blessings that came from such behavior. Also illustrate the consequences of wrong behavior with examples from the Bible.

As a parent, you must be alert to the times. Don't live in a dream world. Don't assume things are the same as when you were a child. This is a fast-changing world, a much different world than when you were young. Children have a natural desire to conform, to do what their peers are doing.

As a parent, you must be informed about today's youths and their concerns and preoccupations. Talk to your child; talk to other parents; talk to teachers; read newspapers and magazines. Keep your fingers on the pulse of the world. If you fail to understand the influences bombarding your child, you may be helpless to counter them.

Watch for wrong attitudes in your children. Be on guard against attitudes of anger, selfishness, dishonesty and rebellion. Inquire why your children feel the way they do. Guide them to understand why any such attitudes are harmful to themselves and to others. Instruct them in the proper responses to situations, and why such responses work for the best in the long run.

In the same vein, encourage the right attitudes of love, giving, sharing, understanding, obedience and forgiveness. Show your pleasure and appreciation when they act responsibly.

Of course, it will at times be necessary to discipline wrong conduct. When such occasions arise, act with wisdom, love, compassion, mercy—and with firmness. Be strict in things that are wrong. Don't be a permissive parent. Correct in a firm yet loving manner. Help them understand why their actions were wrong, and why discipline is necessary.

Exercise the proper judgment in deciding what type of correction to administer. Often a simple predetermined denial of privileges for a period of time can be an effective form of discipline for the removal of bad habits. When physical correction is administered, remember that it should *never* cause injury to the child. Child beating causes per-

manent physical and—even more importantly—emotional damage to a child.

Any correction should fit the infraction. Use wisdom in correction. Bear in mind that children are not adults and should not be expected to act completely like adults when they are young. Be realistic. Don't overreact or overcorrect. Strive for the proper balance. Discipline in love, not in anger. If you are emotionally out of control, wait to cool down before administering correction. Don't let your emotions cloud your judgment.

Remember, too, that mercy can sometimes be as effective in teaching the lesson as administering actual discipline. The display of a forgiving attitude on the part of the parent ("I'm not going to punish you *this* time, but...") will impress your children with your fairness if they did not fully understand the problem. Never harbor a lingering grudge against them. Let them know that you corrected for their own good, and that the matter is now over. Give them a chance for an immediate change of heart or action.

Also, it is important to reward good conduct. Positive reinforcement for right action is as effective a teacher as discipline for wrongdoing. Praise your children when the situation calls for it. Comment on your pleasure at seeing their right conduct. Commend them for their helpfulness and consideration. Such rewards will lend powerful support to your teaching that right conduct brings happiness and harmony. Praise does work wonders.

In summary, remember that your preadolescent children are young and full of energy. They are inquisitive, impressionable and pliable. Establish contact with them. And help them to establish contact with God and he will help them.

Get to really know your children and understand them. Be interested and concerned. Be encouraging. Lay a firm foundation in these crucial years. Your efforts now will pay eternal dividends!

The Teen Years

The teen years are not the time to start child rearing, but to put the finishing touches on parent-child relationships.

“WITHOUT a decent set of parents, a kid doesn't have much of a chance in this society,” says California juvenile court judge Joseph N. Sorrentino, author of the book *The Concrete Cradle*.

At no time during a child's development is that statement more true than during the wonderful, crucial, turbulent teenage years. Teenagers need active, proper guidance from good, strong parents if they are to mature into successful adults.

Think: This world in which we all live is a pulsating pressure cooker—a constantly changing and challenging, even threatening, environment. And teens are faced with this world just at the most volatile period of their lives—when they are trying to come to grips with their energy and emotions, when their personalities and habits are being solidified, probably for life.

Why Frustrations?

Is it any wonder that the path

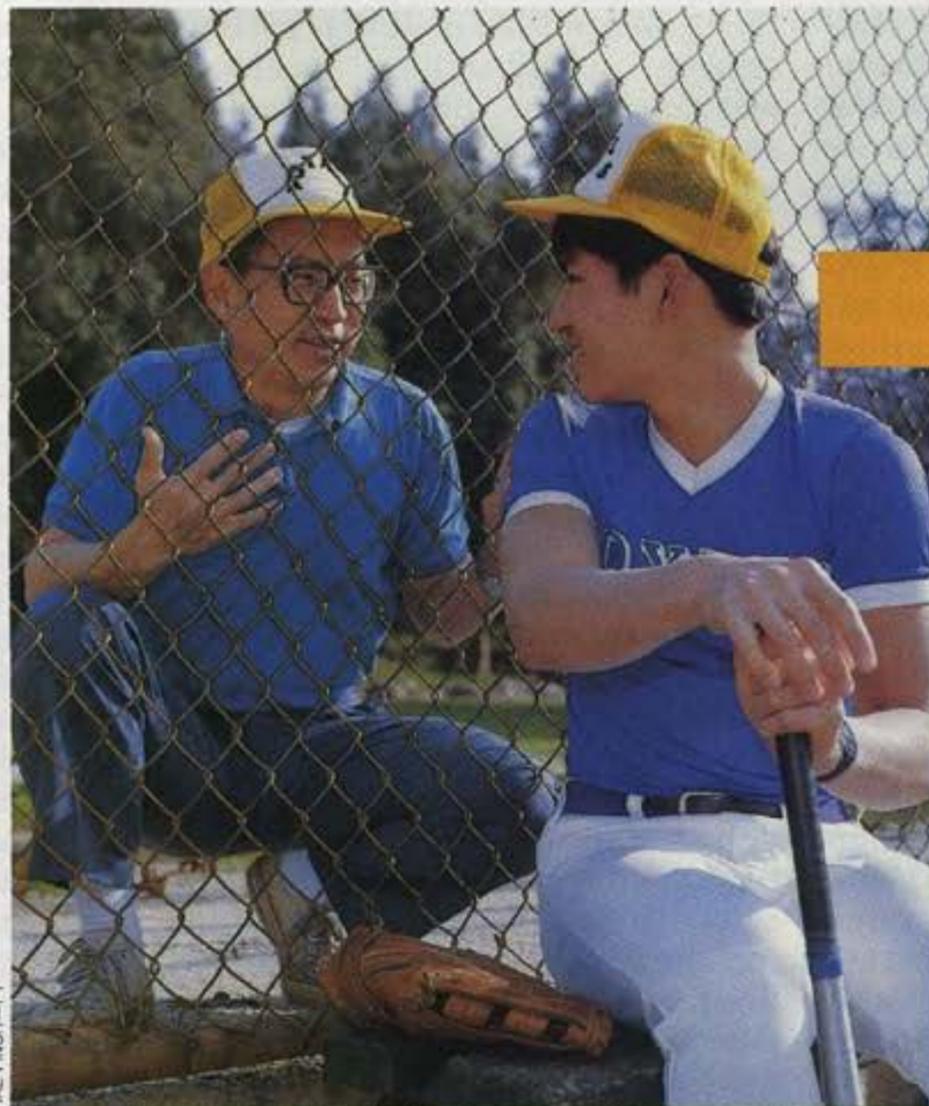
from adolescence to adulthood has been called an obstacle course?

Here's what one youth, overburdened with the problems of this world, said: “What's the use of trying to learn anything or be anybody? The world's going to blow up in a couple of years anyway. Why not just have a good time and enjoy life however you can while you can?”

This seems to be the attitude of many young people today. And can you really blame them?

Can the average teenager help resenting a world filled with fights not of his making—problems not of his creation—frustrations beyond his solving?

Feeling betrayed by home, school and church, they too often just give up and drop out—living only for the moment in a destructive



Children need someone to look up to—models from whom they can learn to develop strength of character.

Parents are the very ones who can do the most to develop right dating attitudes and habits in their children.



whirl of drugs, sex, crime and violence.

Obviously, there are dozens—even hundreds—of intensely personal reasons why young people defy authority, reject parents, fight police. But the one biggest reason is that they simply do not like this world the way it is, and deeply wish it could be changed.

Hope for the Future

The plain truth is that God Almighty is soon going to intervene in the affairs of this world and save humanity alive, ushering in a new world of peace, prosperity and happiness for everyone (Mic. 4:1-4).

