Biblical Auguston Soully Women

Edited by: Brenda Wilkins and Nelda Sorrell

Original mural by Mandy Booher

Biblical Nuggets for Godly Women Edited by: Brenda Wilkins and Nelda Sorrell Illustrated by: Joanna Booher and René Smith

To Our Sisters in Christ

May we know the peace of being Godly women, May we experience the joys of adorning the Gospel; May our lives and homes always be an expression of God's Love!

"The aged women likewise...that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the Word of God be not blasphemed." Titus 2:3~5

Published 2010

FAITH PUBLISHING HOUSE

Digitally Published by
THE GOSPEL TRUTH
www.churchofgodeveninglight.com

Contents

	I. Harmony in the Home	
1. 2.	Our God Ordained Place - Sis .Maxine Busbee Helpmeet - Sis. Sheri Rich	- 11 - 19
3.	Building a Happy Marriage - Sis. Patsy Smith	- 36
4.	Everlasting Love - Sis. Marsha Corteway	- 52
	The Power of the Virtuous Woman - Sis. Connie Flynn	
о.	Keeping Our Secret Garden - Sis. Brenda Wilkins	- 65
	II. Nurturing Motherhood	
7.	For Mothers With Sons - Sis. Anita Adams	- 77
8.	Obedience - Sis. Charlotte Huskey	- 83
9.	Discipline - Sis. Tammy Williamson	- 89
	. Love Spelled T-I-M-E - Sis. Melonie Whitson	
	. Family Worship -Bro. Phillip & Sis. Rosie Gellenbeck P. Diligence in the Home -	
40	Bro. Phillip & Sis. Rosie Gellenbeck	
	Training the Conscience - Sis. Charlotte Huskey	
	. That Messy Room - Sis. Charlotte Huskey	
	6. Children of the Royal Family - Sis. Charlotte Huskey	
	. Crimaron or the riegar raining Cie. Charlotte ridency	
	III. Understanding Submission	
18	. Husbands Who Won't Lead - Sis. Jeanie Samons What Do You Require of Me, Lord? - Sis. Karen LaCroix Melody Makers - A Sister In Christ	165
	IV. Women of Influence	
20 21	. My Mission Field - Sis. LaDawna Adams	187 193
	V. Emotions and Womanhood	
	Rise Up From Fear - Sis. Patricia Rhodes	

	VI.	Contented Hearts	
25.	Wha	Money - No Time - No Help - Sis. Tricia Bell2 at Spirit Are You Of? - Sis. Sheri Rich2 tinue On - Submitted by Sis. Karen LaCroix 2	31
	VII.	Modeling Modesty	
27.	God	I's Portrait of Women Professing Godliness - Sis. Karen LaCroix 2	45
	VIII.	. Filling Our Special Place	
		l's Presence in Widowhood - Sis. Nelda Sorrell 2 Husband is Not a Christian! - A Sister in Christ 2	
	IX.	God Still Answers Prayer	
30.	Divir	ne Healing and Motherhood Part I -	77
		Sis. Anita Adams 2 My Will But Thine Be Done - Sis. Irma Sallee 2 Ultimate Health Care Plan - Sis. Irma Sallee 3	98
,	X . I	Doing Our Part	
33.	Nutr	rition, Divine Healing and Motherhood Part II - Sis. Anita Adams 3	311
,	XI.	Good Stewardship	

34. Finances and the Home Part I - Sis. Anita Adams ----- 327 35. Finances and the Home Part II - Sis. Anita Adams ----- 336

Acknowledgements

Words cannot express my appreciation to every contributor and supporter during the process of compiling this book.

I have enjoyed working and communicating with all of you as we endeavored to unveil God's will for us as Godly Women.

To all of you I say a deep and heartfelt "Thank You!"

To my wonderful husband who has unfailingly encouraged me when I thought I had gotten in too deep; to Sis. Nelda Sorrell...your dedicated help, expertise and faith in this project gave me a tremendous boost and zeal to keep on.

I appreciate the encouragement, advice and willingness of the Faith Publishing House staff to invest their time in bringing this project to publication.

Most of all I thank God for His inspiration and anointing to each contributor and for His unfailing guidance and strength in fulfilling this project for His glory.

In His Service, Brenda Wilkins

The Contributors

Sis. Maxine Busbee is a minister and pastor at the Crutcho Church of God in Oklahoma City. She is the mother of two daughters and three granddaughters. She resides with her husband, Loren, in Edmond, OK.

Sis. Sheri Rich is a minister of the Church of God. She and her husband, Bryan, have been married forty one years. They have nine children and fourteen grandchildren.

Sis. Patsy Smith of Keizer, OR has been happily married to her husband, Clifford, for forty-two years and has a teaching ministry. They have three children and ten grandchildren.

Sis. Marsha Corteway is a minister in the Guthrie, OK congregation. She and her husband, Jerry, have three daughters and seven grandchildren. She is active in children's minsitry.

Sis. Connie Flynn is a lay member of the congregation in Loranger, LA. She is active in ministering to young women and lives with her husband, Gerald, in Loranger, LA.

Sis. Brenda Wilkins is a lay member in the Guthrie, OK congregation. She and her husband, Delmar, have been married for thirty-seven years. They have three children and nine grand-children.

Sis. Anita Adams is a pastor's wife in the Webb city, MO congregation. She and her husband, Danny, have four sons and live in Carthage, MO.

Sis. Charlotte Huskey has been active in missionary work in Mexico most of her married life. She currently lives in Guthrie, OK. She and her husband, James, have been married for fifty-five years and have six children, thirty-six grandchildren and eight great grandchildren.

Sis. Tammy Williamson is a pastor's wife in Loranger, LA. She has been supervisor in the Way of Life Christian school for many years. She and her husband, Michael, have three children and two grandchildren.

Sis. Melonie Whitson is a lay member in the Enterprise, AL congregation. She and her husband, Marshall, have been married for thirty-six years and have three children and three grandchildren.

Bro. Phillip & Sis. Rosie Gellenbeck live in Guthrie, OK. Bro. Phillip is Interim Pastor at the Guthrie Church of God. They are active in the Path of Life Christian School as teacher and principal. They have five children and one grandchild.

Sis. Karen LaCroix is a minister in the Loranger, LA congregation. She and her husband, Glenn, have two children and five grandchildren.

Sis. Jeanie Samons is a minister's wife of Junction City, KY. She and her husband, Toney, are active in young couple's ministry and have been married for thirty-nine years and have four children and eight grandchildren.

Sis. LaDawna Adams is a minister in the Enterprise, AL congregation. She and her husband, Michael, live in Hayden, AL. They have four children.

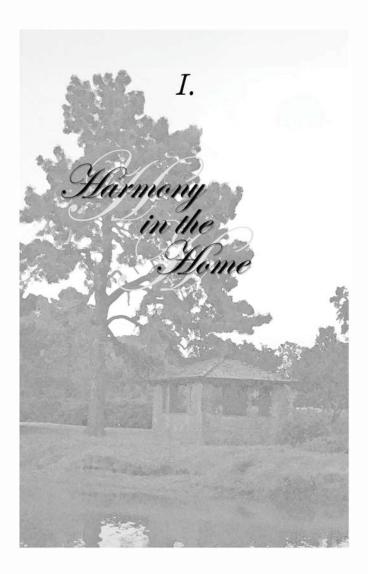
Sis. Geneva Lowe is a pastor's wife in the Tulsa, OK congregation. She and her husband, Charles, have raised six children and have six grandchildren. They have been married for forty-six years. Sis. Lowe is active in the card and telephone ministries.

Sis. Patricia Rhodes is a lay member of the Tulsa, OK congregation. She and her husband, Charles, have been married for thiry-four years. They have three children and six grand-children. She is active in the music and children's ministry in her congregation.

Sis. Tricia Bell is a pastor's wife from the Sapulpa, OK congregation. She and her husband, James, have six children and six grandchildren. Sis. Tricia is active in teaching women at the jail in Tulsa, OK.

Sis. Nelda Sorrell is a lay member in the Guthrie, OK congregation. She and her late husband, Ed, have three children, six grandchildren and five great granddaughters. Sis. Nelda has been handicapped with muscular dystrophy since her early twenties, yet is very active traveling in the work of the Lord and in helps.

Sis. Irma Sallee is a lay member in the OK City, OK congregation. Her husband, Bob, died soon afer returning from a missionary trip to Africa. They have five children and fourteen grandchildren. Sis. Irma has a gift for ministering to the sick and elderly.



Our God Ordained Place

Sis. Maxine Busbee

Order of Creation

"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness... And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.... And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.... And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam,... and he took one of his ribs,...and...made...a woman, and brought her unto the man." Genesis 1:26; 2:7, 18, 21, 22.

Wow beautiful and perfect the creation of the first man and woman! As Adam opened his eyes and beheld the feminine creature presented to him, he cried, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh!" Adam understood that a man should "cleave unto his wife: and they...be one flesh."

In the beginning, all things formed were done in an order of sequence, working together not only for the balance and coordination of the universe and nature, but for humanity as well. God is a God of order, and when His creation functions in that order, harmony is the result. Equally so, when God's order is "out of order," confusion is the consequence. Therefore, to understand our "God Ordained Place," an authoritative order must be considered.

Authoritative Order

"But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God." I Corinthians 11:3. God is supreme in this order, with Christ being subject to the Father. Man's ordained responsibility to Christ would be considered the third level of this authoritative order, with the woman's responsibility to the man being the fourth; yet all (male and female) are subject to Christ. Our "God Ordained Place" could be concluded at this point on the basis of order, but God would be pleased to reveal the beauty of His plan that we be challenged to its fulfillment.

Christ the Perfect Husband

In the book of Ephesians, chapter 5, a marvelous mystery is revealed concerning Christ and the Church. Christ, as the head of the Church and the Savior of the Body, supremely loved His Bride and "gave Himself for it." The Church, being "members of His body, His flesh, and His bones," is subject unto Christ, the perfect husband.

A most beautiful scripture in the Old Testament describes

Christ's divine faithfulness and loving kindness for His Bride. "... Behold, I will allure (attract) her,...and speak comfortably unto her (to her heart.) And... (thus), saith the LORD, that thou shalt call me Ishi; (my Husband)...And I will betroth thee unto me for ever...in righteousness...in lovingkindness, and in mercies...(and) in faithfulness." Hosea 2:14, 16, 19, 20. Christ took the responsibility to "allure" and "speak comfortably" that He might persuade His Bride of His ardent and unending love. The Scripture teaches He loved His Bride first, winning her by His love. He allures with the promises of His favor and offers of divine grace, by which we are persuaded to forsake our sins and turn to God. This speaks to the heart of the abundant consolation for the sorrow of sin.

He said, "Thou shalt call me, my Husband." This speaks of compelling love, sweetness, and familiarity. Our Savior covenanted to betroth us to Himself forever in righteousness, in loving kindness, and in faithfulness. He said He would have mercy upon us and say, "Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God." Hosea 2:23.

The nurturing care Christ has for the Body promotes the development of her growth and progress. He promised to supply all needs "according to His riches in glory," and to "never leave, nor forsake." Our perfect husband never neglects nor despises His precious Bride, for He not only cares for her, but also cherishes her. She is His blessed treasure, which He is sanctifying and cleansing, "That He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." It is through this nurturing and cherishing of the Church that Christ becomes the example to the man, which is the next level of God's ordained order.

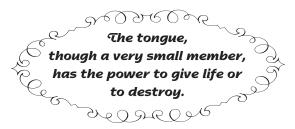
Christ's Example for the Godly Husband

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." Christ is honored when the husband will nourish and cherish his wife, loving her as his own body, for they are one flesh. The love a man has for his wife is an extension of his love for himself, for one cannot sincerely love without having a true care for his own soul first. This love will envelop her and bless him. This love he has for her will beget love, respect and honor, and willing submission. A godly man, filling God's ordained place to be the head of his wife, blesses her, even as Christ, being the head of the Church, blesses it. Should a man seek to understand this deep truth, and discover the knowledge of this God-given responsibility to perform the duties of his headship, he will find the secret to a happy home and marriage. This man will be the spiritual leader of the home. He will show honor to the wife and mother of his children. The children will be brought up in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord." This Godly man will love his wife, recognizing her weaknesses, and not be bitter against her, that his prayer life will be successful. The man will be a shield and protector for his wife and family, for he is the house band. His home will be highly esteemed, prized, and treasured as he guards his family from the "wiles of the devil." This is God's perfect plan, and when followed, it produces harmony in the home and family.

The God Ordained Place for the Wife

We women may feel the greater burden is sometimes placed on our gender. Sometimes it has seemed the woman

has been the topic most addressed concerning marriage. Let us never resent the fact God created us as women. Our place is glorious in the sight of God, and He desires to promote us through the power of Christ. He wants our lives to be such that He can—and will—avenge and support.



When the man and the woman are both filling the place God has designed, the result is beautiful. Christ is honored when we submit to each other, but blessed is the man whose wife is willing to fill her place of submission (as unto the Lord,) and allow her husband to fill his place. Christ is honored when the wife will reverence her husband, respecting his position, while learning to adapt to his life, for the woman was made for the man. She was created to be a helpmeet, to be an aid, and to assist her husband, providing an atmosphere that will envelop him when the pressures of the workday end. The influence of the godly wife will be reflected in the man's life, and he will be "known in the gates." The care of herself, of the home and family, and the love for her husband will be apparent when a wife accepts her position and willingly submits to her calling. Our love for Christ is the very spring of our action—a magnet of submission to our *perfect Husband* when we submit to our own husbands. Blessed is the woman who is empowered by the divine grace of God to fill this God ordained place.

Wise Instructions

The aged women are to be guiding examples for the younger women. The older women should be models of having control over their tongues. The tongue, though a very small member, has the power to give life or to destroy. If we are loose with our comments about others, we will lack self-control in the family setting. If we entertain malicious thoughts, malicious words will come out of our mouth. Abusive language, whether from the husband or the wife, can never promote love nor bring peace to a home. "A soft answer turneth away wrath" was intended to work with the speaker's wrath, and subsequently for others as well. Children should be taught early to control the tone of their voices, as the very tone imparts a message as well as the words.

The aged women are to be teachers of virtue, with noble instructions. Through their example, the younger should see orderly behavior, promoting confidence. Their experiences should help in teaching the younger women to love their husbands, even when the husband may be contrary and not easy to love.

Loving the abusive or neglectful husband takes great Divine grace; we know God's grace has supported many wives and will continue to sustain women in this present time. Submission (in these cases) must be because of Christ and as unto Him. (Remember: Christ wants our lives to be such that He can—and will—avenge and support.)

Power with God for the Woman

Further distinctions between the man and the woman are found in I Corinthians 11. This chapter says the first man did not come from woman, but the first woman came out of

man. It tells us that man was not created originally for the sake of the woman, but the woman was created for the sake of the man. Yet, neither the man nor the woman were to be independent of each other because it took the first man to bring about the woman, but it now takes the woman to give birth to the man, though all things ultimately come from God.

Then verse 10 reads thus: "For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels." The hair becomes a pivotal point with verse 13, "Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered? Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering." (One translation renders the last part of this verse, because her hair has been given her instead of a veil.)

The hair was not only to be an identifying factor between the man and the woman, but it was an added grace for the woman. It was a cov ering, a sign she was under the power of her husband. Verse 10, from another translation, reads thus: Therefore it is woman's duty to have a sign of authority on her head because of the angels, if of nobody else. Woman's true authority is her perfect husband, Christ. If we will be obedient to this doctrine, submitting to Christ, the Head of all, He will be the defense of the woman when the husband is less than what God has ordained. On the other hand, if the wife is less than what God has ordained, the rich blessings for her home and marriage are hindered.

As women, we have a special place to fill. It is a safe place, an honorable place, a God ordained place. It can be either a sacred place or it can be profaned, simply by submission or rebellion. If we, as women, could grasp a vision of God's pleasure and approval when our lives are conducted

by the power of His grace, our natures would be softened, our spirits would be tempered. By the faith of Christ, we need to believe that the poor in spirit are blessed, that "theirs is the kingdom of heaven," which denotes all that Heaven stands for is at our defense. If the God-fearing woman will seek to follow the will of her Creator, should her husband fall short of his God-given responsibilities, God will be her helper, her defense. "Wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they may, apart from the word, be won by the daily life of their wives; while they behold how pure and god-fearing you are." (I Peter. 3:1-2—from KJV, Weymouth and Norlie.) May each of us seek to please our perfect husband, Christ.

Helpmeet

Sis. Sheri Rich

"And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." Genesis 2:18.

Offter God made this statement, He made woman out of Adam's rib and she became his wife and helpmeet. What a wonderful thing to ponder. We know exactly why we were made; it was because it was not good for man to be alone. How wonderful it is to not only know why we are here but to be given a job to do that will fulfill our lives as Godly women! Since God created woman to be a helpmeet to man then it behooves us to learn how to be the best helpmeet we can be.

The root word of helpmeet means to surround, protect, aid, help and succour.