That knowledge gives us tremendous hope—encourages us to overcome the obstacles in our lives and be the best we can be. It propels us to learn and live God's way of life—the only way to true happiness.

It is this knowledge and motivation, ultimately, that must provide the solution to the problems of teenagers today. But exactly how can parents help their teenagers right now, in practical, down-to-earth, effective ways?

Almost every parent wants his or

her children to succeed. It is one of life's greatest joys to see them do so. As one man said, perhaps the one reward a parent gets in child rearing is to see his or her son or daughter become a success in life. On the other hand, it is one of life's greatest heartaches for a parent when children go the wrong way.

And make no mistake: There is a battle raging between you and this world—a battle for your teenager! At birth, the battle began, between you—the parent—and Satan. The spoil is your child.

If you truly want your teenager to succeed, now is the time to continue decisive action. Next to the years of infancy and early childhood, these teenage years will most influence your youngster's development for life. You as a parent must help.

How sad it is that many parents simply choose not to fulfill this duty. Said Dr. Amitai Etzioni, professor of sociology at Columbia University: "An increasing number of parents have resigned their responsibility for the *character* of their child. It's as elementary as that."

And that, in essence, is what we are talking about here—how, given the knowledge of God's truth and the understanding of the spirit in man, by which humans differ from animals, a parent can instill right *character* in a child.

Don't make excuses! Of course, every teenager is different and must be dealt with individually, but there are some broad principles that apply during this special period of a young person's life—principles that can help a parent give a teen the best possible chance in life. Whether you have teenagers now or will have someday, this information can greatly benefit your child rearing.

Let's examine these special areas of concern applying to teens.

Strengthen Family Ties

The foundation of a healthy society is the home, and a good home is built around a strong family.

When a child loves and respects God and his family—feels a deep sense of loyalty to them—he will not want to bring shame or problems upon God or his family. He will watch his conduct so that it does not reflect negatively upon God, his parents or others in the family. He will do what is best for members of the family—he will try to please them.

Developing a strong family unit requires authority in the home. Children must be taught to respect parents, with the father as the head of the home (Eph. 6:1-3, 5:22-23). Children who learn to respect their parents can relate to respect for God and human government in general.

Many parents, influenced by faulty modern psychology, have made the mistake of trying to be their children's friends instead of their parents. This method does not work. Children derive a sense of security—strong support—from knowing there is a trusted, reliable authority in charge. Children need

someone to look up to—models from whom they can learn to develop strength of character, right confidence and emotional balance.

Strengthening family ties requires spending time—quality time—together. Eating together, constantly conversing, being entertained in a happy and fun-filled atmosphere at home rather than outside the home all the time—all these elements are important.

Communication

Families should talk. Teenagers especially need to communicate with parents during this challenging and potentially traumatic period in their lives.

Many parents do not take the time to talk with their teenagers. Even fewer take time to listen. They have their own interests and pleasures—business to take care of, friends to spend time with, television shows to watch. They reason:

“My teens don’t want me there. They want to be by themselves.”

“We just don’t have the same interests.”

“I have more important things to do. I can’t bother with these little matters on the kids’ minds.”

How tragic! Have you

as a parent forgotten what it was like to be a teenager? The matters you now think are little were certainly not little when you were your teen’s age.

How many parents set aside a certain amount of time each day to talk with their children? When parents don’t know what is going on in their children’s lives, serious problems result.

You’ve known of cases in which everybody—brothers and sisters, other relatives, friends, neighbors—everybody but the parents knew a young person was smoking or running around with the wrong crowd or involved in some wrong activity. Why were the parents in the dark—the last to find out?

Because they never asked! Their children probably came to feel that they didn’t care.

How many times has your teenager come home with a serious problem on his mind, actually wishing he could talk it over with you, and you gave him no chance?

How many times after a date has your daughter come home wishing to talk with her mother about certain things, yet was afraid or

ashamed to because you have made it clear that you don’t want to listen?

Do you ask your children about their activities? Their dates? What they did? Whom they were with? Not in a prying grill session, with suspicion in your voice, but with open, friendly, warm, loving interest.

Do you ask them what happens at school each day? Where they have been? Do you try to find out how they feel about certain things—what their viewpoint is on life and its problems?

You must! Proverbs 29:15 points out that “a child left to himself brings shame to his mother” (*Revised Authorized Version* throughout). Many parents, to their chagrin, learn only too late what was going on in their teenagers’ lives.

Show loving, compassionate, sincere, warm interest in your teenager, and he will open up to you. You *can* help him before it’s too late.

And be honest in your communication. Uncertain answers make young people uneasy. They need a solid foundation to stand on—rules to play by.

This means being generous with praise. If you compliment your teenagers they will be more able to accept constructive criticism. They want you to tell it like it is.

General Education

God intended for humans to receive instruction through the family—from father to son and mother to daughter, down through the generations (Prov. 1:8-9, 2:1-5). Many of the problems in teenagers’ lives today are the direct result of their parents not following *their* parental advice. *They* didn’t learn from the experiences, and yes, mistakes, of previous generations.

You, as a parent, need to be integrally involved in every facet of your teen’s education—moral, spiritual, emotional and intellectual.

Help your teenager make right career choices by encouraging him or her to seek full information on occupations available.



It is interesting to note the Hebrew word for *train* in Proverbs 22:6 ("Train up a child in the way he should go"). The root meaning of *chanak*, from which *train* is translated, is "to narrow." Training our children involves narrowing the choices they have to make, instead of accepting the vast array of deceptive, negative life-styles this world offers (Matt. 7:13-14).

Your example is paramount in educating your teenagers. Teenagers will follow parents' examples more than parents' words. Do you keep your word? Do you say nice things to other people's faces and then speak critically of them in private?

Setting the right example for teenagers includes showing affection, displaying good work habits, taking care of your health and personal appearance and providing properly for your family's needs.

A major responsibility you have in educating your teenagers is instilling within them a knowledge of and respect for God's laws and way of life. Notice the last half of Ephesians 6:4: "Bring them [your children] up in the training and admonition of the Lord."

The average parent today is totally unaware of the basic principles by which to help teenagers. Yet God's revealed Word is plain about the way children should be taught to go: "You shall teach them [God's commandments] diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up" (Deut. 6:7).

Sometimes parents know their teenagers are not doing what is right, but are afraid to tell them. Why should parents be afraid of their own children? Why not call your teenager aside and have a good, serious talk with him? You may simply have to lay it on the line. Tell him just where he is headed if he will not obey. Tell him



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It can be fun exploring various musical styles—different from ones your teen, or you, may be locked into.

again who is the head of the house. Let him know what his obligations are. Make him understand!

Thoroughly explain again God's Fifth Commandment: "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you" (Ex. 20:12).

Again, in Proverbs 20:20, God gives the same principle: "Whoever curses his father or his mother, his lamp will be put out in deep darkness."

Teach your teen responsibility and emotional balance. As Lamentations 3:27 says, "It is good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth." Or, as one father told his son when he claimed he didn't know how to do a certain job, "You'll never learn any younger!" This applies not only to physical chores, but to developing important character traits also.

The book of Proverbs contains much sound advice on achieving true success and building happy human relationships. Read through the Proverbs—and encourage your teenagers to do so—or, better yet, read through them together in a

different translation this time. The Proverbs apply to everyday situations and

are easy to understand, especially if you read in a modern translation. You may be surprised at the wisdom you find in them.

Learning from instruction, such as that found in the Bible, and from the experiences of elders, is far better than being educated in the school of hard knocks. As a parent you can no doubt vouch for that.

At this time in life, your teenager will be interested in several special areas that you should be aware of in terms of his or her education. These areas include music, sex and marriage preparation, career education and different forms of recreation.

Music

You've probably seen, in comic strips or on television, humorous representations of the seemingly eternal war between parents and teenagers over the type of music the teens listen to. But the subject, in reality, is not really one to be laughed at.

As a parent you need to take particular interest in the music your teenager finds enjoyable—again, not from a negative vindic-

tive, condemning standpoint, but in an attitude of helpfulness in steering your child in the right direction. Much of popular music today, with its themes of violence, illicit sex and rebellion against authority, is simply not good fare for entertainment.