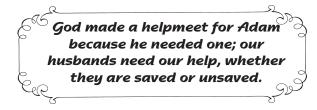
Helpmeet is a many-faceted word; it means we have a many-faceted job. If we intend to do it right, we will have to "study to show ourselves approved unto God."

Surround: to encircle on all sides, just like a city.

In Bible times the cities were surrounded with high walls. It was for the protection of the inhabitants inside. There were watchmen placed on these walls to sound the alarm if the city should come under attack. This is what a helpmeet does for her husband, she encircles on all sides. She is protecting something very valuable; her family and her husband are within these walls.

Psalm 127:1 "Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain."

We are the watchman and we are to sound the alarm whenever our husbands are in danger. We know the makeup of our husbands, their character, weaknesses and even their strengths, so we watch for the enemy's attacks on these characteristics; we watch for trickery and pitfalls. We watch for changes in moods or emotions.



How do we sound the alarm? We surround our husbands with a wall of prayer to our heavenly Father. We pray for his successes and we pray for his encouragement when he fails. Through prayer, we attack the enemy who is attacking him. As the scripture says, "Except the Lord build the house and keep the city we labor and wake in vain." We must keep our

own souls clear and clean before God so we are ready to defend or attack through prayer. Without God we can do nothing! If God isn't the builder of our house and the keeper of our cities, we wake in vain for there is no strength outside of Him to help fulfill our place.

Your husband may not realize how important your job is; he may not appreciate you fulfilling it, but you must help him to be all he can be. When you see a weakness, this is not a time to share what you see and tell him you are praying for him. This job is mostly carried on in secret. We must not get it in our minds that we can do this job by ourselves; it is going to take the Lord's help. He will give you discernment how to pray. You may see something and as you go to prayer about it, God may reveal other things that are attached to it so you can attack there also.

Now it is really hard to pray for someone you are upset with. As a helpmeet you are going to have to learn to put aside your disappointments and get over your hurts. Some women live with unsaved companions. You may be called upon to be a helpmeet to someone who never shows you proper respect or love. But you can better your life and the lives of your children by being a good helpmeet to him. God made a helpmeet for Adam because he needed one; our husbands need our help, whether they are saved or unsaved. You must fulfill the office of a helpmeet to be pleasing to God, and you will do this by surrounding your husband with prayer!

Protect: to shield, guard, defend from injury, danger, or loss; **Protector:** in English history, a person who rules a kingdom during the absence or incapacity of its sovereign.

In battle you raise a shield to ward off the spear or blow designed to maim and kill. That shield protects the vital organs from life threatening injury. The stronger the shield, the longer the warrior can fight. How strong a shield are you to your husband? How many death blows have you been able to ward off? How much longer can your husband fight for his family? Are you supporting his efforts or taking him from the battle because he is having to pet and pamper your feelings again?

You must be on guard duty all the time. You can't afford to desert your post. You can't take a vacation from your prayers as a helpmeet when you're upset today because he forgot your birthday or anniversary. You can't afford to turn your head to the wall and feel sorry for yourself. You must be a helpmeet all the time.

What kind of things can injure your husband? Sometimes it is your own mouth that does more damage to him than anything someone else can say. Others can say all manner of things against your husband, but you live with him so what you say carries more weight. Women get together and share small injuries they have received at the hand of their husbands. This makes them feel better but at what cost! They get the sympathy they are looking for but ruin their husband's influence in the process. They tell his faults but not his victories.

Why do you feel you are bragging if you tell the good, but you are just being honest if you tell the bad about your husband? You must, as a helpmeet, protect your husband's reputation and influence. How would you feel, knowing your husband was telling your faults and failings to others? You need to be discreet about yourself, your home life, and your husband. If your husband is not growing in grace, you need

to take it personally. What can you do to help? What are you doing to hinder?

Some husbands are unsaved. Do you know that those husbands are "absent"—incapable of being the sovereign of the family, of being all God designed for them to be? So you must become the person who rules the kingdom during the absence. Some saved wives feel that if the husband isn't doing his part, it somehow relieves her of her duty, but that isn't so; God holds you doubly responsible. If your husband will not take his place as protector, then it becomes your job. If he doesn't call the family together for worship, then it is your job. It's going to be your job to teach the children how to pray and to make sure they are in church services regularly. Most of the consistency and discipline will have to come from you, because your husband is "absent."

Abigail is a good example of someone who, during the absence or incapacity of the sovereign, ruled well. In the incident recorded in I Samuel 25, one of the young men came and told Abigail that Nabal railed on David and refused him food. Abigail had conducted herself in such a way that she held the confidence of the young man; he ran and told her. He had seen her in action before, fixing the problems that her husband had gotten them into. The young man also told Abigail that her husband was a son of Belial and couldn't be reasoned with. Some of us live with companions like that.

David's men were coming to kill them. The young man didn't call the men of war to get their weapons; he ran and told Abigail. Abigail wasn't surprised nor did she feel she had to defend her husband, and we shouldn't either. Her husband wasn't a good protector and he didn't rule well. She didn't cry and wring her hands; she sprang into action. She

loaded gifts of food and went out to meet David and bowed at his feet. She got down really low, and we will have to do the same. Being a helpmeet is a lowly, humble position. Sometimes we think we are as low as it is possible to get, but God will tell us, "Dig a pit." When those fiery darts are flying with that unreasonable companion, you can dig a trench like a soldier and get below the surface where they cannot hit you. You may feel hurt and have emotions, but it won't keep you from doing your duty of being the best helpmeet you can be.

Abigail said, "Let this iniquity be on me." She knew she hadn't done anything wrong, but she was willing to stand in the gap for her family. She was willing to admit her companion's failings. We should not broadcast our husband's failings, but we should admit them to God in prayer. Some women don't want to face the facts. They hide from the responsibility of confessing their companion's failings before God, and neglect to intercede for him as a good helpmeet should.

Abigail told David that Nabal was a foolish man. Everyone knew it. Sometimes our companions will do foolish things, but we should not be embarrassed or ashamed unless we are adding to the problem. Husbands need to know that they are admired. It doesn't have to be for a lot of things; it can be just one thing. They need to know their efforts are appreciated. In order to take their rightful place in the home, they need respect. Husbands will work long and hard for their families if, at the end of the day, they know their efforts and sacrifices are noticed.

I have learned that when my husband tells me something about myself, it is probably true, even if it is said in anger. I learned this when we were first married. He would tell me I was lazy. I hated that word. As time went on, I found out that I was lazy. When I finally got down before God and admitted I

was lazy and asked God to go down to the depths of my soul and dig it out, I got the victory. As long as I stood up toe to toe with my husband and told him, "I am not lazy, that's just the way you look at it. That's just the way your family does it; my family does it differently," I couldn't get the victory, and I communicated something to my husband that caused him to be less of the husband that I wanted him to be.

We must learn to humble ourselves; husbands will usually think that the way their family did things is the right way. If you are not willing to bend and do it as they like it, you are only going to have trouble. To be a good helpmeet you must learn to bend. This will take away much of the stress in the home; just bend and pray. What difference does it make if we have to learn to do things a different way? A helpmeet is concerned about her husband and his well being, not her own. She loves to please and do for her husband, and he loves her for it.

If your husband says you are not submissive, then go to prayer and find out how you are communicating that to him. Ask God to show you yourself as He sees you. Ask Him to find the fault and root it out. Don't say to yourself, "He's just in a mood today." You will only add to his problem and the way he reacts to you. Work on yourself and your ways each and every day, and he will learn to have confidence in you even if he is unsayed.

Aid: to help or assist; Assistant: a person who helps or aids in a subordinate position.

A helpmeet is an assistant that is always in a subordinate position. You are not the head. God said the husband is to be the head of the wife. He will always be your head. If the head is gone, it leaves you defenseless in many ways. We

should do everything in our power to assist in all that our husbands have to do. We have no guarantee that our husbands will be saved or stay saved. There are some husbands who have left home, and they don't plan to came back. But those of us who still have a husband need to assist them. Some husbands are very good heads; they don't require as much assistance as others.

Have you heard of the term *office gossip*? Employees will gather together and talk about the boss—the head, the one with authority over them. It makes them feel better. We need to examine why they feel better when talking about the flaws of their head. If we look into their motives, we will find that it has to do with being in a subordinate position. They feel exalted if they can share their observations of the supposed flaws of their head.

This is how it will be our homes if we are not watchful. And it can carry over into the work of God. When the head I talked negatively about, whether it is yours or mine, is called into a place of influence, there are now those who cannot have confidence—because of the gossip I have told. To be a good helpmeet, we must protect our husband by refusing to talk about his bad traits. If we talk too much, it will come back to give us trouble later. Have you heard the expression, "If you don't have something good to say, don't say anything at all?" We teach our children this principle when they are young and just learning how to socialize. We must not forget it when we are grown! If I can't find anything good to say about my head and spend all of my time speaking ill of him, I have jumped off the wall and am inside the city without a clear vision of the dangers ahead. I can't see the tricks of the enemy; I've lost my discernment, and my family suffers.

We are to assist our husbands in all of their desires and

plans. There are some desires that are good and some that are worldly ambitions. If they are not sin, we are to assist even in those things we have no interest in. My husband talks to me all the time about mechanical things. It is his interest, and it is how he makes a living for us. I will ask him a question about something, and he will spend the next ten minutes explaining it; all I really wanted was the last sentence! I have learned that listening to all of what he has to say and being interested helps him share his life with me. We want to be noticed by our husbands, and we want them to be interested in our interests. We want them to communicate with us, so we need to cultivate the art of listening in order to be listened to.

At one point in my marriage my husband told me that I thought I was smarter than he was. I was shocked and went to the Lord for an explanation. God was faithful, and taught me that whenever my husband was working on a project, I would walk in and start giving him suggestions. I was trying to show my interest, but he took it to mean that I didn't think he could do this on his own. Now, I can't get my husband to think differently, but once God reveals to me where he got the idea, I can learn not to tread on that territory again. I can't explain it to him to get him to think differently, so I must change my actions. Does it hurt me? No. I learn restraint. A helpmeet helps her husband to be the best he can be and understands how his mind works. This will stop the mouth of the enemy and bring peace in the home.

Men have a male ego. When I was growing up, I heard that the male ego was a bad thing. When I got married I thought, "You don't want to build up that male ego, you want to tear it down." Do you know what you do when you tear down his male ego? You tear down everything that is good in the male. The male ego has strength, fight, and protectiveness, which

cause your husband to fight to protect his family. It causes him to work hard and sacrifice for his family every day. If we tear his ego down, we end up with a man who is irresponsible. That is what the women's movement has done to our men. They have torn them down, made them feel like we don't need them. By the use of medical procedures, some women have gone to the extreme of completely eliminating the need of a husband to produce children. As a result of this, there are children growing up without a father figure in the home. We have a country full of men who have been stripped of their ego. They are no longer protectors of women. The male ego is not bad, but it does need to be sanctified. Part of our job is to build up the side of the male ego that is good and pray for the side that has been corrupted by sin.

You may have a husband who wants to run everything his way and gives you no authority in the home to make decisions. Pray for the Lord to balance him out. Some men have been forced into a submissive role in the home because the woman is so overbearing that they just gave up and let the woman take over. We don't want to force our husbands into that kind of place, so the best way to help them take their proper place is to always stay in our place. We don't want our husbands to think at any moment, on any subject, that we think we know more than they do and don't need their input.

Esther is a perfect example of a helpmeet that assists and aids in a subordinate position. As with Abigail, when there was a crisis, the message was brought to her to do something about it. She was the only one in a position to stop the awful destruction that was about to take place. As all good helpmeets should do, she called for prayer and fasting. Sometimes we get into trouble because we act before we pray. We don't give the Lord time to calm our emotions; we get out of

order and as a result don't receive the desired effect. Esther didn't stand up in the king's face and demand; she asked that the Jews all fast and pray. She was willing to go before the king, but it was the way she went that brought favor with the king. She knew it was against the law for her to appear before the king uninvited. She could lose her life for doing so, but she went in the power of the Lord, in a subordinate position. She didn't walk in boldly right up to the king's throne, but she stayed as far away as she could and still be noticed. The king took notice of Esther in the outer court, and she found favor in his sight.

You and I will find favor with our husbands if we approach softly and humbly. The king looked on her and love for her just welled up inside, and he held out his scepter, which granted her permission to approach the throne. He was willing to grant her request even to giving her half of the kingdom. Wouldn't we all like it if our husbands granted us that kind of favor; if he came home one night and told us, "Half of this paycheck is yours." Our hearts would be thrilled!

I was one who wanted to handle the money. Early in our marriage it was hard to stretch the money; I scrimped and saved to make ends meet. Then my husband started a different job, and now that we were going to have abundance, he wanted to start handling the money. I was so upset that I wasn't going to be in control. Let me tell you what the Lord did for me when I submitted and took my place as a subordinate, when I died to my will and submitted to His. I still don't handle the money. The Lord has made me so happy because He relieved me of all of that responsibility, worry and headache, and my husband gives me more money than I ever would have taken for myself! I had to wait a while and I had to pray and find favor in His sight, but God looked down and gave me more than I had before.

Once, my husband thought I was driving around too much. He thought I needed to stay home more and not waste money on gas. He was going to take my car keys. I knew the right thing to do was to give him those keys, so I handed them to him. There was a time I would have called a locksmith and made a new set, but I was saved and living for the Lord and submitting myself to my husband. Two days later he handed those keys back to me.

If we submit and let God fight the battles for us, we will receive so much more than we can get for ourselves. God helps us to help our husbands to be the best they can be. We must not fight him when he is out of order; it will only make him worse. Bro. Ostis Wilson, in a series of lessons to the married couples, gave this instruction on the scripture, Ephesians 5:22, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord." When you are living with an unsaved companion he may require something of you that would violate your conscience; something dishonest, for example. He stated that we sisters have the right to not submit on that line, and give the reason why. But he also stated that it is important not to try to convince him of why we are not submitting; he is not going to understand. He doesn't want to understand, and for us to try to convince him of the reasons why we can't submit will only drive a wedge.

Help: make it easier for a person to do something, do part of the work; to make more effective, aid in growth of, to serve or wait on.

Do we make it easier for our husbands to be the head of the family; of us, the wives? We can be so agreeable and so humble that we make him think all of his ideas are good. If you don't always have a better idea, eventually he will begin to ask for your input. Help him implement his ideas. The world no longer believes women have to be submissive and a helpmeet to their husbands. Women are "liberated." They are also without the protection God gave them. Your husband can't make you be a good helpmeet. He could be the best husband in the world, but this won't make you a good helpmeet. You will have to get this by seeking God's face.

The husband is the head of the wife. The Scripture doesn't say he is the head of the home, but if you allow him to be your head then it puts him in a position to be the head of the home. That is a position you will have to give him. Do you have trouble with the children showing proper respect for your husband? It can be your fault, because if you don't submit, neither will they.

My children would come to me and say things about their daddy, and in my ignorance I would agree. He really did do something wrong, but in agreeing with my children, I found out I was destroying my own home. If they don't respect Daddy, they won't obey Daddy. I learned that I had to rebuke them and let them know it was not their place to correct Daddy. If they thought there were some injustices, then they could go to God in prayer, but they would find no agreement here. We can make it easier for our husbands to be the head.

In a marriage, sometimes both parties are standing up for their rights. Neither wants to bend. But if we, as saved women, get low and humble enough, all of the pressure will fall to the husband, the head. The husband needs to feel all of this pressure to keep him humble before God, his head. Men are designed to handle the pressures of life. Husbands find out that they need help from God when they feel all of the

pressure of their decisions for their families. As women of God, we need to enjoy our humble, subordinate life. There is a place God can take a wife where she is at peace with her God given position.

There are these unspoken rules of men's work and women's work that we all seem to abide by. My husband loves to mow the lawn. Every time we drove by a yard where he saw a woman mowing the lawn, he teased me about how he wondered what that husband was doing right to get his wife to mow the yard. I used to get a little defensive and say, "You know you love to mow the yard!" Recently the Lord gave me a better answer. I told him I felt sorry for her; because she doesn't have a good responsible husband and has to do it for herself. He hasn't teased me about that again. Get down in humility under him and lift up the things he does for you. Do part of the work.

We want to make our husbands more effective in everything they do, from speaking with the children, to disciplining, to his work for the Lord. Your child may come to you after they have been punished, wanting your sympathy. You can either undermine at that point, or make your husband's discipline more effective.

You can aid in the spiritual growth of your husband. We do this by being subordinate and by being quick to say, "I'm sorry." The Lord taught me to say "I'm sorry," early in my marriage. I was saved, but my husband wasn't. When he would have several complaints, I would go to the Lord in prayer. The Lord would tell me which ones were true, and then I would go and say I was sorry. But God wouldn't let me qualify which one I was apologizing for. I told the Lord if I didn't tell him which one I was apologizing for, he would think I was

apologizing for all of them. The Lord said, "Yes, he will. But that is My business."