In considering the music your teenager listens to, think: Since music is one of the most powerful instruments for good or evil that the world has ever known, the music your teen selects can make a big difference in the attitudes and behavior patterns he or she develops. Encourage your children to be cautious and to ask questions before being swept away by any kind of music.

Is it constructive and uplifting to mind and body? Or does it tend unnecessarily to shock and upset and lead listeners in moral and emotional directions they shouldn't go?

It can be a lot of fun exploring the many different musical styles other than the one your teen may be locked into—or the one you may be locked into yourself! Why not make some positive musical discoveries—together?

Sex Education

Before you deal with questions about love, sex and marriage preparation—and you *will*, as a concerned parent, have to guide your children in this area—we would encourage you again to refer to our free, full-length book *The Missing Dimension in Sex*.

You would do well to guide your teenager to and through specific sexual information, fully discussing areas such as premarital sex, birth control, abortion and marriage planning.

Many parents are concerned about teen dating—when to allow it and under what conditions. Parents are the very ones who can do the most to develop right dating attitudes and habits in their children. Sponsoring quality group activities for your young people can do a lot to defuse the premature pairing off and going steady that can take place when your teens are

forced constantly to find their own special outlets. Most important, get to know the friends they have.

Career Planning

The area of career planning is important to any teenager. Help your teenager make right choices by encouraging him or her to seek full information on the wide variety of occupations available. Numerous books, tests and counseling services are available to help your teen learn more about his or her aptitudes and interests.

Get your teen thinking about the future and help avoid the frustration that may come from taking any job that comes along.

Recreation

The same advice would apply in the area of recreational activities. Provide, as much as you can, for your young person to explore many different types of sports, hobbies and travel opportunities. These will help develop your teen into a well-rounded, balanced adult.

And participate right along with your teen in many of these activities. No one can take the place of a parent. It's all too easy to excuse ourselves from spending time with our children. But no parent has a valid excuse not to be actively involved in the lives of his or her children as they grow from infancy through the teen years into adulthood.

Although the individual interests of teenagers can vary as widely as they do with adults, taking the time to show a true concern will show your son or daughter that you really care.

True, it takes time to learn about photography or skiing. Roller-skating with your kids or going with them to an amusement park may not be the most fun thing you ever do. But putting forth the energy to involve yourself in a realistic way can benefit you, the parent, in building bridges between you and your children. This type of bond cannot be bought with money.

An ideal way to create this bond is to develop interests and hobbies

as a family (more fully explained earlier in this publication). These can offer areas of mutual interest when your children reach their teenage years. The point is that parents should strive to share in the interests of their children, regardless of their ages.

Teens Need Discipline, Too

As a young person grows older, discipline well may take the form of denial of privileges. Proper discipline gives a young person a sense of security. To the surprise of some parents a "code for parents" drawn up by a group of young people stipulates: "Be strict and consistent in dishing out discipline. Show us who's boss. It gives us a feeling of security to know we've got some strong supports under us.

"If you catch us lying, stealing or being cruel, get tough. Let us know why what we did was wrong. Impress on us the importance of not repeating such behavior. When we need punishment, dish it out. But let us know you still love us, even though we have let you down. It'll make us think twice before we make the same move again.

"And make it clear that you mean what you say. Don't be wishy-washy. Don't compromise. And don't be intimidated by our threats to drop out of school or leave home. Stand firm. If you collapse, we will know we beat you down, and we will not be happy about the 'victory.' Kids don't want everything they ask for."

Above all, in every area where you deal with your teenagers, be positive. Show them that you deeply care, and encourage them in every way possible to succeed.

Ask yourself: "Am I *for* my sons and daughters? Am I interested enough to get involved in their lives during one of their most crucial and potentially traumatic periods of development?"

Let's be sure we understand our parental responsibilities. Let's set the example of caring about our teens by knowing them and being involved, in a positive way, with them.

Coping as a Single Parent

REARING a child is never easy, but for one person to function as both mother and father is the toughest job of all.

Yet it is increasingly common today for a parent to find himself or herself in this double role.

Those who have enjoyed the companionship of marriage understandably find readjustment to single life difficult. Loneliness and frustration often creep in. The respon-

sibilities of shouldering the roles of both mother and father can be physically and emotionally draining.

Consequently, many parents in this situation find themselves overworked, tired and, as a result, more easily upset and irritable. Others may still be recovering from the trauma of a divorce or the death of a mate.

Children may suffer in a single-

parent home. They may have difficulty being fully understood by a parent of the opposite sex. A son, for example, may find his mother failing to appreciate his interests. Similarly, a daughter may learn that her father has difficulty understanding some of her feminine needs.

The problem of adjusting can be just as traumatic for a child having a single parent of the same sex, since the care of both parents was designed by God to fulfill the emotional needs of the child.

Often children with only one parent have more difficulty at school. A study showed that single-parent children require more help and attention from school than they receive.

Some women may have been so dependent on their former husbands that they lack the right kind of confidence to make decisions for themselves and their families. Often those with older children must go out and find employment. And after many years at home, they may be out of touch with the work environment or their skills may be rusty or outdated.

Here are some practical suggestions to help

Spend time with your children. Take a drive in the country, go on a hike, spend a few hours at the beach, visit a museum or have a lunch in a park.



you as a single parent boldly face your responsibilities.

Organize Your Life

Life sometimes may seem hopeless and bewildering for single parents. They are pulled in a dozen directions, all at the same time, with many roles to fulfill—homemaker, breadwinner, bookkeeper, nurse. By organizing, you will be more effective in fulfilling all your responsibility.

If you have not already done so, begin to set realistic goals in your life—and teach your children to do the same. Don't allow each day to just happen, without experiencing any progress or growth.

Make a daily list of things you need to accomplish and set priorities. But be flexible—never allow yourself to become obsessed with a schedule that's impossible to complete. Your schedule is only a guide to help you be more organized.

Sharing the load through hardships can bind the family together. But realize that a young child is not mature enough to handle seemingly insolvable problems.

Have a calendar where the activities of every person in the family can be noted. This gives the family direction, goals and structure.

Create and maintain an efficient filing system for important papers, letters, bills and other documents.

Let the children take an active part in domestic duties such as cooking, cleaning or laundry. This will help them feel needed and useful and they will learn responsibility.

In addition, you will be able to devote more energy to other areas.

Don't let clutter collect around the house. Often this happens because the house is too small to store all the family belongings. Give away, sell or throw out what is not needed. Have a place for everything. Put things away when you're finished with them and teach your children to do the same.

Build a Close Family

One of the best ways to offset the handicaps of a single-parent family is by building closeness and teamwork. Spending time with the children is the most essential, though perhaps the most difficult, task of a single parent.

Empathize with your children. The lack of one parent and the subsequent feelings of rejection

It is imperative for single-parent families to share regular meals together. Meal settings provide security, time for communication and unity. This is also an ideal time for sharing thoughts, feelings, ideas, dreams and concerns.

Be open and honest with your children and allow them the freedom to be open with you. Let your children share with you the things that interest them, be it science, homemaking or sports. Guide them to align their interests with God's law.

Always set an example of care, concern and thoughtfulness. This will further build a warm, happy home for your children, providing them with needed support.

Try to avert school problems by taking time to help with your children's studies. Also, take a personal interest in school activities.