We have an example in the Bible of a wife who aided her husband in the wrong way. It is the story of Jezebel. One day Jezebel saw her husband pouting, lying on his bed with his face to the wall. She plotted and schemed to obtain for him the vineyard he so desired. To please her husband, she had an innocent man killed!

There will be times our husbands will have desires that we can't participate in. We can't give him everything he wants because some things might be ungodly. We will have to suffer with the Savior in those times when we displease our husbands for conscience sake. Our husbands want loyalty from us, but sometimes we can't agree with their actions or thoughts on some subjects. The Lord can give you the words to say so that you can remain in a subordinate position without compromising your stand with God. It isn't always necessary for you to let him know you don't agree with him, but you can always suggest to him that you should both have a season of prayer about it. If he objects, it is probably because God has already been talking to him about it, but he just hasn't quite given in to the leadings of the Lord. We shouldn't push at those times, but we should surround our husbands and the situation with prayer.

When you are having a disagreement, this is not the time to say, "Let's go pray." There is something about being the first one to acknowledge that we need help from God that makes the other person feel put down and less spiritual. You might need to excuse yourself and go and have prayer for yourself, that you will be able to act right. It is a good thing to wait a little while, then go and say you are sorry for the way the discussion went. Then ask if he will pray with you about it.

We need to humbly walk with God before our husbands. Jezebel agreed with her husband and fought for the wrong thing, and they both lost their lives. It is not being a good helpmeet if we always agree with our husbands, even when they are wrong, just to avoid a battle. If you have pity for your children or husband when they are wrong, you will destroy their lives and your home. God will give you wisdom in the hour that you need it to calm the storm.

Succour: to give assistance in time of need or distress.

I was saved four years before my husband got saved. During that time he did whatever and went wherever he wanted, and some of those places I couldn't go. The devil told me he was far from the kingdom, and I believed him. It wasn't true at all.

One day he came home from work, and he was so despondent. He was undergoing some persecution at work from the other men, and he had borne about all he could. The Lord has a way of setting up circumstances to bring you to the end of your rope! We were having special meetings at church at that time, and I asked him if he wanted me to call the minister over so he could talk with him. My husband said, "Yes!" I was shocked because I thought he was so far away from God. The minister came, and my husband got saved that day when I was least expecting it.

We must always be ready to listen to the voice of the Lord and speak the words He wants us to in our homes. They will fill needs and give assistance in times of distress. Keep yourself in a place where you are not only close to the Lord, but you can reach out to the needs in your home. Be ready to show love and concern, not sympathy. Sympathy doesn't help

with the underlying problem; it encourages your husband to keep standing against God or his fellow man rather than humbling himself. Showing him concern and love will encourage him to keep humbling himself.

The fifth chapter of Daniel tells about Belshazzar's terror when he saw the handwriting that appeared on the wall. He called all his wise men and astrologers, but they could not read the writing. The queen remembered Daniel and knew he could interpret the writing. She kept herself informed about things so that she could assist in the kingdom.

We should know what is distressing our husbands and making their job harder. We should be ready to assist whenever possible. We can help them become more responsible, loving and caring husbands. Our husbands are a reflection on us. We are to carry out our responsibilities so that our husbands can be well spoken of in our homes, churches and communities. We are to help him to be the husband, father, and saint that God wants him to be. Without us fulfilling our place as helpmeets, our husbands will never reach their full potential.

We have been given a very valuable job. We were created to fill a special need. God is the one who will make us into the helpmeets we should be. He is the one who will give us wisdom and the right words to be used in any situation. He is the one who is head of the husband. He has given us an important job; we must do it well. It was not good for man to be alone so God gave him an helpmeet!

Proverbs 18:22 "Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD."

Building a Happy Marriage

Sis. Patsy Smith

In the beginning God said, "It is not good that man should be alone." It is up to us as Godly women to live so that the men we are married to will never question God's wisdom in having made woman. The virtues we bring and contributions we make to our marriages will determine to a great extent whether our marriages are happy or a source of great discontent.

Just as we are unique individuals, so the joining of two people in marriage will give each marriage a personality unlike any other. We all come from diverse backgrounds. We have varying levels of knowledge in things pertaining to life, the Scriptures and Godliness. Our experiences as children have all been different. The relationships we have had with our fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters have all gone into molding us into the person we are today. We have a wide range of likes and dislikes. The men we marry will have just as varied and complex backgrounds as well. Our challenge is to blend who we are with the men we marry and create marriages and homes that will bring as much happiness as

possible to us and to our families. Given all of this, there are still some basic principles of truth that will apply to all of us and help bring our marriages into conformity with what the Scriptures teach.

Where scriptures are quoted, I trust you will give prayerful consideration to what they teach us about God's will. Where my own thoughts are mentioned, I hope you can glean something that will be a blessing to your individual situation. There are problems in some marriages that will not be solved unless both the husband and wife seek God diligently. Only God can change a heart. A wife is not responsible for the failings of her husband. All she can do is seek to please the Lord in the role He has placed her.

First gave their own selves to the Lord II Corinthians 8:5

The kind of marriage you have will begin taking shape long before your wedding day. The attributes and qualities that you build into your life as a young person will be what you have to bring with you to your marriage. The sooner you give your heart to the Lord and let Him begin working in you, the more prepared you will be to become a good wife and mother. All of the fruits of the Spirit the Bible teaches about . . . love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance . . . are the building blocks of a great marriage. Every one of these virtues will be needed in full measure in your marriage to enhance the good times and give grace for the difficult days you will encounter.

A common misconception among young people is that if they can just get married, they'll be happy. True, there is great happiness to be found in marriage, but the opposite is also true. Witness the many divorces around us and realize that great misery can also be found. *Marriage will not change who you are*. If you're not happy before marriage, it is not likely that you will be happy after you're married. It's unfair to expect your husband to fill the void in your life that can only be filled with a personal walk with the Lord and the knowledge of your sins forgiven. There must be peace on the inside before there can be peace on the outside.

Seeketh not her own I Corinthians 13:5

Courtship can be a wonderful time of our lives. We experience intensity of emotions that will rarely be duplicated again in our lifetime. We feel so special to be the object of someone else's affection and revel in the joy of being "in love." We are so careful to use our best manners and make sure that we don't offend by our words or actions. We keep ourselves looking as nice as possible when we are going to be in the company of our boyfriend and try not to do things that we know he doesn't like.

Now, a year, five years, ten years later after the marriage ceremony, what has changed? It seems many wives treat everyone else nicer than they treat their own husbands. This is not the way God intended for it to be. If there is one person in your life that deserves to be treated with respect and consideration, it should be your husband. He is the one you have chosen to give yourself to and with whom to build a life.

After the wedding, too many couples forget that they have promised to cherish each other, and they begin looking out only for themselves. It is no longer about what will make "us" happy, but what will make "me" happy. In today's society, women are encouraged to get in touch with their feelings

and assert themselves, but divorce is also at an all-time high. Something about this philosophy is not working.

True love does not "seek her own." By nature, women are more emotional than men. It is very easy for us to be so *tuned in* to our own feelings that we become self-focused, even to the point of selfishness, and lose sight of our husbands' needs and, indeed, of what reality even is.



Emotions are not a bad thing when they are in their proper place. They make us caring and nurturing and sensitive. But, haven't we all had our days when we're supersensitive and it seems that nothing pleases us? I remember one of those days early in my marriage. My husband and I were doing something as mundane as shopping for a new screen door. How hard can that be? Unfortunately, I wasn't dealing with it very well, and I remember the room where I knelt to pray, later that day, to ask God's forgiveness and help. The Lord very graciously dropped the verse in my mind that says, "Charity. . . doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own..." I Corinthians 13:5. I have found that on days when my emotions are running in overdrive, if it is at all possible, it's better to avoid putting myself in situations where I will find it difficult to behave myself as I should. Proverbs 22:3 says, "A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself..." We can't check out of life on those days, but we can be aware of our weakness and ask for special grace from God.

You expect your husband to be sensitive to you, to listen to your complaints and be understanding. That is a two-way street. Husbands deserve respect. God has placed them as leaders in the home. Your husband may have a responsible job and will spend his workday being shown genuine respect by those with whom he works. His ideas are listened to and his decisions given careful thought and his wishes implemented; but then he comes home to you, someone who says she loves him, and you are constantly criticizing him and belittling the decisions he makes. It would appear that he gets more respect elsewhere than at home. It is your responsibility to make sure that your husband finds his home is a safe haven to return to at the end of a hectic day.

The virtuous woman described in Proverbs 31 spent her days attending to the needs of her husband and family. Being a Godly wife will require sacrifice on your part, but it pays high dividends. Having a good marriage and building a stable home is the greatest thing you can accomplish in life, after you've given yourself to God.

The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her... She will do him good and not evil Proverbs 31:11-12

Your husband has given you his heart. Guard it carefully. The vows you promised before God and your husband on your wedding day likely included the promise to cherish him and to guard his reputation. There will be things he will share with you that no one else should know. Be a safety deposit box for him to open his heart and tell you his insecurities and fears. Let him know he can do that safely. Keep in secret those things that belong to just the two of you.

We women like to visit. There is a place for seeking advice and counsel when needed, but your girlfriends shouldn't know private things about your husband just because you happened to get on a talking streak. Protect his reputation. You and your husband are now "one." What hurts him will also hurt you.

As a considerate wife, be there to share your husband's dreams, to listen to his confidences, to rejoice in his successes, to help hold him up when life tries to crush him. If his faith should falter, let yours be strong while he regains his footing. When he thinks that all the world is against him, make sure he knows your love is sure.

To be keepers at home Titus 2:5

There is a vast difference between someone who is just a stay-at-home wife and someone who is a keeper at home. A keeper is a guardian, a protector and a custodian. As a Godly woman, your role in life is to be a keeper of your home.

The home should be a place of refuge for a husband after he has faced the frustrations and challenges of his job. How relaxing do you think it is for a husband to come home exhausted and walk into a house that has dirty clothes littering the floor, unwashed dishes piled high on the counters and everything in a state of disarray? And then we hear the complaint, "My husband is never home—he always finds somewhere else to go." Did you ever stop to consider if there is something you could do to make home more attractive for your husband?

Life can get really hectic with the challenges of raising a family, and things will not always be "perfectly" in order. There are some things that are way more important than a clean house; however, there is a level of upkeep that is critical to a smoothly functioning home. You expect your husband to get

up every morning for five days a week, if not more, and go out and earn a living for you and your children. Now, what's your job?

Your part of the bargain is to be a keeper of your home. That doesn't just mean that you spend your time there. It means that you're making it a warm, inviting and comfortable place for your husband to live. When he walks in the door after work, be there to welcome him home. Let him know you're glad to see him. If he wants to talk about his day, give a listening ear. If you've had problems during the day, give him a chance to relax before you unload all of them on him. Make homecoming a happy time of the day. This will make him want to come home!

Don't fool yourself with the thought that if you had a beautiful home you'd keep it up better. Remember that few of us started our marriages with very glamorous accommodations. It's up to you to make the most of what you do have. When I've felt the stirrings of wishing for nicer furniture or *things*, I pull up a mental snapshot I have of a hillside I saw in Mexico. It was covered with blue tarps, corrugated tin and cardboard boxes that people were calling home. Another scene I have in my mind is of people sleeping on the sidewalk in Bombay, India and children taking a Sunday morning bath in the fire hydrant on the corner. It quickly turns my complaints into thanksgiving.

I remember reading an account that Corrie ten Boom wrote about a time she was imprisoned in a concentration camp. Her sister was being held in another cell, and one day Corrie had opportunity to see inside her sister's cell. She related how, even in that despondent place, her sister had her cell looking as homey as possible. She had hung the coats on

the hooks with the arms draped around the ones next to it and was setting a tone of cheerfulness.

Dear sisters, I know how frustrating it can be to feel like housework is never done and things get messed up as quickly as they're cleaned. Here is where it is our responsibility to teach our children to help and give them age-appropriate jobs so they can assist. Here is also a marvelous opportunity to spoil our husbands and let them know how much we appreciate all the work they do for us. Make it a habit not to nag at and complain to them. Keep in mind, they've had a long day too, and it's okay if you have to pick up the paper they leave on the floor or return a cup to the kitchen that they used in the living room. It takes very little of our time to do a few extras for our husbands, but it will make them feel loved and appreciated if we pamper them. That consideration will be manifested in a more loving and peaceful home environment.

Now, you may still have some extra time, and my philosophy is that the more of the chores that I can do around the house, the more free time my husband will have when he comes home from work. (How long does it really take for me to be the one to take out the trash?) That means more time for us to spend together as a family. We all win.

... and a time to laugh Ecclesiastes 3:4

From the beginning of your courtship on through all the years of your marriage, you and your husband should be making memories that bring a smile to your face. Life will have its share of hard times. No one escapes the trouble that comes to all in life, and there is "a time to weep," but focus on the good times. Indeed, learn to laugh together! Be playful! Seek

to lighten your days and lessen the tensions that crowd in. Be willing to laugh at yourself. Cultivate a good sense of humor! That is a wonderful means of diffusing tense and stressful situations.

Life is full of amusing incidents if you open your eyes to them. Sometimes, it may be nothing more than a word or phrase you hear that will bring a remembrance to your mind. When it does, catch your husband's eye and share the moment together. My children are all adults, but my husband and I still laugh at some of the cute sayings they used as toddlers. Those words became a permanent part of our vocabulary. That is a bond that belongs only to the two of us. When our family was young, we made a game out of giving Dad his good-bye kiss in the morning as he left for work. If your children can see Mom and Dad enjoying life together, it will bring great security to their lives. You've heard the saying, "Don't cry over spilled milk." Many have been the times we've sought the silver lining so that we could laugh rather than cry.

I Peter 5:7 tells us, "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you." Psalm 118:24 says, "This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." The Lord wants to lighten our burdens and bring joy to our hearts.

In her tongue is the law of kindness Proverbs 31:26

To a great extent, the wife and mother sets the tone for the household. Look around you and you will see the mother's expressions and mannerisms reflected in her children. If the mother is having a bad day, it makes for a bad day for the family. Pretty big responsibility on us, isn't it?

The good news is that there is a loving heavenly Father

that has promised to be our helper. Practice the law of kindness. The first place to start is through kindness in your words and deeds to your husband.

Life can get tedious at times, and emotions will go up and down. The closeness you feel to your husband will not always be the same. This is dependent on what's happening in your life—children, jobs, health issues, outside pressures. Even in all the swings of life, strive to let the law of kindness rule in your home.

Bro. Ostis Wilson, my pastor for many years, told of a time when two married people came to him and sought advice concerning their marriage. It seems they didn't have much common ground anymore and were constantly fussing, and felt little affection for each other. On one occasion, Bro. Wilson stayed in their home while he was holding a meeting in their congregation. The last day he was there, he called them both together and told them he had some advice for them. He told them that at least once every day he wanted them to compliment each other. If the wife made a meal the husband enjoyed, the husband was to tell his wife how much he appreciated it. The wife was supposed to find something every day on which to commend her husband. Bro. Wilson said he didn't give the couple time to respond, but picked up his hat and walked out the door. Some time later, at a camp meeting, the couple came to Bro. Wilson and said they would like to talk to him. His spirits dropped because he thought it would be another session of trying to solve problems. But he did make time to talk with them, and the couple told him that they had taken his advice, and they had never been happier in their marriage. By complimenting each other, they had been able to rebuild their marriage and now truly loved each other.

My husband knows that I love cookies. Sometimes when he has been somewhere that cookies are available, he'll tuck an extra one in his pocket to bring home to me. Is the cookie the important thing to me? Not necessarily; I can get them on my own. What does make me feel special is that he thought about me while he was gone and wanted to do something that would bring me pleasure.

The law of kindness will work wonders in your marriage and in your home. Days are made up of mostly small occurrences and repetitious events. Do not save graciousness and good manners for just the major times, but practice them every day.

Two *are* better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. Ecclesiastes 4:9

I cannot emphasize enough how important it is that a husband and wife meet life with a united front. Two people living in the same house but pursuing their own interests and looking out for their own welfare is a sure recipe for failure.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 says, "Two are better than one;...For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up." The closest bond that can be forged is between a husband and wife. This may seem surprising since men and women are so different, but our strength also lies in our differences. If you are willing to let your husband fill his role as head of the home and you fill your role as his helpmate, you can accomplish great things together.

Give your husband the space and freedom to excel at being who he is. Your job is not to try to change him to fit into your mold. A marriage needs someone who is strong. Men are good at that. They face a tough world on a public job. They're often working with people who will run roughshod over others. They put up with rudeness and inconsideration. Your husband is willing to endure this because he wants to protect you and provide for you and your children.

Strong marriages are not necessarily created by two people who are the most alike, but by two people who have learned how to accentuate the strengths of each other and shore up their partner's weaknesses. Learn the areas in which your husband excels, and then encourage him and let him know you appreciate the benefits you receive because of that. It's when you try to compete, rather than complement, that problems arise. If your husband has places in his life that are difficult for him, it's your turn to fill in the gap—not in a belittling way—but in a manner that will enhance the whole.

Your husband's personality, of course, is different from yours. Sometimes you may find it difficult to understand him, and he may even have some traits that annoy you. But remember, there's a good chance that his unique personality and differences from yourself are what attracted you to him and were part of the reason you fell in love with him. Often one person is an introvert and the other an extrovert. One may be an idea person and the other a detail person. These are opposites but if both are willing to let the other flourish and do what they're good at, they can each contribute in a positive way when both are working toward the same goal. The marriage will be stronger because of it.

As being heirs together of the grace of life; That your prayers be not hindered. I Peter 3:7

It is imperative that there be an altar of prayer established in your home. If your marriage is lacking the richness

and vitality you long for, check and see if you're allowing time to visit with the Lord. God is to be the head of the household. You will continually struggle and fall short of excellence if you're trying to get through life without God's direction.

From the beginning of your marriage, make it a daily practice for you and your husband to pray together. Jesus said, "Where two. . .are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Matthew 18:20. God must be infinitely pleased to see those two people are husband and wife. There is a very special bonding that forms between a husband and wife who daily pray together, thanking God for the blessings of life that you share and seeking help with the myriad decisions you have to make everyday when raising a family.

True prayer takes humbleness of heart. When a married couple is showing humility before God, there will also be a tenderness toward each other. Just as family prayer is of the utmost importance, you must also seek some time for private prayer. This will be a time for you to fill your cup with grace for the day.

Forgiveness is a vitally important component of a good marriage. Even when both the husband and wife are serving God, there will be times when they see things differently. Misunderstandings will occur, and one will feel slighted for one reason or another. Don't be afraid to ask your husband for forgiveness. Just that simple act will often remedy the situation and give you a fresh start.

I've heard the story of when Bro. Isaac Chandler was a young man and had just said his marriage vows. On the first day they were married, he asked his wife if she ever planned to divorce him. She was shocked that he could even ask that while they were so happy in their newly found love. She responded emphatically that, of course, she didn't plan to ever

divorce him. He told her "Let's never take the first step. If there are misunderstandings or hurt feelings, let's clear them up before we go to bed. Don't let disagreements build and cause problems between us."

And yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

I Corinthians 12:31

Teach the young women to love their husbands. Titus 2:4 The greatest of these *is* charity. I Corinthians 13:13

One writer said that, "to love abundantly is to live abundantly." Nowhere is this truer than in a marriage relationship. Love never fails. When you're at the end of your rope and don't know which way to turn, when understanding and knowledge fail, cling to love. The 13th chapter of I Corinthians is the great treatise on love. While it addresses our lives as a whole, it also gives the basis to form great marriages. Think of all the attributes of love: patience, kindness, generosity, humility, courtesy, unselfishness, good temper and sincerity. Love leaves little room for petty issues and ill will to divide.

Human beings flourish under the care and nurture of love. Tell your husband how much you love him. Under-gird those words by your actions. When he comes home from work, present a smiling face and a warm welcome. Do those things that will please him.

Love will not keep a strangle hold on another person. It's healthy in a marriage for each partner to have some interests and pursuits of their own. Love will not be envious when one partner engages in activities that may not include the other. Chances are that your husband had special interests before he married you, and it's unrealistic for you to expect him to

give them up completely. However, love will cause you to want to spend time together. If your husband has a set day to be off work, it's a great idea to get your chores done beforehand so that you will be free to do things as a couple.

Believe in your husband. Whatever he can do well on his own, he can do better with your support. Be there to encourage and bolster his spirits. Be his biggest fan.

Love does not require perfection. Each of us is in the flesh and will stumble and make mistakes. Be willing to forgive and overlook. Love can see a partner's weaknesses and yet remain constant. Remember what the important issues of life are and don't put undue emphasis on the insignificant.

Love your husband. Love him freely. Cultivate love, and the fruits of love will be yours to enjoy. You are not only pleasing your husband, you are pleasing God.

Finally... be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Ephesians 6:10

My prayer is that God will give grace to all of my sisters, grace to please Him acceptably, and that He will give you wisdom to know how to meet the challenges of life with courage. May the trials of life not take your victory, but may God be very real and near to hold you close to Himself during the difficult days.

If it were a perfect world, everyone would have husbands that are Godly, caring and considerate, which would make life so much easier for all involved. But it's not a perfect world, and some of you will face challenges in your marriages that will try you to the very limit. Lean hard on God. Above all things, seek to please God and put Him first in your life.

Remember you are half of the equation in a marriage. There is much you can do to enhance the quality of your life and that of the man you chose as your lifetime companion. Strive to build stable homes. Be an unbroken link in the chain of faith. Pass on to your families the rich heritage of the Gospel, and it will be an anchor to steady them in uncertain times.

EVERLASTING LOVE

Sis. Marsha Corteway

"And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof, And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." Genesis 2:21-24.

rue love; everyone wants it, but how do you know if you have it? There are many ways for you and your spouse to express your love, you can say it by words, candy and flowers, but this alone doesn't prove your hearts to be true. The only way to know if you have true love is to see whether it stands the test of time. Has it weathered life's busyness? Has it withstood the pressures of job, family and home? Time alone will tell. There is a saying, "there is proof in the pudding." A

loving marriage speaks aloud for itself. You will know the level of your commitment to each other by the way you live out your lives together day by day, expressing your love in every possible way, respecting and encouraging each other, and serving each other every moment, hour by hour.



Over time you both will determine whether your love is everlasting. I John 3:18, "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth." Let's not just talk about love; let's practice love and prove our love sincere and lasting. Let life's experiences draw you both closer to each other. Isaiah 64:8, "But now, O LORD, thou art our Father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand." Marriage can be viewed as a similar work in progress. Like the clay, you and your spouse will constantly face various pressures from life—job changes, financial stress, responsibilities as parents, and the list goes on. But remember your Heavenly Father is using these times to build up your relationship and make it stronger, and causing your love to deepen for each other.

Proverbs 25:11, "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver." Never let a day go by without saying, "I love you." Words are powerful; take time every day to say this to one another. Daily reminders will fill your hearts and lift your spirits, and this is nurturing to your relationship. Poets have searched for words to express love; this phrase seems the best of all, "I love you."

Developing similar interests, sharing experiences, enjoying life and having fun together helps to bind your heart and relationship even closer. Things as simple as traveling or just enjoying a dinner date at a favorite restaurant may help cultivate this bond. It is the quality time that you spend together with your spouse that is saying, "you are the most important person in my life." In some marriages couples spend more time together because they work together, as when a husband and wife are self-employed. This can be a special time—sharing your husband's life's work, working along side by side. Sharing the same interests really strengthens the marriage bond. There are many memories that you will cherish together when you spend a lot of time with each other. Make time for each other, you will be rewarded with a closer, happier life. No matter what occasion, just as long as you spend quality time with your spouse. Psalm 128:3, "Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house; thy children like olive plants round about thy table."

Everyone has problems; just stay together and work them out. In the very best of marriages you will sometimes disagree with each other. God will provide one of you with insight to understand your partner's needs. Talk to the Lord about everything. God alone can help you through every situation and strengthen your love. Ask God to be your partner in

your marriage today, and you will have a bright future for all your tomorrows. Psalm 121:1-2, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth." A good marriage takes three partners: husband, wife and God. Always remember that God is on your side. He wants you to be the happiest that you can be. God gave you your spouse to bless your life.

Always be best friends with your partner. What is a best friend? Some friends will be in your life for a time, and family members will also walk with you for awhile along life's road and then depart. But Proverbs 18:24 says, "...there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." With your spouse you will find that best earthly friend, who will always be there by your side, and one day you will share the journey's end. God has blessed you with a friend for life; nourish that love and friendship. God has given you that person to love. Ecclesiastes 4:10 says, "For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow...." Your truest friend is the one who has reached out and helped you and stood by your side no matter what life has brought, or what has happened to you in your life. A loving spouse will pull you up, tell you your worth as a person, and encourage you to go ahead and try again.

Your best friend is the one you want to be with the most, the one who you want to talk to first whether your life's road is smooth or rough, the one with whom you want to share your thoughts and feelings, the one from whom you seek advice. Proverbs 17:17, "a friend loves at all times...." God has given you a spouse to fulfill all of these deepest needs.

Pray with each other daily. When you kneel together and pour out your hearts, this will bring a closeness as you

feel the other's concern for you. You are inviting God's power to protect and provide and guide your lives. What more meaningful thing could we do for the person we cherish? When you hear the other one praying for you, asking the Lord to help you and bless you, you realize again how much you are loved. Praying with your spouse has a strong emotional effect on you. James 5:16, "... The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

Proverbs 13:4, "... The soul of the diligent shall be made fat." Those who work hard will prosper and be satisfied. A hard working nature is the fruit of a godly man, and the Lord will use such a man to provide for your needs for food, clothing and shelter, making you feel safe, secure and loved. In Proverbs 31, the wife is described as a noble character, a woman who applies herself to her duties with enthusiasm, works very hard to care for her husband and family and diligently manages the affairs of the home. Both partners working hard together will strengthen their marriage commitment, love, and family.

When you take your husband's hand, there may be no words spoken, but the power of emotion that the years have given you will be there; it will be worth everything. Never underestimate the power of holding hands. Words do not always have to be spoken. Take every opportunity to hold the hand of the one you love so much, the one that has always been by your side.

II Corinthians 9:6, "...He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." Everlasting love in a marriage will be sowed by a lot of hard work, as well as happiness. With great joy you will reap the benefits of a

loving family, along with the precious grandchildren. You will see the great blessings as time goes along. Devote time and energy into your love with your spouse and your marriage will be blessed.

Our greatest blessing is having God in our lives and finding His great salvation. Next to that, He gave us marriage to enrich our joy and allow us to experience EVERLASTING LOVE.

The Power of the Virtuous Woman

Sis. Connie Flynn

"And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." Genesis 2:18.

he woman was created as man's equal, being created an intelligent human being. She was neither above him nor below him. In the virtuous woman, Proverbs 31, we find a perfect example of what God intended woman to be . "Her price is far above rubies."

After the fall of man, we know that God punished Eve by making her a subordinate to her husband. Note that Eve received her punishment before Adam received his. She was the one who listened to satan and became convinced that they didn't have to do as God said in not partaking of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. She also was given the punishment of multiplied sorrow in child-bearing. God cut her no slack, and we also will suffer greatly when we go against God's plan for us.

Because we, as women, were created as an equal to the man, we possess intelligence. Too many times we feel we can be the head instead of him. We might like to make him the subordinate, but God set things in order, and it will never change. No matter how much we may feel we are superior to our husbands, we are out of order when we try to usurp authority over the man.



"The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life." Proverbs 31:11-12. We women have it within our power to be an influence to our husbands and children for good or for evil. True women of God will work to keep their husbands in the place God put him while also being an example before their children that will point them toward God. I believe Eve must have recognized that she possessed a power that could sway Adam, for she surely went to him with the temptation the serpent brought to her. Why didn't the serpent go straight to Adam? Perhaps he knew the woman could do a better job of influencing Adam than he could.

Let us now go to some other scriptures and notice a truth that is so lacking in the world today. "...The contentions of a wife are a continual dropping." Proverbs 19:13. "Every wise woman buildeth her house; but the foolish plucketh it down with her hand." Proverbs 14:1. "It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman in a wide house." Proverbs 21:9.

God has a design that is beautiful, so fulfilling and rewarding to us if we will follow His plan. The Bible tells us to reverence our husbands (Ephesians. 5:33.) This does not mean that we worship him, but that we respect him. You might say, "But what if he doesn't conduct himself in a way that I can truly respect him?" We must rely on a close walk with our God to give us answers and wisdom on how to handle our individual circumstances. We must be on our knees before God often to get leadings and directions from Him on how to respect the place that the husband holds.

The godly woman wants her husband to *safely trust in her . . . that she will do him good . . . all the days of her life.* What a responsibility! She might have to step up and take on some responsibilities that he has left lacking, but she should always do so in a way that he will not feel she is trying to take his place. She can insert some word here and there that expresses her respect for him in whatever area she can find to do so. He might be negligent in keeping things in good repair at home, but may be a good provider, etc. Seek God to find ways to show him respect but still fill the place as you need to

Colossians 4:6: "Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man." We sometimes live as if it said "except if it be thy spouse."

Psalm 19:14: "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer."

my strength, and my redeemer."

Matthew 12:34: "... for out of the abundance of the

heart the mouth speaketh."

Proverbs 31:26: "She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness."

Let us watch the meditations of the heart. Too many times we women choose to nag (that "continual dropping".) In doing this, we do not build our houses, but we tear them down. Why? Doesn't he need to be told when he isn't doing his part? Yes, we can seek the Lord on how to do it in a way that we do not violate any of the Scriptures. But God didn't design man to withstand continual nagging, chiding, fussing, etc. When we start this and continue to do so, we get into a habit of nagging about things that are not of importance and can get under the influence of a wrong spirit. When we do this, we are tearing down something in our home which we are going to regret down the line. We can break down emotions and strengths in a man, which will cause great sorrow in the home. If we have a tendency to be bossy, we should ask God to help us in this area. We may feel that we have won the battle when we talk down to our husbands and work him over with our mouths, but we are tearing down something very vital in our relationship. Instead, when we come to the end of it all, it is so blessed to have worked on ourselves and have our husband's heart safely trusting in us. Flirtiness, bossiness, talking down to our husbands, harsh words, jealousy, dressing to show the body, etc., are not part of the virtuous woman.

The virtuous woman rises early and *giveth meat to her household* . . . (Proverbs 31:15.) She is up, preparing a meal for her family, instead of letting her husband and children get it for themselves while she is lazy. She is working and planning for her household and seeing to it that all are properly cared for. She makes sure the children have proper clothing. She is a good manager of the finances so that there is no lack; again, "her husband doth safely trust in her."

II Peter 1:4-7 speaks of being partakers of the divine

nature and "...giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue" (moral excellence, goodness, high character;) "and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity."

These scriptures show a picture of the virtuous woman. She does not go out and spend money on frivolous things at the expense of necessities. We can get into a spirit of unnecessary spending and bring problems to the family. I've heard of some who would go shopping often and just had to buy something, though it was totally unnecessary. One said she was almost helpless to stop spending, and it brought much contention between her and her husband. Within her own power, it was something she almost couldn't break. This is much like an addiction. It is a spirit that will take control of us if we don't guard against it. Let us beware of these traps of the devil. He knows our weaknesses and will take advantage of us if we are not always on guard.

Titus 2:4-5 instructs that we are to love our husbands and our children. We are to be *discreet* (careful in our words and actions; wise), *chaste* (morally pure, innocent), *keepers at home* (what a great job we have!), *good* (excellent, of high quality) and *obedient* to our own husbands so that the Word of God will not be blasphemed.

Oh, now where do we stand on this one? In this age of "women's lib," being in subjection to our husbands is becoming something very few of our newer generation know anything about. God didn't intend us to be "door mats," so to speak, of which our husbands can demand anything he so desires out of selfishness. But we are to recognize him as the head of the home and show him we expect him to fulfill his duties in being the man God designed him to be.

The virtuous woman is a strong woman whose whole heart is toward God and His desires for her. She, through the power of God working in and through her, can stand as an example in the home so that her husband and her children rise up and call her blessed. There is a popular saying, "The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world." There is much truth in this.

Let us manifest the fruit of the Spirit in the home: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. Where in the Bible does it give us the right to be a grouch, sharp with words, petty, peevish, selfish? We might say, "But there are times when I don't feel well, and he just needs to understand that." Yes, there are those times. But why can't we speak kindly and show gentleness and meekness even when we feel badly? Let us slay self, for self is so ugly.

Have you ever seen an adult acting like a spoiled child? It's ugly, to say the least. If this is the way we are tempted to act sometimes, this is the time to go to the closet and give SELF a real slaying with a season of earnest prayer. We must do that every time we're tempted to act out of order. Ask God to take full control of you, and ask for this every day. Self destroys. Godliness always builds up. When we continue to work on ourselves and deny self, we will find after a while that we are not bothered with self as much. "...Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you..." James. 4:7-8.

God is a loving Father who is moved with compassion toward a child who is doing his best, and He will meet us every time we come to Him. Ask for greater victory in your life and He will be right there to guide and help you through.

What greater power do we want than that our husbands recognize us as teammates (not competitors), our children recognize us as the true godly guide of the home, and greatest of all, God recognizes us as that true child of His, whose heart is totally given to Him?

Again I would like to say God set up this plan and nothing else will work. He knew the perfect order of things, set it up that way, and it will never change. We do well to recognize this and fill our places as strong women of God, filling the home with Godly virtues—as only a Godly woman can do.

Keeping Our Secret Garden

Sis. Brenda Wilkins

"And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." Genesis 2:18.

od, the creator of all, created in us mortal beings the desire and hearts yearnings to share our life with someone special. That desire came straight from the heart of our God, who is Love.

God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him (Genesis 1:27.) We are a reflection of God's own heart. Adam Clarke says, "We are the masterpiece of God's creation."