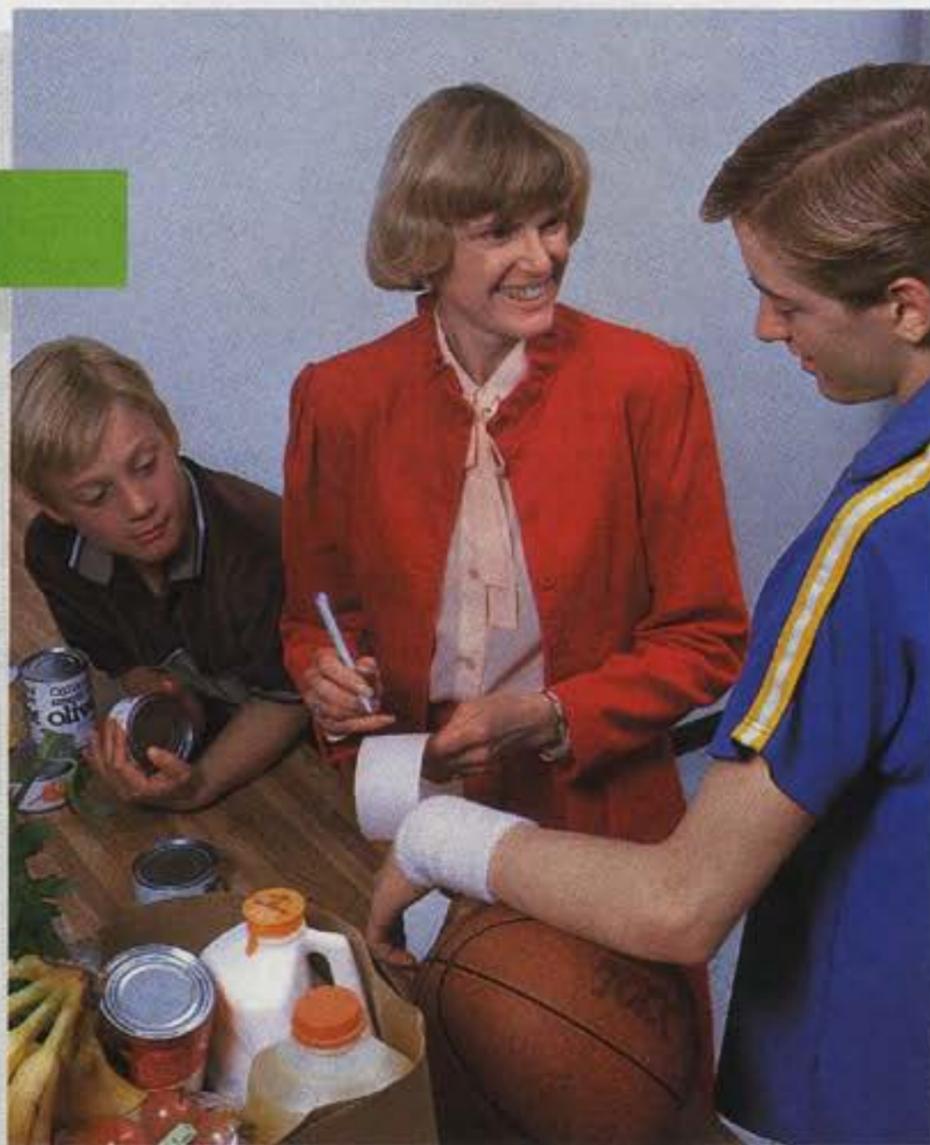
Set aside one or two evenings each week to spend as a family. Plan these evenings in advance, perhaps including a special dessert, so that everyone will be home. Often anticipation is half the fun.

During the week, when opportunities arise, teach your children about God, point out blessings your family receives or how God has helped each family member that day. The Sabbath can be ideal for family Bible study.

Sundays can be spent as family time. Take a drive in the country, go on a hike, spend a few hours at the beach, visit a museum or have lunch in a park. Other Sundays can be spent working together around the home, shopping, preparing for

the next week or simply relaxing together. These activities need not consume the whole day, only a few hours of it, so that personal goals can also be accomplished.

Ask your children for their opinions and thoughts about suggested activities. Try to ensure that whatever you plan will be enjoyed by the whole family.



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and insecurity can make them crave the single parent's attention more than they normally would. A strongly united household will enable each family member to give and receive the emotional and moral support needed. When one is down, the others will be able to provide strength and encouragement.

Sharing Worries

A single parent can get very lonely. There are heavy responsibilities to be borne and sometimes the pressures will get you down. You need someone to talk to—someone to share the burden. Not having a mate, it's easy to turn to the older children. After all, you think, they're big enough to understand. Well, maybe they are! But your timing and approach are all-important.

Sharing the load through hardships can bind the family together. Can help you understand each other. But you, the parent, must realize that a young child is not mature enough to handle problems that seem to have no solution. Those should be taken to God in prayer.

That doesn't mean you should shield your children from reality. Ask God in prayer for discernment about which subjects to discuss with the children. Teenagers, especially, need to learn how to cope with situations that require courage and sacrifice. They need to understand what it takes to run a home. That adult living isn't just peaches and cream.

Select items that you think are within their tolerance and *take them into your confidence*. Construct a plan to resolve the problem together. They will appreciate your honesty and your respect for their ability to help. But don't let your children become your crying towel and soak up an attitude of hopelessness and despair.

Growing Up Too Fast

Sharing too much of the load with the children can have negative consequences. Many single parents worry about forcing their teenagers to grow up too fast. Others may hurry them along to adult independence in an effort to ease the stress in the home. The old adage that "kids should be kids" is true.

The apostle Paul said, "When I was a child I thought as a child, but when I became a man I put away childish things." It takes

time, training and discipline to bring a child to adulthood.

So even in your special circumstances you should avoid forcing your children to grow up too fast. Even though they can and should carry more responsibility than most parents require of them, too much too soon can give them a negative outlook on life. They need time to be children. Otherwise, they may always feel that they missed out on childhood and this in turn prevents their becoming truly mature adults.

Be sure you give them time to play. Time to cultivate friendships with others their own age. Time to burn off a little of the foolishness of youth and release the pent-up pressure of extra responsibility. Remember, they have the same handicap you do—lack of another parent in the home.

Parental Models

A God-intended major function of a father and a mother is that of parental models for the children. In a complete family unit with father and mother present this is a natural and almost unnoticed process. Generally speaking, because of biological and psychological traits boys will emulate their fathers and girls will emulate their mothers, while taking on certain characteristics of both parents. Good parents will encourage this practice!

But if you are single and have children of the opposite sex living with you, you are faced with a special problem. Where will the child learn his role? Should you try to be both father and mother?

Obviously certain responsibilities may devolve upon you. You may be breadwinner, cook, housekeeper, mechanic, nurse and disciplinarian. But you can't completely fulfill both masculine and feminine roles as an example to your child. The best advice is to be the best you can possibly be in your rightful role as either mother or father. Then build associations with stable families that can provide the example of masculinity or femininity missing in your home. Spend time

together with families, and occasionally let your child visit them alone for short periods.

Look for good models among the child's normal contacts and encourage communication with them. Teachers, coaches, grandparents, ministers and wives will often prove ideal examples for your child to follow.

Historical figures and biblical personalities may also be used to define the proper duties of both sexes.

Teenagers

For any household there can be special pressures in working with teenagers. But there is no reason for any Christian parent to approach this time in *fear!*

We all know that teens are undergoing major changes in their bodies and minds. This is a necessary and wonderful process that every human being must go through. Understanding it and planning for it can help you and your child make the best of it.

Communication must be the lifeblood of your parent-child relationship. You must be able to listen to and empathize with your adolescent. Talk with him or her. You must be mature enough to give advice and guidance, but let the teenager make decisions. You can't prevent him or her from making some mistakes, so stay close enough to help your teenager learn from them. But as with younger children, you must always strive to set a right example and never compromise with God's word or your own.

Seek to provide a broad range of social, athletic and educational-academic experiences for your teenager. Make your home a hospitable and predictable environment for your children's friends. This will allow you to know who your children's friends are and if they're acceptable.

Being a single parent is not easy. But none is more important than your God-given role in child rearing. For you, no physical endeavor can be more challenging or rewarding.

Children of the Inner City

What's the solution for youths who live on the street?

“HHEY, let's pop that old broad, cop the bread and blow some smoke. Yeah man, let's do it!”

Did you understand what you just read? Or should we interpret it for you? “Let's rob the old lady, take her money and buy some marijuana.”

Tragically, dialogue like this and the criminal aftermath occur thousands of times each day in teeming urban areas, especially in the United States. Even more tragic is that most of these crimes are committed by “children” from 8 to 18. No wonder Isaiah prophesied what he did about our day: “Children are their oppressors” (Isa. 3:12, *Revised Authorized Version* throughout).