In Genesis 2:15 it says, "And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it." The word husband comes from the word husbandman. A husbandman is a caretaker of a garden or vineyard. Eden was a perfect place, a place of beauty that God created for man and woman to share with Him. Did you notice God

said, ".. to dress it and keep it"? Even Eden, in all of its perfection and splendor, needed man to maintain it, to cultivate it and to see to the keeping of it!

Intimacy between a husband and wife, ordained and blessed by God, is likened to a secret garden of love. The plan is beautiful, it's fulfilling and it needs our dressing. God decreed that husband and wife should leave their parents, cleave to each other and come together in companionship and intimacy and become one flesh (Genesis 2:24.) God ordained that we understand this special oneness—this bond of unity—and never feel complete one without the other. Eve was formed from Adam's rib and each was a completion of the other. Only together can we truly fulfill the God ordained plan for our lives as a couple.

God said His plan for creation was good (Genesis 1:31.) Every aspect of marriage is included in that plan. As Eden is a secret place, the intimate relationship of man and woman was created only for husband and wife, created for the first man and woman in their original state of purity.

God Ordained Intimacy!

The world's standard for sexual intimacy is little more than lust. Satan takes everything that God ordained as beautiful and tries to pollute it. Satan has exploited the unique intimacy that God created for husband and wife and distorted the truth of it. We must remember **it was created by God.** God made love pure, beautiful and a precious expression of sharing between husband and wife. We need to look at God's standard for intimacy and cherish the keeping of it. In Hebrews 13:4, God said that sexual intimacy within marriage is pure; it's honorable and the bed undefiled. When

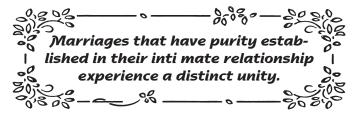
we comprehend the beautiful plan ordained by God we can overcome the demeaning standards of satan. Our perfect God created us as sexual beings, and He planned everything for our good and pleasure. God created us with sexual desires and designed our bodies for sexual intimacy. God loves to bless us when we stay within the confines of His plan for creation. We have a sacred gift that we, as women of godliness, have kept for our husbands, and we can enjoy giving it. Proverbs 5:18-19 says we are to be a joy to our husbands. Here is an example of a husband that is rejoicing and saturated in the love of his wife. But, as in a garden, we must keep it! We must work to maintain its beauty. This beauty is fragile and without proper care and maintenance it will wither and die. Magnificent gardens take time to be established. They do not wane with age; they only become more beautiful.

Love Is Pure!

One of the keys to nourishing our garden of love is purity. Just as we protected our gift of love for our future husbands before marriage, we must value and esteem it after marriage. We must continually guard the gate of this secret garden of intimacy from the standard of the world and the temptations of the devil. So many young couples are tricked by the devil to let down this guard after marriage. Anything that is not pure in content, whether in music, in reading material, the places we go, the things we do, our actions with the opposite sex, the things we watch or the clothes we wear, will plant seeds of death into our secret garden of love. Especially tempting is the idea, "It's okay to watch this with my husband, we are married and it will enhance our marriage."

Sexual toys, objects, acts or practices that are demeaning, abusive or cruel to either spouse do not belong in the garden God created specially for His creation.

Anything less than purity only promotes lust. Lust breeds selfishness. Selfishness is the greatest destroyer of marriage. Lust hinders us from giving our all to our mate because we have given room for the object of that lust.



Placing a high esteem and value on purity helps avoid temptations the devil places in our pathway. Let your husband know how much you value and appreciate being his and his alone. If mistakes and sins have been committed in the past or before marriage, it is crucial to seek forgiveness and let God heal and recreate a standard of purity in your home and relationship.

God's Plan is Perfect

Following God's plan to love and nourish my marriage, to be a helpmeet to my husband in the daily cares of life, and taking time to understand my God-ordained place as a wife, sets the tone for a beautiful, intimate relationship with my husband. Our secret garden of love will flourish into a place of beauty when we are determined to eradicate any seeds of distrust, selfishness and lust germinating there. Marriages that have purity established in their intimate relationship

experience a distinct unity. Gardening takes work and diligence; our garden of intimacy needs careful keeping.

Respect is a vital key to the keeping of our garden. Respect the purity of intimacy with your husband. It is so sad to see the display of passion and intimacy by so many couples, in the form of passion marks, so brazenly portrayed for all to see. This lack of respect for the privacy and beauty of intimacy will destroy purity. It shows a lack of confidence in your mate and yourself. It also fosters temptation and impure thoughts in the men around you. Lack of respect will allow cracks to form in the walls of your secret garden. Don't share the beauty and privacy of your garden with anyone but your husband. Sexual comments and jokes about intimacy from anyone should be repulsive to us as Godly women. We must be quick to place our guard against anything impure and see that only beautiful seeds are allowed to germinate in our garden.

Another key to maintaining our garden is the giving of ourselves. God commanded us as wives to not refuse our husband his marital rights (I Corinthians 7:4-5) except by mutual consent for a time of fasting and prayer. Of course, we understand God is a reasonable and balanced God, and as was stated in a previous chapter, we must not accept or participate in anything that is abusive in any way.

Sometimes women are tempted to use this precious gift that God created for husband and wife as a weapon. God says, "Defraud ye not one the other." We must never withhold ourselves from our husband to punish or manipulate him. We must never take advantage of his need in the areas of intimacy for a selfish reason. God created equality in intimacy. I Corinthians 7:3-4 tells us that we are not our own, but we belong to our husband, and he is not his own, but he belongs

to us. God's plan brings a very meaningful order to the expression of love in mutual self-giving, and there it finds its highest fulfillment. We do not have the power to withhold but to give willingly to our mate because we have become one, and we are to respect our husband as our self.

God created us as women to be loved and desired by our husbands. It is vital to our marriage that we fulfill that desire in the natural and beautiful way God ordained. The Song of Solomon is a beautiful love story. In chapter 7, verse 10 the bride says, "I am my beloved's, and his desire (or ruling appetite and affection) is toward me." If we separate ourselves intimately from our husband without his agreement, we will not have the blessing of God on our life and will not be in obedience to His word.

Plan Time for Your Husband!

Keeping our garden requires time. It is easy to get so stressed out with daily life that we have no time to share with our husband. Plan time together. Put the children to bed early and spend time communicating and sharing your day with him. Plan something special; even sharing a candy bar together brings closeness. Show interest and concern in your husband's career and hobbies. Respond to what is important to him. Sometimes we have to regroup and examine our priorities in our busy cares of the day. After God, our husband is our first priority, and we need to meet his needs first. Never quit winning his love. You will reap great joy in making your husband a priority with your time! The Song of Solomon 2:8-13 is a beautiful reflection of a bridegroom that is enamored with love

for his bride. He enthusiastically cries for her to come and spend some time with him. This Shulamite bride went on to call him her beloved, her friend, (chapter 5:16.) All of this spells time together. Love must be maintained. Mutual satisfaction does not necessarily come automatically; it requires *commitment* and *dressing*. This can only be obtained by making time for our husband. Gardens become ugly when neglected. Time spent on our husband equals a happy marriage.

When God created male and female, He created a very unique and complex combination. Understanding God's creation is not always easy. As women, we sometimes think our husbands will never understand us! We have all heard the saying, "Prayer is the Key." Well, prayer is essential to our attitude, to carry out our God ordained role as Godly women. Prayer moves our will to accept God's will in our role as wives. Prayer keeps our attitude forgiving and accepting of our husband's strengths and weaknesses. God, through prayer, helps us to release our emotions and serve our husbands, **As unto the Lord** (Ephesians 5:22.) When we keep our self in God's will, it will be reflected in our relationship with our mate. As we do God's will in being a helpmeet to our husbands, our attitude will become responsive to them; as I said earlier, it will set the tone for a meaningful relationship. Intimacy will be enhanced in our relationship as we pursue a strong prayer life, both privately and together, with our spouse.

As women we are very emotional beings. It will benefit us to understand that sexual intimacy involves more than just sexual action, but must include the heart and the will. We must not let our emotions rule us. If we want our husbands to be sensitive to our needs, then we must be willing to tell him,

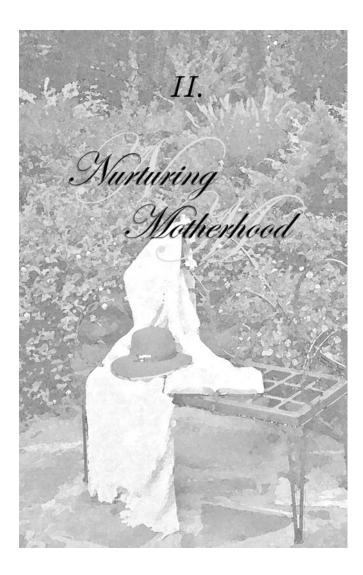
to overcome the pride of fear or humiliation. He cannot read our minds! Ephesians 4:15 tells us to speak the truth in love. This is not a time to demean him but to examine our motives and decide against selfishness. Communication is an act of our will, we choose to share or we choose to build walls. One of the first steps to really communicating with our husbands is to really listen to him. True intimacy in a marriage relationship requires heart to heart communication.

Hints for Helping

Keep your bedroom a special place for only you and your husband; a place that permeates peace and contentment. If at all possible, keep it free from areas of stress and work. The sewing machine or the husband's office would be better in another room of the house. Teach your children early to sleep in their own rooms. Sometimes children need comfort in the middle of the night; it is so easy to just roll over and let them share your bed. It takes real discipline to crawl out and stay with them in their own rooms for a time of comfort and prayer. Once the child learns you will not permit them to stay with you, they soon will stop coming to your bed. This takes perseverance, but otherwise you lose a privacy that is meant only for you and your husband. Keep your bedroom clean and neat, don't allow the children to use it for a playroom. Keeping the bedroom a pleasant, special place creates an atmosphere of closeness and harmony.

God ordained for us to enjoy our husbands and to take pleasure and satisfaction in each other. When we understand that intimacy is a God-given gift—for us to become one flesh, to form a bond and closeness in marriage, and to fulfill His plan to replenish the earth—we come close to

understanding the heart of God. For God is Love! Just as God created the beautiful Garden of Eden for the first husband and wife, He has given to us, dear wives, a precious garden in which we can be a helpmeet to our husbandman with dressing and keeping.



For Mothers Of Sons

Sis. Anita Adams

o you know you have a wonderful treasure in your arms? I would have been very disappointed had I not had any sons. So many times, especially after having my fourth son, people offered me sympathy. What I want to share is: "Sons are a great blessing. Enjoy them." I don't have to mow the lawn, carry in wood for the wood stove or all of the groceries. I have strong sons to do that.

Many times, as girls, we were submissive children. Some of that may be partially because we were girls; God tends to make girls more compliant. (However, I have seen some very strong willed girls.)

Boys, by God's design, tend to be more strong-willed. God purposely made men stronger and tougher because His plan is for them to work and provide for the household. They have to be daring, not afraid to try things, in order to do their job well. I have said, "If it had been left up to me, the West would have never been won." Lewis and Clarke's expedition was just too dangerous. That is the reason God created man—to conquer and explore. However, when we compliant mothers

end up with normal sons, we don't understand—at least I didn't. Boys will often do ornery things that a compliant mother would never have thought of doing. She would have been mortified to do something to get herself into trouble. Yet they don't seem to care.



I would like to share some areas in which I lacked understanding while rearing my sons, in hopes that it will keep others from making the same mistakes that I have made.

- I. One area still causes me trouble today. It causes me my most guilt, and has sent me to the altar more than once! I trained them—and myself—to wait until I had taken all I could handle before I really cracked down and required obedience. Ecclesiastes 8:11 reads, "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." When we fail to gently but firmly demand obedience immediately, we are allowing our sons' hearts to become fully set to do evil.
- II. Notice, I said *trained*. That was something that had not registered with me. If I didn't do anything, I was training them. If I didn't make them pick up their toys, then I was training them that Mother will pick up the toys. If I allowed

them to ignore me the first time I spoke, I was training them that they didn't have to respond just yet. If I allowed them to get by with disobedience, I was training them that next time I didn't mean what I said either. We are training them every second we are with them. Somehow that didn't register with me early on, and I felt that I could let some things slide and catch them later. But when later came, both my sons and I were trained. I found it is harder to un-train unwanted behavior than it is to train desirable behavior!

- III. Another area that I failed to realize the seriousness of was the need for attacking bad attitudes early on. Sometimes it looks cute; sometimes we may feel it is just a stage and they will outgrow it. Sometimes we may just not be in tune with our sons enough to recognize it before it grows into a wrong disposition. I have found that dispositions tend to only get bigger unless they are corrected early in life. I feel that I did more correcting for wrong rather than trying to train and mold the disposition. Had I worked on the disposition, perhaps the wrong doing wouldn't have taken place. Attitudes and dispositions are vital to our ability to get along in life.
- IV. Beware of the Momma Bear mentality. We mothers tend to be very protective of our baby cubs, thinking, "Daddies are just too strong and require too much of our babies. They don't understand!" I have found with time, though, that daddies have a very good insight into the strong nature that God has given our sons and know much better how to make men out of them. We must remember that the ultimate goal for our sons is that they become MEN. I would encourage you to trust your husband's judgment when it

comes to training his sons. It is very unfair to run interference as a mother, then when you are at wits end and totally exasperated, turn them over to him. It may then be too late if we have run too much interference, and they are now teenagers. How much better to let him have more input early on and thereby help us avoid those exasperating times.

- V. My sons would run from me when I would correct them or in order to avoid correction. I guess this is an age old problem because I can remember Grandma telling about Uncle Donald running from her. She would be right behind him, switching him, and saying, "Run, Donald, run!" He finally stopped and said, "Do I have to, Mother?" This MUST be conquered early on, for soon they will be able to out run you. When they run from you, they are actually showing resentment at your correction, and the will has not been conguered. My mother told me to require them to bend over a chair, etc. to receive their swats. This takes some time to train, but they soon learned that they received fewer swats if they would bend than if they didn't. Sometimes this resentment is shown by the child muttering under their breath. One may have to call them back to the correction spot and apply more swats so that they will resign to the correction without resentment. Resentment can turn into rebellion as they become teenagers, so it is most important that we conquer resentment early in life.
- VI. PRAYER, PRAYER AND MORE PRAYER. God can give direction in correction and also melt their hearts. We have prayed together about dispositions and, many times, my own failings. I have prayed with them and asked them to pray with me.

VII. Ask forgiveness. None of us will be that perfect mother that we want to be. When you realize that you have really failed, you must go back and ask forgiveness. Let them know that while their disobedience was not right, you didn't respond as you should have either. Many times we are teaching them how to ask forgiveness by the way we ask their forgiveness, so make sure you state clearly what you did wrong.

VIII. Let your Yea, be Yea, and your Nay, Nay... (a portion of Matthew 5:37.) Boys will constantly reason with you. If they ask you if they can do something and you give them a good reason why you don't want them to do it, they will automatically come back with an answer. For instance, maybe you tell them that they might get hurt; they immediately respond, "Oh no, Momma, we won't get hurt. We'll be careful." or, "I know how to take care of myself." As mothers, we have to recognize that they will do this. Don't get drawn into their reasoning strategy. Say what you mean, and mean what you say. If you say, "No," then stick with it and don't allow them to reason you into saying, "Yes." They may continually repeat the question, trying to get the answer they want. Make sure your answer is consistently the same.

The last thing to remember is to love them dearly, treasure them, and ask the Lord to make up for those areas where you either fail or are ignorant. With lots of love, prayer and God's dealings, they will make it to adulthood and become productive young men.

In closing I would like to share a poem my Grandma Probst shared with me after our fourth boy was born. So many poems show girls as everything nice and boys as trouble. I do not know the author or the tune, but it is true. Sons are heaven sent.

That Little Boy of Mine

A tiny turned up nose Two cheeks just like a rose So sweet from head to toe That little boy of mine.

Two eyes that shine so bright
Two arms that hug me tight
Two lips that kiss goodnight
That little boy of mine

Chorus

No one will ever know just what his Coming has meant Because I love him so, he's something Heaven has sent

He's all the world to me when he Climbs upon my knee
To me he'll always be
That little boy of mine.

Obedience

Sis. Charlotte Huskey

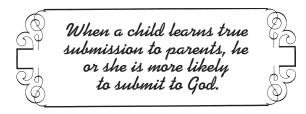
"Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord."

Colossians 3:20.

Obedience is the foundation stone on which any person keeps a relationship with Christ. Therefore it is very important that children learn to obey. God says in I Samuel 15:22-23 "... to obey is better than sacrifice... for rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness (insubordination) is as iniquity and idolatry..." There is a great blessing in obedience, but rebellion and stubbornness bring a curse.

Obedience is the first commandment with promise (Ephesians 6:1-2.) When a child learns true submission to parents, he or she is more likely to submit to God. The goal of every Christian parent is to train each child to let Christ be Lord of their life. However, a great part of obedience is learned through example. All the care, love, prayers, training, and biblical devotions have little effect on children whose parents are

not submissive to Christ and other authorities in their lives. Knowing to do good does not guarantee right conduct. Training is the easy part. The rewards are given for doing. Living in submission to the authorities that Christ has placed in our lives can be challenging, but it will make obedience attractive to children.



Even parents who are in obedience to God will find it hard to bring some children into submission because some are not people pleasers but naturally selfish or just freedom lovers. Sometimes, however, children are insubordinate because parents, in reality, are encouraging disobedience while trying to get the child to obey. This is very stressful to both parent and child. Here are three principles that, if followed consistently, may reduce stress and increase willful submission.

Principle One

When a child is spoken to in a way that requires an answer or action, always, always, always expect an immediate and complete response. Children often disobey because they have conveniently not heard or habitually ignore mother's voice. Sometimes, however, they may not have understood what is expected. Every child should respond politely when spoken to by any authority, then clear instructions can be given.

The mother or father who first coaxes, then threatens, finally punishes a little, or bargains, is fostering stubbornness and encouraging disobedience. Their hope for compliance is great, but the will to enforce it is weak. Is this mercy on the parent's part or laziness? Mercy could not be so cruel as to encourage habits of rebellion that will cause the child trouble all his life. And how is it that a child will obey the third time but not the first?

When parents consistently require first-time obedience, the child knows when he will be punished. When parents repeat, bargain, and threaten to get obedience, the child is kept in continual confusion. Consequences are no longer tied to disobedience, but to the mood and whim of the parent. This is very undermining, because children often believe God has the same characteristics as their parent. Are our eternal rewards dependent upon God's mood on the day we die—or upon our obedience? No one wants their child to believe they'll be rewarded according to God's good or bad days. But that is just what they will believe if we require first-time obedience one day and fourth-time obedience another day.

Bribing can also encourage disobedience. Bribing is different from goal incentives. Goal incentives help children take responsibility for their obedience. Children should be rewarded for obedience, but should not be obedient just to gain a reward. There is a difference. Children who have been bribed to obey tend to be self-oriented and manipulate others. They seek rewards and serve others only when there is something in it for them. A child should obey in obedience to God and not for personal gain. Bribing is training the child to have unrighteous characteristics.

Principle Two

Never give a command unless you intend for it to be obeyed. The perfect way to <u>train a child to be disobedient</u> is to give instructions that you will not enforce. Before speaking, consider carefully what you are requiring. Is it possible? Is it appropriate? Is it pertinent for the situation? Then give the command and see that it is obeyed. When the child is concentrating on other things, give a time-related warning. Sometimes allow a little discussion for good understanding, but don't let yourself be caught negotiating in conflict.

Children love negotiating in conflict. Choose your commands well, then hold to them. Total obedience produces joy. Half-obedience leaves both child and parent frustrated. If we negotiate the standard when the child objects, there is no true surrender, only an agreed upon suspension of conflict. Without a complete surrender, there will always be a member ready to wage war. Never negotiate in conflict.

A child's willingness to accept total submission to authority is the first step to freedom or self-rule (which is the desire of almost every child.) The child must first surrender his will to his parent's desires. Then he can surrender his will to God's will, as directed by the parent. When this is mastered, he or she is able to have certain freedoms.

Misuse of compassion is another way parents foster disobedience. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." Ecclesiastes 8:11. Be watchful and alert to little deeds that seem innocent and correct them, even in very small children.

Inappropriate behavior should be stopped when it first appears; before it takes root in the heart. Tolerance of behavior

such as repeated disobedience, deceit, disrespect for authority, stealing in the home, shirking responsibility, etc., fosters criminal characteristics. Repeated spankings are better than any jail term. "Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell." Proverbs 23:14.

Principle Three

Be sure your command is clearly understood. Require eye contact if possible. Then require a verbal response, "Yes, Mom," or "Yes, Sir." Some children also need to be touched while listening to instructions. It is good to have instructions repeated back to you. Routine requirements also makes obedience easier for any child. Older children do well with written instructions.

Children should obey immediately, completely, without challenge, and without complaint. Is this possible? Yes. God has never given a command that He does not give strength to obey. Please note that following the command for children to "obey in everything," the parents are warned to not "provoke their children to anger, lest they be discouraged" (Colossians 3:20-21.) Coaxing, threatening, bargaining, bribing, negotiating in conflict, misuse of compassion or mercy, and parental inconsistencies will surely provoke children. And it could easily cause them to be discouraged.

Children want parental approval. Their feeling of acceptance and approval is directly related to the standard of behavior required by their parent. This is especially true in without-challenge obedience. A child who meets these high standards of obedience receives approval not only from his or her parents but also from society. This approval makes obedience attractive to the child.

Don't allow yourself to think that some children will not obey. I have heard parents say, "I cannot get John to obey." You are sinning when you do this. Take him by the hand and force his hands to do whatever you have commanded. This isn't hard when the child is one or two years old, but after years of inconsistent training you will have some problems. Don't give up. Older children in whom unrighteousness has been fostered through ignorance or neglect may have developed bad habits that will take time and patience to break. "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." James 4:7.

Disobedience is sin just as is devil worship, witchcraft, stealing, murder, etc. (I Samuel 15:23.) Allowing disobedience is also sin. Repent for allowing your child to ignore your commands or shirk their responsibilities. The child's soul is in your hands, don't allow yourself to train him or her to be disobedient (ungodly).

If you have not been enforcing your commands, ask God for more strength. Then require a higher standard. Be consistent; give clear requirements and stand your ground when they are challenged—and they will be. God will help you to turn uncooperative teenagers into self-motivated obedient ones.

Are you completely obedient to Christ? Have you found peace in being submissive to the authorities in your life? Unless you have, that spirit of rebellion (which you may not realize exists) will surely effect your children. Your children may conform to your wishes and show outward obedience, just as you attend church service, and outwardly conform to its standards. But are you submissive in your heart? Don't expect your children to be truly submissive to you unless you are totally consecrated to God.

Discipline

Sis. Tammy Williamson

have felt a burden for some time for our children. I would like to share with you some of the things that have been a help to me. I have felt some hesitation because I do not think that I have all the answers, nor have I done everything right. I have had to apologize to my children on many occasions.

The simplest advice that I have given out is Be CONSISTENT! Whatever you tell your child, you need to stick to it—or explain why you changed your mind. The child needs to know that when Mommy or Daddy tells them something, they mean it—the first time that it is said. He should not be allowed to wait until he is ready to do what you ask.

I would advise to avoid the counting method. A child that is used to the counting method knows that he has a time period to do what he has been asked to do. It is teaching a child that he really does not have to do it now. This is teaching the child the power of being in control and that he really doesn't have to obey quickly. Many times the parent gives

up, and then the child has learned that he can dilly-dally and get by without consequences.

A parent should not make wild threats like, "If you do this, you will not get to play outdoors for a month!" A child that hears this type of statement often will respond with something sarcastic. In my experience, when I would go to the top of the wall when frustrated, my child would call my bluff, and then there wasn't much recourse left. I had already thrown out the worst possible consequence, so either I make another wild statement or back down. Don't threaten something that is not within reason. We do these things when we are out of control ourselves, and the child realizes this. What ends up happening is both the parent and child are out of control. These are the times to remember the scripture, "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Ephesians 6:4.



When we ask our child to do something, we should see to it that our child is doing the *intent* of what we asked. "Go to your room," does mean *go to your room*, and it means *every* body part is to be in the room. Our child is testing us when he is leaning out of the room with just a toe or a foot left in the room. A child should be expected to follow the intent of the instruction—not find every loophole that he can think of.

As a whole, I do not believe that we give our children as much credit for their intelligence as we should. Many times,

they know and understand much more than we believe. As a small child, they should be taught what "no" means and have their hands swatted for continuing to reach for something. When they start shaking their head as they are reaching, we can be assured that they are aware that this is something that is a "NO!" Children can start learning as young as seven or eight months what "no" means.

I cannot emphasize enough how important it is to be consistent. Do not give up! It does not matter whether we are tired or not. We are still mothers, and our job is to train our children. It is very tiring and emotional at times. It is also rewarding! I believe that one of the reasons why mothers should be keepers at home is that it is a full time job; it requires all our time to properly train our children and keep our homes. "That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed." Titus 2:4-5.

I want to interject here that love is a key ingredient. Notice that the verse says to love their children. Matthew Henry's Commentary states: "... not with a natural affection only, but a spiritual, a love springing from a holy sanctified heart and regulated by the word; not a fond, foolish love, indulging them in evil, neglecting due reproof and correction where necessary, but a regular Christian love, showing itself in their pious education, forming their life and manner aright, taking care of their souls as well as of their bodies, of their spiritual welfare as well as of their temporal, of the former chiefly and in the first place" (Titus 2:4-5.)

I have seen the times when I was not able to get much done in the home because I would be in a "battle" with one of

my children. This is not the time to give up; our child must submit his will to us; by this he learns how to submit to God when he is older. A child that never properly learns submission to authority will struggle in his spiritual walk. We must not ignore our child at this time or act like we don't see him. Our guidelines should be the same today as yesterday. We should not set guidelines that suit our own personal conveniences or feelings. Our child has to learn to bend his will to our authority. We don't want to break his spirit, but his will needs to be in submission to our will. We are God's extended arm in our home. It is our job to teach, guide and discipline our child. We are to be in authority over our child.

Sometimes, it is hard to define exactly when explaining crosses over into arguing. We need to keep arguing to a minimum. Our children must learn to express their feelings to us in a respectful way, and we need to listen. I know this is hard to do sometimes because we just want them to "do what we say." But our goal should be obedience, and we must work on achieving that goal.

Children do appreciate boundaries, especially if we hold those boundaries in love and firmness. Children need to feel our love and be secure in that. Lord, help us to surround our children in our unconditional love! I have had to humble myself to my children on many occasions when I stepped over the line or didn't listen when I should have and just "laid down the law." It did humble me when one of my children prayed very sincerely, "Lord, please help mommy be more kind."

Another area in which I have felt concern is that we mothers realize that these are *our* children and *our* responsibility. It is *my job to teach my child*. I am not saying that there are not occasions for them to spend time with grandma, but it should

not be because our child hinders us from getting anything done. Our children need to feel wanted and loved by us, to know that we are so thankful that they are in our family and are not a burden to us. It is so easy for mothers to get stressed, and children can be made to feel it is their fault that mommy doesn't feel good. Having quiet time each day is a good break for mommy and child.

Concerning church services, I have learned some lessons that I would like to share with you. When we were having problems with our first child, at eighteen months old, being loud in service, I was told that we should never let our child's feet touch the floor. (I tried it with my next two and it did work for us.) We were told one Sunday, after service, that if we would spank her more at home, then we would not have so many problems. Also on the same Sunday, someone that had seen my husband outside spanking our daughter told us that it upset them so much that they could not even come into service. We were ready to quit going to service. We felt like a failure, and we were getting conflicting advice.

The Lord let us know that we had to make quiet time at home. She had been used to just being free at home; when we went to service she did not like being confined. So that week, I put our eighteen month old on the sofa. At first, I had to sit there and hold her on the sofa. I would whisper, "This is quiet time." I would put a tape of Sunday school songs on that lasted around 30 minutes. I gave her a catalog to look at. I made her sit there for the entire tape. Every time she tried to talk, I would whisper to her, "We have to be quiet!" We did this at least three times a day. By the next Sunday, we were ready for service. She had made a marked improvement. For years after that all I had to do was go put that certain tape in, and all my children would go get on the sofa and sit there quietly. Thank

the Lord for giving us answers when we are desperate.

We need to remember that church service is not the time for "little Johnny" to show off all of his newly learned talents and all the happy noises that he can make. This is not the time for our cute baby or toddler to be on display and the center of attention. We want the Lord to be in that place. (To be honest we really do want people to notice how adorable and brilliant our baby is! So let's get together *after* service and talk about what they just learned this week. Hint: Don't leave grandma out of the talkfest, because she can be our children's best fan.)

Obviously, the chapel is not the place for your child to pitch fits without receiving parental correction. If we are having trouble hearing over our child's noise, we can be assured that everyone around is having the same trouble. If we cannot quickly get our child quiet, then we should remove him from the service until we have him under control again. When everyone starts turning around to see the source of the commotion, and we want to sink through the floor, this is probably a good time to make an exit. This is not the time to turn him loose to play in the nursery, or he will learn very quickly that going out is fun. Children should be tended to and brought back into service. What adds to the quandary is when our child doesn't understand the first time, and we do not even get full contact on the pew before the next wail starts. This will add to the embarrassment and feeling that everyone is looking, but this is a good time to just make another exit and try again to get your child to understand that it is not fun to go out!

Folks with hearing aids have been known to say that crying or loud babies make it very hard for them to come, because they feel like they are about to jump out of their skin at every sudden noise. However, it takes grace on everyone's part to work with each other in the service. The best way for our children to learn how to behave in service is to be in service.

Please consider not letting your children stand on the bench looking back at the audience. It generally causes a disturbance. They are usually doing things that you are not aware of, making faces, dropping things, etc. I heard about this little tip after my children were past this age: consider taking quiet toys to church in a special bag saved just for church. Then, as they grow, maybe three books, eventually graduating to pencil and paper, and then, of course, to just taking notes.

There are all kinds of philosophies in the world today, which rationalize children's misbehavior. Instead of saying a child is unruly and disobedient, they say they are strong-willed and active. This sounds better, but the results of that type of behavior today will be the same as it was years ago. Childrens egos are not too precious to be told "No!" and to be expected to obey. It will not damage their psyche to be disciplined and held in control. It does not damage a child to spank them in the correct manner. As a matter of fact, if we study the Word, I do not see how, as God-fearing parents, we could not spank our children. It speaks in different places of how to discipline our children:

Proverbs 13:24, "He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes." Proverbs 19:18, "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying." Proverbs 22:15, "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from

him."

Proverbs 29:15, "The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame."

In our modern society, this is not an acceptable mode of discipline and look at the results! We have more rebellious and disrespectful children. I believe that if we will concentrate on our children from birth until around three years of age, we will see positive results. Make this period a time to bond, a time to set the boundaries, to set the stage for unconditional love, to teach them what you expect. Then you will not have to spank them all day long.

We need to spank until the job is done, not just enough to make the child angry. A child should not look like a thundercloud when you are done. If our child is in that place, then his will is NOT submitted to us, and we have wasted our time—and most likely have caused seeds of rebellion to grow. It is okay for a child to associate a spanking with some pain. It is nonsense that it will teach our child to be violent if we hit or spank them. Our society today calls spankings 'hitting our children.'

A child should not be disciplined in anger. We are to discipline our children because it is our duty and we love them, not because we want to punish them for something they did to get on our nerves. If we discipline in anger, we will cause our children to feel resentment. If this is a common way we discipline, our children will learn to watch our faces and attitudes to determine how they will behave on any given day. If mama is calm and unruffled, then they can do what they want and most likely will not get in trouble. But if mama is in a bad mood, they will have to tiptoe around. This does nothing but teach a child how to beat the system, and they will grow up knowing practically nothing about submitting for the right reasons.

If we are fair and consistent with our children, they will be more likely to honor and respect us, as well as God, when they grow up. We should administer all discipline in love, with strictness but not harshly. A child should not question that mama loves them and does not enjoying watching them suffer. A child needs to know that it is our God-given duty to train them, and we are only doing it because we love them, not because we are bigger and said so.

Proverbs 22:6, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Proverbs 29:17, "Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul."

A child should feel a willingness to cheerfully do what we have asked. A child should not have to be held down to be given a spanking nor be chased around the room. If we start working with our child as a toddler, we will find that it will be much easier for them to do what we ask. We should never allow our child to hit at us, even seemingly in playfulness. A child should never be permitted to say to his parent, "NO!" or "I hate you!" or to make any other type of rebellious statement.

Our children will be more likeable and more likely to succeed in life if they are reared to think of others rather than themselves. Children are born selfish and if allowed to do so, will focus only on what they want. It is human nature and our sin nature, which needs to be purified. From the moment that our child is born, it is our job as parents to start training them. Our prayer is, "Lord, give us wisdom and grace to know how to train our children. Help us to discern what is fair. Help our children to feel the love we have toward them. Lord, would you make up to my children the places where my failings are apparent?"

Love, Spelled T-I-M-E!

Sis. Melonie Whitson

e have probably all heard the saying that love is spelled T-I-M-E. That can be true in our love for God, our husband, our neighbor, and also in our love for our children. The Bible says:

"And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children and shall 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. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates." Deuteronomy 6:6-9.

The dictionary defines diligently as: pursuing with painstaking effort, persistent application to one's duty, proper heed or care.

We may have had mothers of today tell us that they spend "quality" time with their children, implying that we full time mothers have quantities of time but not of great quality. That is a philosophy that the devil would like for us to buy into; "I am a better mom when I am not with my children so much. I have more quality time when I am only with them for a few hours." That doesn't seem to be what the Bible is saying to us.



God wants us to be teaching our children throughout the day—playing with them, working with them, praying with them, singing with them, walking with them....quantities of time.