Misguided children are turning our inner cities into war zones of crime and gang violence. But this installment is not about child crime, it's about how to rear crimeless children—children who will not become statistics in prisons or morgues. Straight children can be reared in a crooked environment!

The Challenge

It's not easy trying to point children in the right direction when everything around them pulls them in the wrong direction. Yet that's the way it is in too many neighborhoods in the inner cities.

The average child in the inner city lives with his mother who is

probably unskilled and unemployed. His father has long since left the family. There are often three or four brothers and sisters who share the three-room government-subsidized apartment commonly known as “the projects.”

He or she grows up in the graffiti-garnished, broken-glass-littered streets. In too many cases, one could say that the inner-city child is reared in the streets and by the streets—and the streets are cold-blooded ruthless teachers.

The streets teach children to survive by being cunning, devious and violent. The street “faculty members,” in the United States for example, are characters who carry names like Apple Jack, Baldy Locks, Superfly and Fast Eddie. These infamous role models are themselves graduates of the streets with graduate work in the “big house” (prison). Many have master's degrees in the gruesome fields of dope pushing, pimping, robbery and murder. They are there eager and ready to pass on their seamy skills.

These “professors of the streets” hang out on every corner dazzling their aspiring young pupils with the trappings of “success”: fine rags (flashy clothes), a bad ride (luxury car) and a head fix (high on some form of drug). This is what the inner-city child is conditioned to believe is “making it”—real success in life.

Since repetition is a good teaching technique, this street life-style is reinforced minute by minute and

song by song by the sounds that blast from the “box” (large portable radio). This mechanized repetitious teacher of the streets hypnotizes and programs the mind with the life-style and values of his or her human street teachers. The constant reinforced curriculum is inescapable: easy sex, easy money, easy high, and being a “player” (ghetto Romeo).

Yet, despite all these negative factors, it is possible to rear straight children! Whereas the details we have just described are more typical of American cities, the circumstances and the solutions are universally relevant.

Thousands of parents in the inner cities are successfully meeting the challenge. They are rearing children who, in spite of their environment, are responsible, respectful and successful young people. They are proving that just because you live in the ghetto, the ghetto doesn't have to live in you. Here is what you can do to rear your children above the shaky shambles of the streets and set their feet on solid ground.

Responsible Parents: Good Children

Parents, let's face it. If you want your children to turn out right, you must be right. You must be what you want your children to become.

Children are great imitators. As little tots they dress up in our clothes and play Momma and Daddy, “acting” like us. As they grow older it becomes more than

just playacting—they live out the role of their parent or parents.

If you cheat the bill collector and lie to the government, why should you be surprised when your child robs somebody? If you use profanity, why should you be shocked when you hear your child using filthy language with the children in the neighborhood? If you are having an illicit affair, how can you say anything when your daughter comes home pregnant, or your son has caused somebody else's daughter to become pregnant?

It doesn't have to be that way with you and your children. Maybe your parents did not know any better, but by virtue of this article you now do! With God's help, you can break the cycle—history does not have to repeat itself. Your children

crusader fervency to win your child's heart and mind. You are in a battle with the negative forces around you for the control of your child's mind, and victory's price is unrelenting commitment.

What's more important than your child's life? The time-consuming soap operas on television? The time you spend with friends? The extra time you spend doing your own thing? No! Nothing is more important—for a child's life is a terrible thing to waste!

Children are our future and we have the responsibility to commit our lives to make them and their future better.

Perhaps you do not realize the awesome importance God places on your rearing *his children*. That's right, they are his! God has loaned them to you to develop for him.

accountable. Make a commitment—give your all to win the battle for your child's life.

Exposure Equals Influence

Who has the greatest influence over your child? The answer lies in whoever has the greatest amount of exposure with your child. If it's the negative elements in the streets, then your child will be influenced to go the way of the streets. If it's your positive example in the home, then he will be influenced to go the way of you and your home.

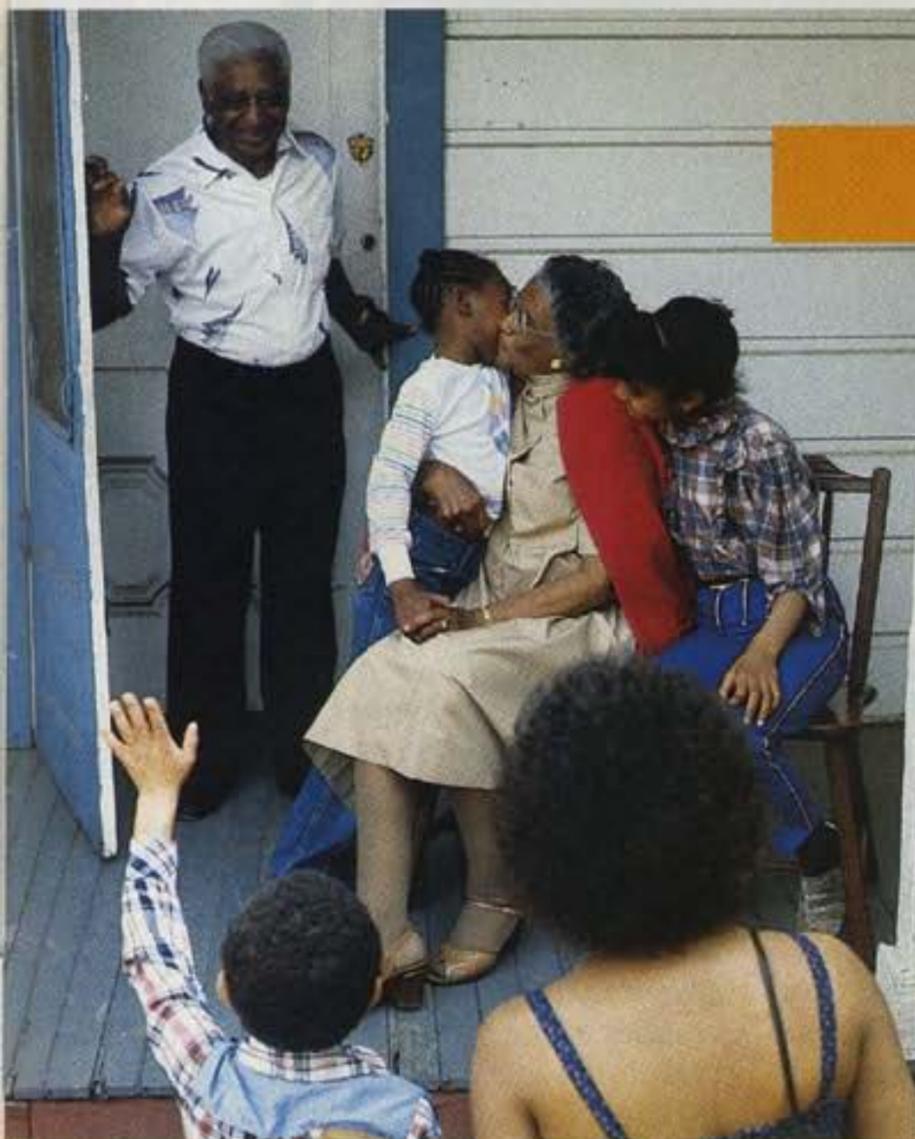
You must sacrifice doing "your thing" to do the things necessary to positively influence your children. Make exposure time with your child or children a top priority. Let nothing and no one rob you of these precious moments. Let your children be exposed to you as a person. Let them feel and see all that you are and all that you stand for.

Our children learn best through association with parents. Our values are passed on to our children every second we are exposed to them. This is why God said: "You shall teach them [God's values] to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up" (Deut. 11:19).

Some single parents by themselves may find it difficult to provide enough positive parental exposure for their children. If this is your situation, turn to respectable members of your extended family for help. Grandfathers and grandmothers, uncles and aunts can provide support in the rearing of your children. Single mothers, especially, need the firm hand and masculine influence of a man in guiding teenagers.

The young evangelist Timothy was probably reared by his widowed mother. Yet through the positive exposure and influence of his extended family, in his case a grandmother, Timothy became a profitable young man (II Tim. 1:5). If the whole family works together, children can be reared successfully.

Guide your child in the selection of his or her friends. Do not just tell your child whom to associate



Grandfathers and grandmothers, uncles and aunts can provide support in the rearing of children of single parents.

G.A. BELLUCHE, JR.—PT

can be better than the generation before them. But you can't just talk that talk to your children—you must walk the talk before them. You must live a better way if your children are to see a brighter day.

Commitment to Win

You need a total commitment, a

King David wrote: "Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb is His reward" (Ps. 127:3).

What will God's heritage be in your children? Will it be a ruined life in prison, death at the end of a needle, or college and a productive successful life? Your child's life is in your hands, and God holds you

with. Teach him how to select associates. Help him analyze the behavior of others and the end result of that behavior. Help him understand that "he who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will be destroyed" (Prov. 13:20).

There is another "friend" more subtle and more negative than some of the other teenagers that hang out in the streets. If you allow your child to be exposed to this "buddy," his influence will negate everything good you've been trying to teach your child. Your child is probably already spending most of his waking hours listening to this destructive friend. Who is this character? The music beat that blasts 24 hours a day out of the "box" (large hand-carried radios known on the streets in the U.S. as "ghetto blasters").

Many inner-city children are addicted to this music. The addiction is often stronger than heroin and potentially just as destructive. The constant exposure to this music reinforces the negative life-style of the streets. It influences children into believing illicit sex is fine, getting high is cool, and life in general is one big party.

Jesse Jackson, the leader of a black U.S. coalition group PUSH, out of concern for the progress of inner-city youths, once stated: "Music is important to the formation of children's attitudes because it's such a big part of their culture." Jesse Jackson's comment applies to all races and to all types of music—definitely to that kind of music that has negative effects. Expose your child to the best in all types of music. Help him or her to evaluate music based on its effect and the values that the music projects. Check out what your child is listening to. Remember, exposure to bad moods in music will influence your child to be bad and exposure to good moods in music influences your child to be good.

Expose your child to positive role models. Everyone in the community is not a dope pusher or mugger. Lift his or her head high to see the positive examples of those who have really made it. Point out the ones who lived in the ghetto but did not let the ghetto live in them. Praise the ones who

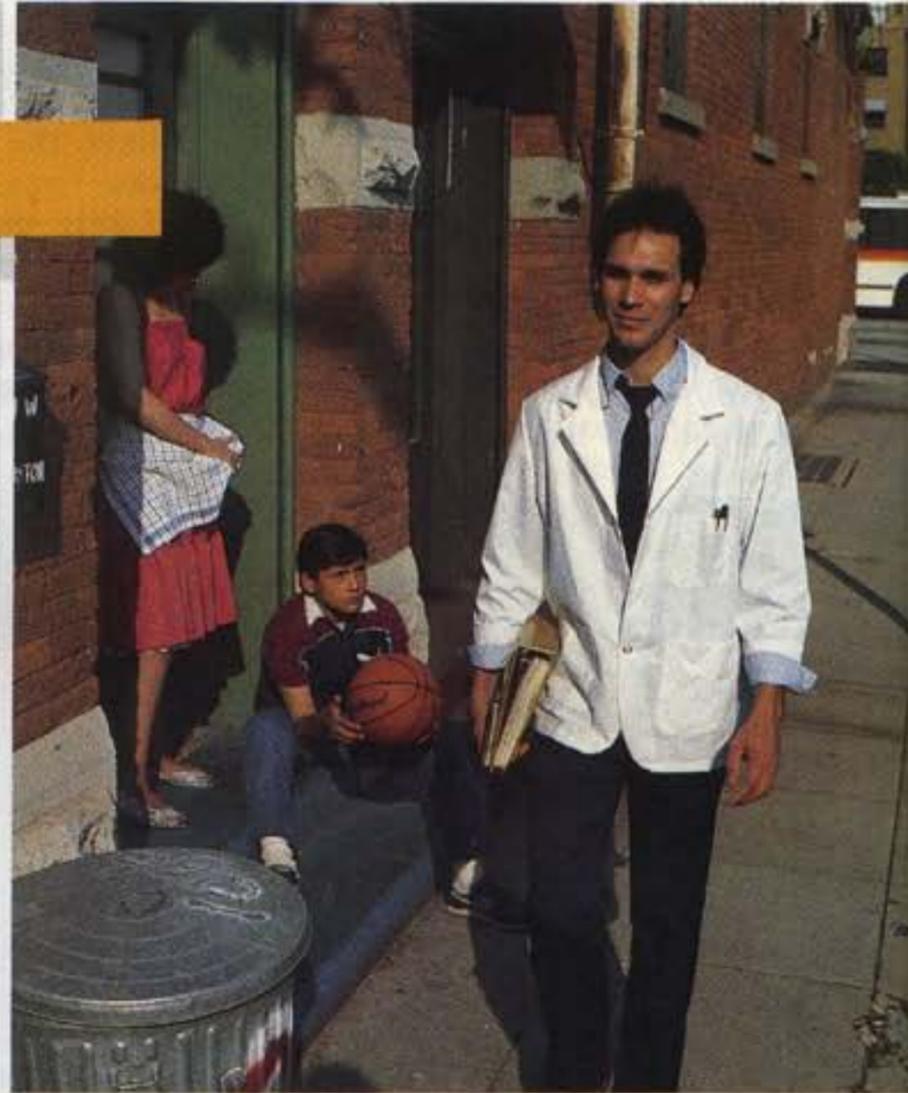
walked through the streets, but who did not stay in the streets. Point out the ones who went on to become businessmen, doctors, engineers, successful people in every sector of society. Expose your child to the great and he will be great.

Respect for Authority

Why do teenagers disrupt classrooms and terrorize whole schools?

Expose your child to positive role models. . . . Praise the ones who walked through the streets, but who did not stay in the streets.

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Why do they rob and then beat to death old people? One of the major reasons is a lack of respect for authority.

Respect for authority is the most fundamentally important principle a parent can teach a child. Without respect for authority a child cannot learn from God, parents or anybody else. He will become a rogue.

Parents, start early teaching your children to respect you. Deep down inside, children want to respect authority, but they need to know who is in charge—who has the authority. Their way of seeking that authority is by challenging you—testing you to see if you really mean what you say. And when they seek, when they test, let them know in loving firmness that you are indeed in charge!

Teach them that your "yes"

means "yes" and your "no" means "no" with unwavering consistency.

Train them to speak respectfully to you. Whatever happened to "Yes, sir" and "No, ma'am"? That might sound old-fashioned to some, but it's like a breath of fresh air hearing those words flowing from the mouth of a young person. These words reflect an attitude of honor and respect for authority.

The apostle Paul instructs children: "'Honor your father and mother,' which is the first commandment with promise: 'that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth'" (Eph. 6:2-3). As a child honors and respects his parents, so will he honor and respect others. He will respect his teachers and grow in knowledge, understanding and wisdom. He will respect the laws of the land and develop his or her talents in school, rather than going on to prison. A respectful child can acquire the skills to enable him or her to grow up to be a straight successful adult, no matter how crooked his environment may be.

Teach the Children

The word of God is the foundation of all knowledge. By teaching your

children about God and his principles of living, you will be giving your children the best education possible.

First help your children to develop a personal relationship with God through prayer. Encourage them to talk to God about their problems, their hopes and their dreams. They will soon discover that they have a friend that "sticks closer than a brother" (Prov. 18:24).

Your children need God with them as they face the many difficult challenges of life in this crooked society. There are threats from addicts, gangs, molesters and muggers. There are temptations from peers, pushers and prostitutes to go the wrong way. But if your child has God as a friend, all these things can be overcome.

Then teach him the living principles contained in the Bible. Make the word of God relevant to life and the daily situations a child faces. If the Bible says to do something, explain the why and the how of it, and the blessings that come from doing it.

Then show him the other side of the coin: the consequences that come from disobedience. Let him see in the wrecked lives around him what disobedience produces. This will help him consider more deeply the end results of his own actions.

As he lives by the revealed principles of God, he will enjoy the happiness and success in life

that will lift him above his peers.

We have a monthly magazine entitled *Youth*, specially written for teenagers. This magazine makes the laws and principles of God understandable and livable. It helps youths solve problems God's way. It's free of charge and available upon request.