It takes time together to pass on our values. The window of opportunity to teach and train our children is so narrow. We may have them with us for 18-20 years, but the teaching and training period is even shorter than that. So, the Bible is saying do it, and do it diligently!

Time traveling in the car can be used to memorize verses and review memory work previously learned. Taking walks together can be physical exercise as well as time to share insights and moral values. Playing games together, inside or outside, can be a time to teach good sportsmanship; how to win and lose, and to play by the rules. Working together can make our children feel more a part of the family. Seeing us working with them, not just assigning chores for them to do, makes work more fun, and it becomes more of a teaching opportunity.

Including them in things we do for others is also teaching them to "Do unto others" and to "Love thy neighbor." Take them with you to visit the elderly, take food to a new neighbor, mow the chapel yard or clean the building, volunteer during a

disaster relief effort or bring holiday help to the needy. In doing so, we are modeling for them compassion for others and unselfishness in our thinking. When we include them, they learn to naturally do those things as they become adults.

"Rules without relationship breed rebellion." What a true and powerful statement! If we don't take the time to build a relationship with our children while they are young, then when they become teenagers and we are trying to put restraints on their activities, they are going to say, "Who are you to try to tell me what to do?" How do we build strong relationships with our children? Be with them. Spend time with them. Entertain them. Make home a place where they want to be, a place where they find their favorite people to do things with. Yes, that means we have to read books to them that are on their level, play games with them that they can enjoy, teach them to do what we are doing even though it takes more time and maybe turns out less than perfect. If that means putting aside some of our interests, hobbies, and maybe even career advancement for those few years, we will have no regrets that we took time to have a relationship with our child. Usually, if we live long enough, we will have time for those other things later.

Children need time with their dads, and we as moms can help promote this. When a dad is working two or three jobs to make money, he really isn't available to us or the children. Statistics have proven that as children become teenagers, they get into less trouble with drugs, alcohol, teen pregnancies, homosexuality, and pornography if they have a healthy relationship with their fathers. Mothers protect and shelter, but dads add a necessary dimension to both boys' and girls' lives. They excite, challenge, and teach about the world beyond the home.

A recent e-mail told of satan's tactic to get people trapped into lifestyles which are too busy, leaving no time

for an intimate relationship with God. It was, "Get them to spend, spend, spend and borrow, borrow, borrow." This would keep the husbands and wives working to earn extra money, with no time to spend with God, their children, or each other. As wives, we can help our families avoid this trap.

We need to be careful in our spending and willing to make some sacrifices in order for our husbands to be able to be there for our children. It really is for our own benefit too! We should avoid impulse buying, shop for clothes a season ahead to get the clearance sales of 50-80% off, be happy to drive a less expensive vehicle or an older model, clip coupons, stock up on sale items, drink water when eating out, shop yard sales or thrift stores, cook and eat most meals together at home—whatever works for us. It will be worth the effort if, as a result, we can have the help and input of our husband in bringing up our children.

We can make birthdays and Christmas more special by not buying something for our child every trip to town. They will learn to look, dream, and save for things, instead of wasting money on something that may not last or even be what they want in a few days. Watch for free or cheap entertainment. In most areas, there are things of historical or informative interest all around us. Take advantage of the parks with hiking and picnicking, the free concerts that are sometimes put on by the orchestra, half price or free days at the zoo or museums, programs at the local library. We can have fun together without spending a lot.

Find fun things to learn together; maybe how to play tennis or a musical instrument, or how to garden. Pass on anything we know how to do so that our children will be able to manage and be good stewards of God's money. Dads have many skills that will be invaluable to their sons in the years to come. Take the time to teach them. Save money for building memories on family vacations and trips to camp meeting. Do things as a family, together! We should enjoy our children, love them and spend time with them; whatever we invest now, we will reap the benefits in the years to come.

I was a mother of three small children with only a four year span in age from the oldest to the youngest. I remember how that felt and understand how lonely the confinement of that time can be. If you are a mother of young children now, I want you to know I understand that you need some time to recoup your resources in order to be the best mother you can be. I am not wanting you to feel that I am telling you to be on duty 24 hours a day. That is one advantage of having your husband come home after eight hours or so and give you some help and maybe a break. We are all different, and our needs are unique to our situation. Because our children were near the same age, we could read a book aloud together on winter evenings that was on everyone's level. In summer we could get out and play volleyball, "flies and skinners," croquet, "Around the World,"— whatever—and all be able to play together. Also, our children went to public school, so after a day away, home was a haven for them.

All of our situations are different, and all of our families unique. That is why we need the Holy Spirit as our guide in making right choices for our families. Only He can lead us to the paths that will be wise for our children. I can look back on mistakes I made and things I should have stressed with more diligence and see many things I could have done better by example. The more we realize our own inability to do it right and our need for God to show us the way, the greater can be His role in guiding our steps. God bless all of our families!

Family Worship

Bro. Phillip & Sis. Rosie Gellenbeck

Way our homes be a sanctuary where God is worshiped! Family worship is more than a sit down time of Bible reading; it is a continual attitude of worship in our homes. When God is made Lord of our home, His blessing will be upon us, and many evils and temptations will be avoided. The community in which we live will know that our family is on the Lord's team. Let us be like Joshua who said, "As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." This decision blessed Israel into the next generation. A home that worships the Lord is the most significant tool for imparting our faith to the next generation. As goes the home, so goes the church, so goes the nation.

The altar of worshiping the Lord together should be in place as new homes are established. Learn to enjoy and draw strength from worshiping God together. One (shall) chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight. (Deuteronomy 32:30.) There is great power as husbands and wives acknowledge God's blessings and confess their personal needs. Establish this altar of worship in your home *before* you are blessed with children.

"Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth." Psalm 127:3-4. We are appointed as stewards over their souls, that they may not be devoured by the gods of this world. Hannah had the true heart of a steward. She prepared Samuel and presented him back to the Lord at a very young age. She told her husband, "I will not go up, until the child be weaned, and then I will bring him, that he may appear before the LORD, and there abide forever." I Samuel 1:22. She seemed confident that her labors on his young heart would last for eternity. Let us also aim to prepare our children that they may serve in the Kingdom of the Lord. Send them forth with aim and purpose, as we would send arrows.

As goes the home, so goes the church, so goes the nation.

Proverbs 22:6 says, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." A child's conscience must be trained, "and that right early." Much of a child's intelligence is developed during the first four years. According to some who have studies child development, the most critical year for a child's spiritual life is age five. Around this age he or she will often decide to believe what he has been taught about God or reject it. So what he has been taught before age five is the most important training time of his life.

We must believe this and begin at an early age to train our children.

In these tender years, the child's conscience must be trained to fear the Lord and to care for their own soul, which God has placed in their hand. We teach them to care for their teeth, clothes and personal belongings. We educate our children so they can be good productive citizens. But what value is a good life if their soul is lost in eternity? The soul is most important. It is our place to train in spiritual matters. It should not be left to others or only to the church. What children hear in church should be a confirmation of what they have been taught at home. This reinforcement helps to solidify truth in their hearts.

Many parents send children off to pre-schools and baby-sitters, thinking they are too young to be affected by their environment. They reason, "Children this young do not understand the difference between right and wrong." This is true, but these are the formative years when they are establishing what is right and wrong. We should be even more careful about their environment. Children are soaking up all they see, hear and feel. They are like a video camera, recording almost everything. You are their hero. It is your responsibility to guard your position and their tender minds. "Mark the fool and who is cool," before the fool has a chance to warp your child. Young, glamorous, entertaining babysitters can dethrone you and become the child's role model. Choose babysitters that will believe in and strengthen your values.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 says:

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy

might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them 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. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates."

Mothers, our activities through the day with our children should include conversations about Scriptures and spiritual things. Link daily happenings to spiritual lessons. For example: while washing dishes, say, "The water is like the Word of God. As the water cleans the dirty dishes, God's Word will wash our minds." ("...the washing of water by the word." Ephesians 5:26.) Relating biblical values to daily activities is much like teaching in parables.

As these daily activities occur, we are reminded of spiritual lessons. Every time I pass a wheat field with weeds, I think of "the tares among the wheat." Here is another example someone shared with us: squeeze toothpaste out on the counter, then ask your child to clean it up and put it back in the tube. Yes, that is impossible, but here is a good lesson on our words. Once we let them out, we cannot bring them back.

Fathers should be spiritual leaders of the home, but if they do not take this responsibility, it does not exempt us as mothers. How many testimonies have we heard of children who were saved by the influence of a godly mother? Many fathers would take more leadership if they knew where to start. Mothers can gather materials for lessons and encourage fathers to lead. Be positive toward your husband. Sometimes children prefer mothers because she may read more expressively. We must seek God to do what is best for our family.

Having family worship at home is good training for children—and for father and mother. The best training for church leaders is to lead in family worship. "...If a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?" I Timothy 3:5. If we learn to sing, pray and teach at home, we will have courage to do the same in public. When we learn to worship the Lord at home, then our worship at church springs from a daily reality, not just a show.

Here are some objectives for family worship:

- 1. Teach respect and honor for God and righteous things.
- 2. Teach biblical values and beliefs in a setting they enjoy.
- 3. Produce a desire in our children to <u>want</u> to do the right thing.
- 4. Challenge our children to have purpose in life.
- 5. Help children learn how to arrive at good judgments.
- 6. Quiet them and put them into a "mode of worship" before bedtime.

Ideas for implementing these objectives:

1. Teach respect and honor for God and righteous things.

Honoring God is the first key for receiving anything from Him. When children are small, the discipline of sitting still and listening is teaching them to reverence the Lord. It is important to teach respect for the time of prayer and reading of the Bible; no play among children, eyes closed during prayer. All attention must be given to the Lord. We

have one purpose; worshiping the LORD. When a child learns to sit still and participate, this will be a springboard for good conduct in church and school, as well as many other benefits.

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." True reverence has a sting of fear in it. We reverence those who have power to make our lives better or worse. One cause for the breakdown of Christianity has come from the philosophy that God is too good to send anybody to Hell. God is good, kind, merciful, and magnificent; we serve Him because we love Him. But when the love runs low, the fear will kick in to bring us to true reverence and obedience. Remember Matthew 10:28 says "...but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." When the conscience is trained to reverence and fear the Lord, children are more easily touched during altar call.

Make family worship very important. "Oh consistency, thou art a jewel." When children know life is busy but worship is still high on the priority list, this sends the proper message to our child. They need to know that having a quiet time of Bible reading and prayer is more important than temporal cares and desires.

Consistently honoring and fearing God gives the right platform for our children to communicate with Him by themselves. Also, let your children see Mom and Dad bowing their knees before God—consistently. This is the most important part of the day; it must not be easily crowded out.

Honoring God with praise in song brings life to this time of reverence. For small children, let the signal for worship be a song; one that requires motions. This will cause them to drop their toy and give their attention. Let the "joyful noise" be made. We can express our passion in singing.

2. Teach biblical values and principles in a setting they enjoy.

Deuteronomy 6:7 says, "...And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children..." Diligently in Hebrew meant to do something over and over again, as sharpening an instrument. It is with patience, consistency, and perception of the finished product. Step back and analyze what you are shaping. What do you want to achieve? God will help us to know our children's hearts and to discern their needs.

The words, which we are commanded to teach, must be in <u>our</u> hearts. When the Word is alive in our hearts, we can teach it with emotion and genuine expression. We will never be able to effectively teach something we don't live.

Pray for fresh anointing on worship time. Apply your heart to studying the Word and understanding how to present it. We must apply ourselves to anything we want to do well. Make worship time interesting for your children. Stories, anecdotes, and personal experiences you have had will interest the children. Be sure and relate instances in Scriptures or in books to present day situations, so they can see the value of it. Talk about the consequences of people who rebel against God. Give examples of those who submitted to Him. Be convincing.

With smaller children, animate the lesson or use pictures. Always read with expression. Object lessons are good with all ages. Ask simple questions to keep their attention, difficult questions to stir their minds. You will be surprised what children can grasp. I remember, at age thirteen, being excited about studying Daniel's dream. "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all

these kingdoms..." Daniel 2:44. I was excited to understand the history of these kingdoms and when the kingdom of God was established. A child will adapt to what we expect.

3. Produce a desire in our children to *want* to do the right thing.

We've got to get it right. If our children get the wrong conceptions of spiritual things early on, if they learn to hate the worship of the Lord, we are going to be in trouble. Children can never be forced to serve the Lord, but many times we can produce a desire in them to do so.

Children naturally have a great desire to be like their parents. It is said that children who hear their father read, also learn to love to read. Children pick up on and believe what we are passionate about.

Children are endowed with an abundance of curiosity. Lead them on a venture to discover the treasures of the Lord. Don't cram or threaten; we must lead with joy. Their own curiosity will compel them to follow. Remember that your child is no spiritual giant, so don't be too lengthy. A good length of time for worship is about 20 minutes. "It would be better to be 10 minutes short than 1 minute too long." (Bro. Clifford Smith.) However, if we are reading an interesting story, our children beg to go much longer. We all talk of how much children need quality time with their parents. Family worship is a great opportunity for that.

4. Challenge our children to have purpose in life.

Read about the works of those who have given their lives for christ, such as George Mueller in England. This helps children see a much bigger picture than just their own world. If you read interesting stories from missionary books to your

children, then their idea of salvation will be far greater than just themselves. Life will have a greater <u>purpose</u> and reason.

As they continually hear stories of God's power and answers to prayer, such as the Lord miraculously meeting the needs of the orphanage in England, then the whole picture begins to make sense. They realize, "I was born for a purpose!" Then when they meet with accusations of the devil, and maybe even some failures, it gives them hope to go on.

This is also a place to challenge older children to give a lesson that the Lord has taught them. We know a family where the eldest son led the worship. When the father suddenly died, this son's initiative was a great blessing to the family. When he married and left home the other children realized the great need for family worship to continue. They learned the importance of family worship before they established their own homes.

5. Help children learn how to arrive at good judgments.

Bro. Clifford Smith made these good suggestions: "Discuss questions openly. Play the devil's advocate to get children to think. Don't give them all the answers, and if you don't know the answer, admit it. Be totally honest. Talk about battles they are facing.

"(Family worship) should not be a time to be dogmatic. We tried to teach our children how to arrive at their own conclusions: how to think through the questions; the places you go; social events (for example, our daughter's class had a slumber party.) You go through the logic, the thought processes. What are the pluses and minuses? What about the influences? Entertainment: how will it affect us spiritually? What kind of influences does it have? How will it affect me? Would the Lord be there? How would He feel? How would it affect other people?

"We talked a lot about family life: child raising; marriage; principles of good parenting; how to treat a wife; how to find a companion, and the importance of giving. We often referred to Proverbs. It is a gold mine of down-to-earth advice for everyday living."

Here are a few examples of using Proverbs to teach practical life lessons: Proverbs 3:35 says, "The wise shall inherit glory: but shame shall be the promotion of fools." Proverbs 6:26, "For by means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread:..." Use a few live examples to show the reward of foolish behavior—how a nice home and respectable people can be brought to nothing (a piece of bread) by the foolish behavior of an unfaithful man.

Contrast that with a faithful man. "A faithful man shall abound with blessings..." Proverbs 28:20. When children see the value in taking God's way and the error of the wicked, it will help them make good choices throughout life.

6. Quiet them and put them into a *mode of worship* before bedtime.

This applies to evening worship. They say the last thing on your mind at night is important. This "mode of worship" also tenders their hearts to want to make things right with their siblings. Be keen to sense when the conscience is accused. Talk openly with children and help them know how to live with a clear conscience. Rest is sweet when the conscience is clear. Also, to go to bed knowing that God is near brings a real sense of security.

In conclusion, our sufficiency must be of the Lord. There was a secret Daniel needed to know, or he and all the wise men were going to be put to death. <u>Daniel told his companions about the crisis and they entreated the Lord with him.</u>

They rightly knew they did not have the answer.

Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions: That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven. Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his." Daniel 2:17-20.

Reading on in the next few verses, it tells us that God changes things. "<u>He giveth</u> wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding; <u>He revealeth</u> the deep and secret things:..."—<u>and we praise the Lord for it!</u>

The Lord can help us know the secrets to our children's hearts. This will be through His wisdom, and also with the help and wisdom of our companions in travel: first our spouse, then the trustworthy advice of those who have already succeeded. We should be ready and willing to learn from others.

"A wise man will hear, and will increase learning..." Proverbs 1:5. "Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counselors there is safety." Proverbs 11:14. "Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counselors they are established." Proverbs 15:22. "Yea, if thou criest after knowledge...If thou seekest her as silver...then shalt thou understand..." Proverbs 2:3-5.

We are all in a battle for our children. There is so much at stake!

Diligence in Our Home

Bro. Phillip & Sis. Rosie Gellenbeck

odly homes and families are vital to a strong church. Our effectiveness in doing God's work is in direct proportion to our effectiveness in lifting God up in our homes and ruling them according to His will. Our first mission is in our own home. We must seek God to teach us how to conduct ourselves as husband and wife; to show the proper love and respect for one another. Then, together, we can face the responsibility to train up our children to know, to love, and to serve God.