Get Him "High"

Getting high on drugs is a popular pastime among many teenagers today. To some it's an escape—it's a way to feel good about yourself when everything around you seems bad and hopeless.

You want to get your child "high," to give him a high that will give him a true way of worth—a high that will really make him feel good about himself and his future—a high that will last?

We are talking about the high that comes from accomplishment. Young people have drive and energy—they want to accomplish. But that drive and energy must be channeled in the right direction.

Encourage your child to think about what he wants to be when he grows up. He may change his mind several times while he is growing, but the important thing is that he has a goal to aim toward.

Help him set and achieve intermediate goals as well—things that he can accomplish now. If your child is busy accomplishing, he will be less likely to get into trouble.

Help him discover his abilities

and talents by allowing him to try different things he expresses an interest in. Whether it's art, music, study or sports, give him the opportunity. He will stick with the things he does well in and, with a little bit of encouragement and praise from you, he will excel. The more he accomplishes, the higher he will get and the better he will feel. And the better he feels, the better he will live. And though we use for convenience the masculine pronoun, we mean to apply these principles equally to every girl.

Yes, you can rear your children to be outstanding among young people. If you begin utilizing the principles outlined in this article, your children will be beacons to the rest of the community. They will give the neighborhood a foretaste of how children and old people will live together in happiness and peace in the streets of tomorrow's cities.

Look at this beautiful picture of children and old people living and playing together in tomorrow's inner cities: "Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'Old men and old women shall again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each one with his staff in his hand because of great age. The streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in its streets'" (Zech. 8:4-5).

So start now rearing your children the right way—and remember, only you can rear straight children in a crooked environment.

Today's Child-Care Crisis

It is now a worldwide trend.

Not only in industrialized societies, but in developing areas, such as in the islands of the Caribbean, rising numbers of mothers are joining the work force. Here, statistics show up to 90 percent of the children were in day care before they were 2 years of age.

Demand for day care in Australia, New Zealand and in Latin America is strong. In Canada, more than half the children 5 years and under are supervised by some sort of nonparental care. About 40 percent of Britain's under-5s are in day-care facilities. More than 35 percent of children of 6 years and less are in day care in West Germany.

The United States is experiencing another baby boom, but this time, only a few months after the birth of their babies, mothers are returning to their jobs. More than half of U.S. mothers are now working outside the home. Mothers of children under age 3 are a significant part of the record-breaking increase.

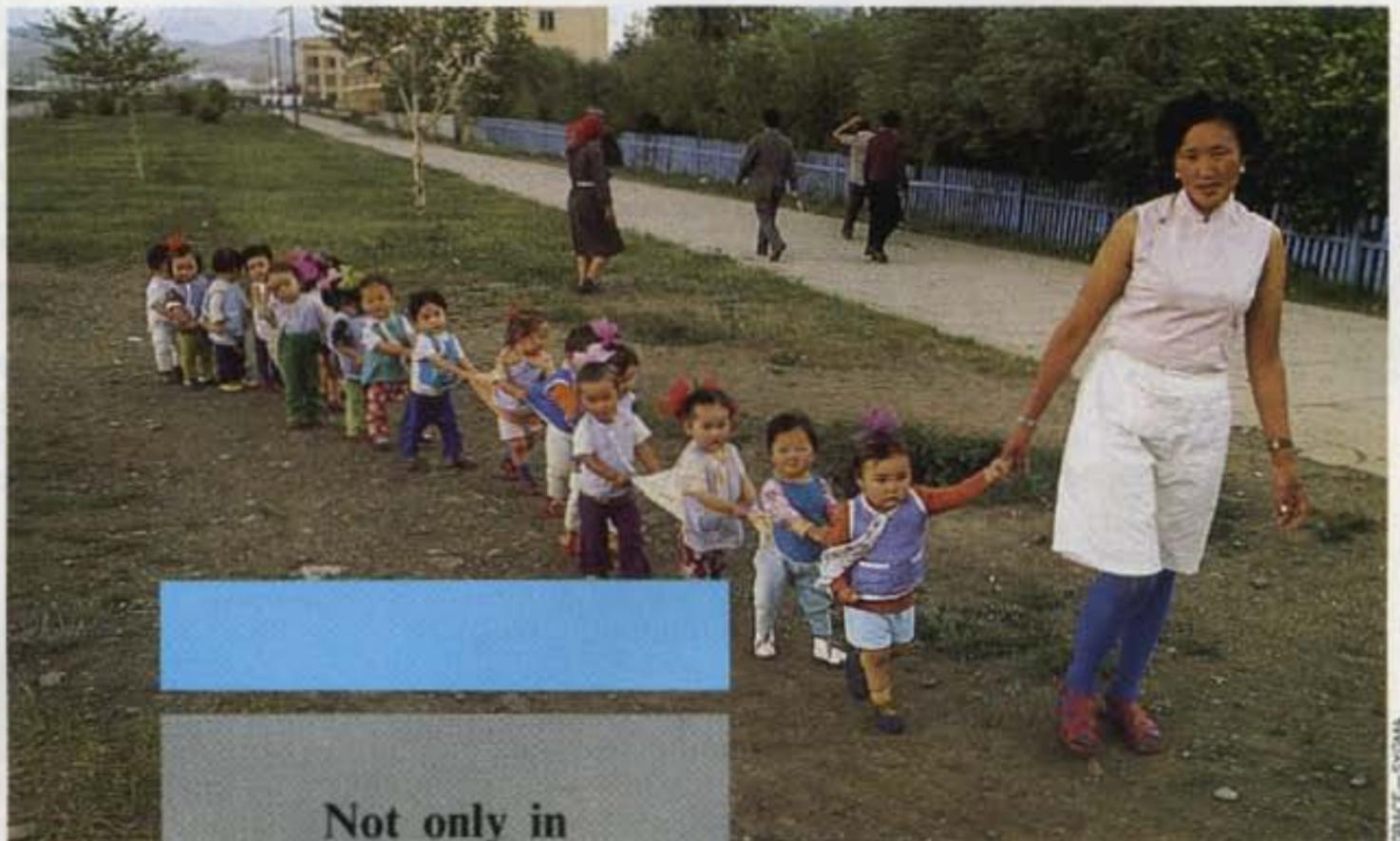
Who will care for these children? And the hundreds of thousands of children in other nations whose fathers and mothers have both joined the labor force?

Is organized, government-licensed or subsidized day care really providing the answers to the need of today's families? Or can franchised or corporation-provided day care or nonprofessional care answer those needs? And what about the needs of the children?

How does custodial care in an

indifferent day-care environment affect fragile, impressionable young minds? Let's look at average day care, hopefully with competent personnel and clean, properly furnished facilities.

(It's not our purpose here to include the horror stories of the tragically mismanaged day-care facili-



Not only in industrialized societies, but in developing areas rising numbers of mothers are joining the work force

ties we've seen portrayed in our newspapers and on television. But we should not ignore these dangers in the system.)

Infants Learn Early

Human infants begin to learn at birth—some experts believe infants perceive information even in the womb. Before babies are a year old, they will have acquired more

knowledge of their surroundings than they will in any other comparable year of their lives.

A baby quickly learns to recognize mother and definitely prefers her face and voice. (And more researchers are emphasizing the added importance of father's play with the child in the beginning years of life, as well as later.)

By the time the baby is 5 or 6 months old, the degree of mental and physical abilities acquired will depend upon the response and interest of parents, especially the mother. Parental response increases alertness even in the tiniest of infants.

A baby left alone for long periods of time becomes not only lonely, but also frustrated. He or she is not able to exercise, and thus develop, all the new skills being learned. Later the frequency with which the infant expresses himself or herself in making sounds will decrease if not stimulated, and the child's language development will slow.

Infants and young children do not thrive physically, mentally or emotionally in an environment where they are denied consistent loving attention—the case in average day-care institutions.

Sobering studies reveal that a child's ability to form a lasting attachment to another human being—the capacity to love—is learned before age 3. This ability to form a lasting mutual attachment seems to be inexorably tied in with the development of the child's conscience. In other words, no human attachment equals no properly developing conscience.

Yet how many toddlers today have been confused at one time or another, calling some part-time caretaker "Mommy"?

What does the absence of a full-time mother do to impressionable young minds? From studies over the last 20 or 30 years, infant psychologist Selma Fraiberg states: "... we have learned that the human qualities of enduring love and commitment to love are forged during the first two years of life.

On this point there is a consensus among scientists from a wide range of disciplines" (*Every Child's Birthright: In Defense of Mothering*).

Day-care advocates have not been fully aware of the limitations of a caretaker environment. Most of their studies were made in day centers of above-average quality. Few of these facilities are available and would be out of the price range of most families anyway.

It's a controversial subject and books and articles expressing opposing views are numerous, but it's hard to deny living, breathing evidence.

The God-ordained Family

Broken homes are a tragedy. Children need two loving, concerned parents (especially their mothers, at an early age) to develop into mature adults capable of loving and caring for other human beings. Adults who can enrich the lives of others with their own unique creativity, who, guided by loving parents, have exercised their God-given right of independent thought and action. The developing of such character in young children is the responsibility of parents.

Our transient mobile society has robbed our children of the stable extended-family ties enjoyed by our grandparents. Most young people have little sense of the past and less regard for the wisdom of their elders. It should come as no surprise that youths have been wandering around for the last two decades wondering who they are.

The society we live in has made child rearing doubly difficult. Without the support of the extended family, parents' responsibilities today have never been more important.

Children need both parents more than ever. To avoid future deep-seated emotional problems, there is no substitute for mothers during those early years.

For those with older children, depending on the family circumstances and children's ages, some

form of day care may be an alternative, but for those with young preschool children, mothers are indispensable—at home!

Daring to Question

For many there's no alternative, of course—single parents trying to single-handedly hold their fractured families together physically and economically, as well as emotionally. They're caught, we're all caught, in a system we didn't create, but to which the majority are paying more than lip service.

But what about the rest? Some women are reanalyzing their priorities. Husbands and wives are going over their budgets, taking the time to count the cost of turning their children over to others to rear. Is it really worth it? Cost of day care is rising—some women are paying almost 50 percent of their paychecks for child care.

Other women have stopped long enough to take a good look at their goals in life and how they plan to accomplish them. They've plotted a time to have children and to enjoy rearing them. They believe child rearing is a career. These goal-oriented women approach training and rearing their children in the same way they have successfully accomplished responsibilities in other areas of their lives.

More companies are offering job-sharing opportunities and flexible working hours to their employees. Some will allow working hours to be scheduled around family responsibilities. In this computer age, various corporations are encouraging employees to work from their homes. Cottage industries are another alternative. Some people, even those who aren't parents, prefer to pursue their careers from their homes.

Don't think you have no choice when with a bit of ingenuity you may be able to come up with a workable solution. Avoid day care for your infants and preschoolers if at all possible. Give your children the priceless gift only you can give—yourself, at home. They're worth it. □

EPILOGUE

EVERYONE wants to be happy in life. There is a definite way to true, satisfying happiness—a way of living that will produce happiness as a by-product.

By teaching your children early how to properly conduct themselves, you will be helping them avoid a life full of

When children are in rebellion against parents, there is a reason. There is a cause. Some parents blame circumstances for the waywardness of their children. They blame the school systems. They blame one another—father blames mother, and vice versa.

Some reason that our youths are only running their course. They say, "They're only doing what I did when I was their age!" These are excuses for parental neglect. The actions of parents are responsible for how their children turn out just as surely as they are responsible for their begetting and birth.

Don't leave your children on their own to get into trouble in later years. Start early to put them on the right track! Sidestepping your responsibilities in this area can

lead to ultimate DISASTER. There are definite penalties for breaking child-rearing laws. If practiced, right principles of child rearing will produce happy, vibrant, responsible children! It is in your power to mold, form, shape and de-

velop right and wholesome character!

Still, after all is said and done, after the children are grown and no longer at home, can any parent look back and say, "I did a perfect job in rearing my children"? Surely not. At our best, we all fall short of perfection. In whatever we do, including child rearing, we must have God's help.

This most important point in child rearing is probably the most overlooked in today's world. We humans need divine guidance. We receive that help through studying God's written word and, upon conversion, by the leading of God's Holy Spirit (John 16:13).

Ask God to help you understand what to do in your situation, in dealing with your children, and then to help you do it the right way, with love and consistency.

Children are precious to God (Mark 10:14). They are a heritage from him (Ps. 127:3). God lets you care for your children for a few years till they are mature. You must take advantage of the few short years they are with you.

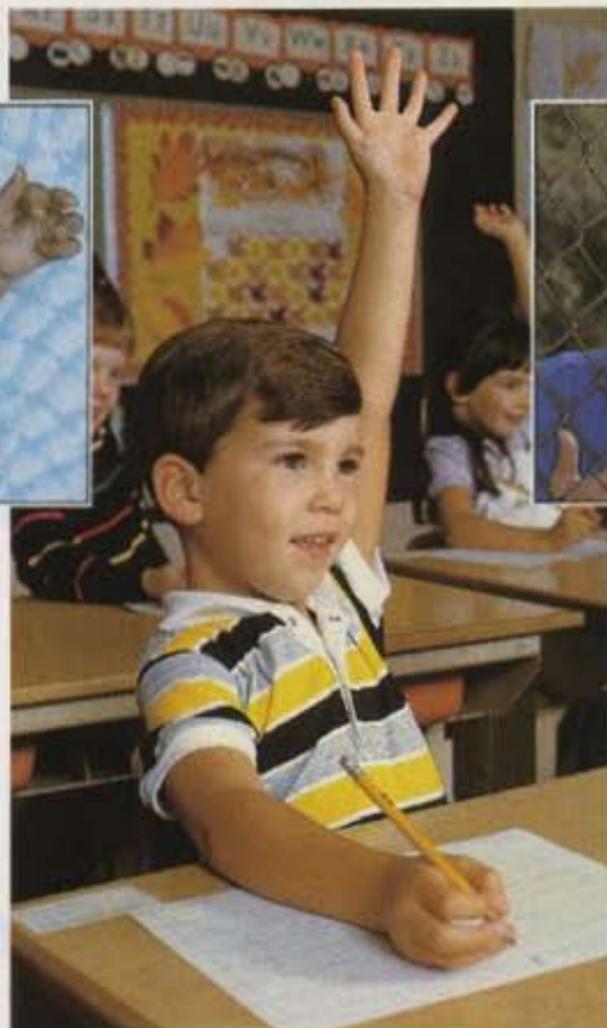
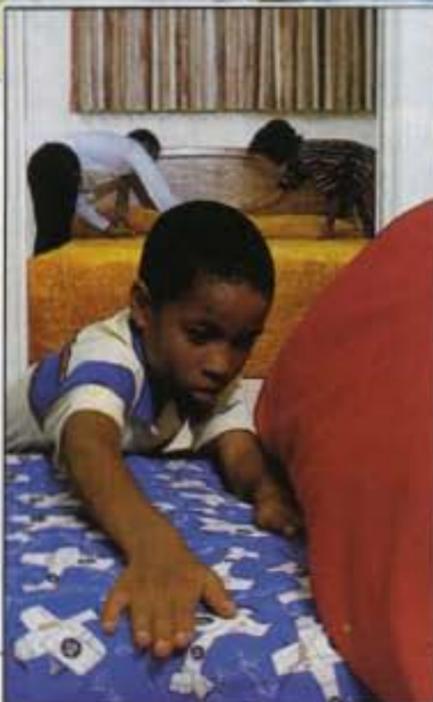
Learn to rear your children God's way. If you do, your children will enrich your life greatly and bring joy to your home. The character you help them build will be of inestimably great value to them for the rest of this physical life and, it is to be hoped, for all eternity. □

The Happy Conclusion

heartache and problems.

It is never too early to begin giving your children clear standards of behavior! From their earliest years, you are influencing their character—actively or passively—for good or evil.

If you don't actively teach them how to live life the right way, they will live it whichever way follows the path of least resistance. "Delinquent children have delinquent parents," goes one saying. And it's true!



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Printed in U.S.A.