The Lord has provided us with very effective weapons to enable us to fight a good fight of faith. He wants us to know what these weapons are and He wants us to be skillful in their use. II Corinthians 10: 4-5 says: "(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." These weapons are not carnal; we don't fight with our hands. They are spiritual.

Military weaponry has advanced so much it is mind staggering. Powerful and effective weapons can hit a small target with precision a great distance away. The Lord has given us weapons that are, as it says, "mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds." He is the Master designer.

The Lord has not only given us powerful weapons to use in our homes against the enemy, He even wants to fight our battles for us! He wants to be in our homes and teach us how to use these mighty weapons that can change our lives into something good. Our effectiveness in any endeavor for God comes from our success in the home. I believe the Lord does want us to get married and "live happily ever after," but there are some real battles to be won if we are going to accomplish this.

Although Goliath was a giant, David was not afraid of him. When Saul offered him his own armor, David refused because he had not proved it. But David had proved that God would fight his battles. He confidently went out against Goliath in the name of the Lord. The Lord will also give us victory in our battle to make our home a happy, secure place for our children to be brought up.

I Peter 3:7 says, "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered."

We are in a battle for our children. We want them to live for the Lord, become established and believe the truth. But in spite of all our good desires and prayers for them, our prayers can be hindered. Peter says, in the above scripture, that the husband and wife are to be *heirs together of the grace of life*. The grace of life is given by God. Part of this grace is eternal and part is right here on this earth. The Lord wants to pour

some of the grace of life out on us. It is like the dew of Heaven. It is the thing that makes everything work right. The Lord has so many blessings that He wants to give us through prayer, but many times our prayers are hindered.

When we humble our hearts, it puts a stop to the enemy's work.

Strife, contention, jealousy and unkind words in the home will hinder our prayers. The Lord told us to give "honor to the wife, that our prayers be not hindered." We must not have strife; we are to love one another. He tells husbands, without any qualifications, "Love your wives as your own self; as Christ loved the church."

Sometimes we fail to get on our knees and find grace to help in times of need. The Lord wants us to humble ourselves before Him. Many of us, at times, have had real struggles in our marriages. We all have different personalities but God has given us powerful weapons that will work to use these differences to build successful and happy marriages and homes. I have found that if we humble ourselves before the Lord, He will give us something very wonderful in our home.

In World War II, the allied troops were coming up against Japan. They knew the encounter would cost them, perhaps a million men, but they estimated that the Japanese would lose several million. Then they pulled out a weapon, the atom bomb that just put a stop to it all.

Humility is one weapon that God has given us that may be compared to pulling the atom bomb from our arsenal. This weapon will devastate the working of the enemy in our home. It will stop him from hindering our prayers for our children's protection and salvation. James 4:6 says, "But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble."

When we humble our hearts, it puts a stop to the enemy's work. So, when there is conflict in our home, that is the time for us to pull out the one weapon that destroys the working of the devil—humility. We must humble our hearts and say, "I did wrong; I spoke sharply and I'm sorry." Get down and pray together, "Lord, won't you help us here, won't you give us grace to be kind and gentle with our words all the time."

The mighty weapons that God has given us are powerful enough to put a stop to some things in our lives. These weapons are our great heritage. The Lord wants us to use them.

Pride is one of the devil's favorite tools. When we stand up for ourselves, defend ourselves and demand to have our way, walls are built between us and others; communication is lost. But if we will take the Word of God and use it in our lives, those walls will be broken down.

When we take our own blame and offer no resistance, but apologize, this puts a stop to the devil's working. It opens up a channel of communication. Reconciliation becomes easier. We can go to all kinds of seminars to learn these principles, and yet God has just told us the solution: "Humble yourselves and I will give you grace."

The Lord wants to reveal many secrets that will help us conform our lives to His word. Then we will reap the benefits of being God's children; we will have His blessing of grace coming down into our life.

Daniel was a man who knew how to humble himself before God. He knew how to pray and he was faithful to seek God often in prayer. Three times a day, at the risk of his life, he knelt and prayed because his heart was trusting in God. Daniel 9:20-23 says:

"And whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God; Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision."

Daniel was there before God, begging for mercy; he probably didn't expect to have an angel visit him. The angel said he had come to give Daniel skill and understanding.

We need much skill and understanding in raising our children, and dealing with our husband or wife! When we start, we have no understanding on our own; we've never raised children before. We might think we have the understanding, but before many years into our marriage and child rearing, we realize we don't have the answers we thought we did! The further we go, the more we realize we need the Lord's help.

Seeking God's wisdom and guidance will bring the peace

and joy that we want in our home. The Lord comes down and touches situations because our prayers are not hindered. We must allow God to work in our hearts. Giving honor to one another as "heirs together" as He commands, is the secret to a happy, fulfilling marriage. That is not just putting up or bearing with one another. It is giving credit to your spouse, honoring and blessing them. When we humble ourselves and follow His perfect plan, the Lord puts His blessing on our homes.

Colossians 3:12 says, "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering." Longsuffering means to bear, to patiently hold out under trial; to restrain yourself from yielding to passion, especially the passion of anger.

Verse 13: "Forbearing one another..." When you forbear to do something you just put that off; you just wait. Sometimes we need to just wait, just put some things off that don't need to be said right now. "...and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." If we don't forbear and completely forgive, our prayers, as well as our children, will be hindered. We must fall on our faces and confess our need to God. I have found He gives grace to the humble.

"And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ <u>dwell in you richly</u> in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." Colossians 3:14-16.

As we read the Word of God, give it a place in our life,

and humble ourselves to do it, it will "dwell in us richly." We should take in this Word in our daily devotions and allow it to inspire us. When we don't see a perfect reflection of it in our own lives, then through obedience, we must allow the Word to change us to conform to His glory and likeness. We must apply it with the prayer, "Lord, let this live in me!"

"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." (Verse 17.) We can nullify everything we want to teach our children and hinder our own prayers by the life that we live! It can hinder the blessed relationship that God wants us to have with our wife or husband. If we put the blame on someone else or justify ourselves, saying, "That's just the way I am," we give the enemy the chance to take advantage.

So we see that a right relationship with God and with our spouse is fundamental. If our prayers are hindered, then everything we do to instruct and win our children can be in vain. It can sometimes actually cause rebellion instead of blessing.

The Lord gives us this charge in Deuteronomy 6:5-9, "And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them 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. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates."

We may teach and try and wish, but if we don't love the Lord with all our heart and soul and mind and strength, we're going to be lacking in ways that we don't even realize. Our efforts to properly instruct our children will be in vain.

Verse 7 says: "And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children." To teach our children diligently means to put careful, consistent effort into teaching them. Moses goes on to say: "Thou shalt talk of them." First, God's words must be in our own heart—the supreme love of our life. Then we are to teach them to our children when we sit in our house, when we walk by the way, when we lie down and when we rise up. They are to be written on our gates. Everywhere, all the time, we are to be teaching our children the ways of God—diligently! If we lose our focus on the Lord, our children will suffer.

There are some basic principles, or building blocks, in life. We must get those in place as a strong foundation for a heart and home that God can bless.

Ephesians 4:25 says, "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another." Probably most, if not all, of us have had one of our children lie to us. We must be diligent if we want our children to be honest. Honesty is one of the building blocks of life. When our child tells a lie we should stop everything. The child should have Mom's and Dad's full attention. We must stop and get to the bottom of it. I believe we should make a big deal about it so they will face what they did and repent and apologize. It is good to then pray with the child.

We are teaching our children to be honest before God and men. This is a basic building block, one of the foundations of life. I believe that the Lord will help us to cause children to want to be honest if we deal with them right. I know this way of handling dishonesty works. Don't get too busy to face every act of dishonesty quickly. Our children have to know that one of the most important things in life is to be honest. If they are not honest, then our whole world stops; their world stops, everything stops until this thing is cleared up! We must not treat their lying casually, saying, "Yes, they lied; they're just not honest." Many times parents are afraid to confront the child, thinking it will hurt their self-esteem. But nothing hurts self-esteem like living under a cloak of dishonesty.

Humans are profit-driven from day one. When first born, they cry when they want to be fed, and they get food. They profit from that cry. When a child does wrong repeatedly, there is some joy or profit in what they are doing. A diligent parent will take the profit out of that. If they are playing and talking during church, you can remove their profit by letting them sit quietly after service, while the other children are playing. It works wonders!

"A false balance is abomination to the LORD: but a just weight is his delight." Proverbs 11:1. How many of us have watched children dividing something, maybe the last piece of pie. The one dividing the pie declares that he has divided it equally while the other one is hollering, "This isn't right!" I don't believe in getting involved in every little struggle, but when a child is not being honest, we should take that very seriously. To not divide something right, and to say he did, is dishonest. We must ask the Lord for skill and understanding, confessing we don't know what to do. One thing we can do at a time like that is to let the other child have his pick first. That just clears the situation up. It isn't so important that one gets exactly what the other gets, but it is important that everyone is being right and honest.

Proverbs 29:15 says, "The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame." There are many ways to correct a child. God is able to give us wisdom, so our correction will touch the hearts of our children and give them a desire to do right. It will establish a relationship with them, enabling us to teach them by many practical examples; when we walk by the way, when we sit in our house, when we're having family worship, when we get up—all the time.

We can explain, "Son, this is why I want you to be honest. Do you see this man who is all bound up and has lost his family? He wasn't honest in his dealings, and that's what got him into this trouble." We must give them many practical examples to help them understand. The Bible says a child that is left to himself will bring his mother to shame. This means if we don't talk to them, train them, and bring our child into subjection, then our child will bring shame to us rather than honor.

Proverbs 12:27 says, "The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting: but the substance of a diligent man is precious." A diligent person has a completely different outlook from someone that is slothful. Another scripture says, "By much slothfulness the building decayeth; and through idleness of the hands the house droppeth through." Ecclesiastes 10:18. Some children seem to be born lazy. You must teach and train them the value of working. We can just say that the rod gives them wisdom; and the rod is very important. But if we never win their thoughts over to understand the value of what we're trying to teach them, then we're just working in vain.

I heard that in Florida, cars, which had been demolished in a wreck, are placed by the side of the road. Then they write, "Think!" on the side of them. How many times could we point out, "Son, you see that suffering lady over there, the children who don't have good clothes? It's not that the man can't provide; it's because he is lazy. He hasn't kept a job, he's been in and out of a job all of his life."

We need to give many practical examples so we can win our children's hearts to understand true values. Once they understand the value, then they will be willing to allow our correction to work in their life. Otherwise they will protest, "You're too hard on me; you make me work. I don't want to work. You just want me to work all the time!" And maybe they're not working much at all; they just feel that way. We must help them understand that the good things of life come to people that apply themselves; they don't come to lazy people.

We must pray, as Daniel did, for the Lord to give us skill and understanding. We may have to ask someone for advice who has experienced what we're facing. When we're diligent, we take advantage of every opportunity to teach our children. It is worth all of our time and effort because our children are so valuable. If we will allow Him to, the Lord will help us.

Galatians 6:8, "For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption..." Our children need to understand what it means to sow to the flesh and of the flesh reap corruption—in real life terms. They need to see what happens to a home where the man is not faithful to his wife. They need to see what happens in life when things are out of balance. They need to understand that when we sow to our flesh, we are going to reap corruption—those things that die.

"...But he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." Our children should also see the perfect man. We should continually show them, "Look at what

happens when you serve the Lord diligently. You see the blessing that God brings on hearts and lives." By the Lord's help, as we impart these things to our children, we begin to convince them of their value.

The devil is fighting for our children. We can fight too. The Lord has given us some weapons. I want to emphasize: the most powerful weapon we have is to humble ourselves before God. I can't think of a more powerful weapon.

When our children become teenagers, we start dealing with things we never had to deal with before. Sometimes we scratch our heads and ask, "Lord, what do I do here?" Many times we have to humble ourselves. God gives us power to humble, that we might be more like Him. It enables us to learn how to get along with one another.

That humility that has worked in our home will also work in the congregation. The way we are in our home is the way we are in the congregation. May God help us win the battles where the front really is, in the home with our husband or wife, and with our children. The strength we gain in victories won there will bless and strengthen others when we come together in the congregation.

My concern is that we be diligent. We must allow God to help us win our battles in our home. We must be diligent, first in our personal walk with God: diligent in supplication, diligent in loving the Lord and diligent in storing the Word in our heart. We must first allow the Word to do its work in our own life, and then diligently endeavor to put it into the hearts of our children.

I trust that God will help us day by day to put these principles into our lives. I know that sometimes our best efforts fail, and I don't want to imply that this is a simple thing.

Biblical Nuggets for Godly Women

126

But we can live in such a way that our prayers will not be hindered. If we humble our hearts before God, He will work in many, many ways to bless our homes and our lives!

Training the Conscience

Sis. Charlotte Huskey

"My soul is continually in my hand."
Psalm 119:109

"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; . . . and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." Revelation 20:12.

or this reason we must obey and diligently teach our children the precepts and standards of God's Word. What an awesome responsibility!

In the beginning "... the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."—an eternal being) Genesis 2:7. As God is eternal, so is man who was created in His image. Every human has a soul that will return to God and give account for what they have done while living on earth.

Parents should establish standards of right and wrong

and impress them at a very young age upon their children. This is done primarily by not allowing yourself to transgress God's commandments; also by stories, memorizing Scripture, and day to day instruction. Making babies be quiet during worship is training them to respect God. When a baby arches its back in rebellion, it is time to teach submission. Any naughty action at any age should be taken seriously and not laughed at.

This is building a moral conscience in the child. This moral conscience is like a million-dollar bank account that your child can draw from at any given time. From this stored information, the conscience will interact by prompting, confirming, warning, or accusing. A child without this moral storehouse is like a ship without an anchor. He or she may drift into the teen years and make decisions that have ruined many lives. Parents, please do not let the years slip by.



Prior to the age of accountability, children believe in God simply because their parents and others who have influenced their lives say they should. Somewhere around 5 or 6 years of age, however, the children begin to analyze what they've been told. At this point they are faced with a choice—either accept their training as truth and make it their own or consider the Bible stories to be no more than fables. We must make diligent effort to instruct our children during this time. But while this age is important in a child's life, it must be

coupled with proper training both before and after. Do not make the mistake of waiting until this age to begin to teach your child Gospel truths. It is preposterous to think that our actions, the child's teachers, childcare givers, older siblings, TV, videos, radio, etc., do not effect which direction the child will take.

Every child has the right to be protected from satan. Building a moral conscience is a way of helping to protect your child. However, we can protect them only if we stay under the authority of God and receive of His wisdom—"... it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." Jeremiah 10: 23. God will show us how to deal with each individual child, for "... the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." I Peter 5:8.

Although every person is born with an inclination to sin, the soul cries out for communion with God. The conscience is God's avenue of communicating with humans. The Hebrew word 'heart' refers to conscience in most passages. "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." Psalm 119:11. A Greek verb that means "to know with" is translated "conscience" in the New Testament. Even people who have no biblical teaching sometimes do what is right, because they communicate with God by listening to and obeying their conscience (Romans 2:14-15.)

Using the moral conscience, which the parent has built into the child, God will warn when about to do wrong, and prompt to do right. He will condemn when wrong is done and confirm when right is done or when a wrong is corrected. As choices are made throughout the day, the conscience is continually sending messages that either confirm or accuse our actions. The guilty feeling is a warning

and the happy feeling is God's pat on the back.

Besides supplying a sense of right and wrong, the conscience also causes fear of rejection, feelings of accountability, and shame. After Adam sinned, he doubted God's approval and hid (Genesis 3.) Cain felt he would be killed because he had killed Abel (accountability, Genesis 4:14). David felt ashamed after he cut off King Saul's robe (1 Samuel 24:5.)

Fathers and mothers are the child's conscience before a storehouse of right and wrong is developed. However, it is very important that we teach even very young children how to listen to and obey signals from their conscience. Positive and negative training does this. Negative training includes restrictions, warnings, consequences (spanking, etc.), and are used predominantly in the early years. Positive training is primarily encouragement when right decisions are made or when instructions are followed.

Positive training such as instructions, encouragement, and reinforcement are used mostly in the middle (ages 8-12) and upper years. If parents do not move from negative to positive training in the middle years, they limit the child's capability to reason morally, or to understand his own conscience. In these years he must assume the responsibility of his actions and report to you and God. Let him practice what you have taught. You will then have a chance to confirm good actions and encourage more right decision. We must encourage children to do right as opposed to only discouraging them from doing wrong. They should see obedience as attractive, not just a way to avoid punishment. Only very young children should refrain from doing wrong just because they might be punished. Older children should think, "I will do this because it is right," or, "I ought not to do this because it is wrong."

The conscience of your child will become insensitive if he or she is allowed to do wrong and not be held accountable. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." Ecclesiastes 8:11. It is easier to ignore the wrong, but what is that doing to your child's conscience? Ignoring wrong can lead a child to believe that God does not see every action. The Bible speaks of a "conscience seared as with a hot iron." When a conscience becomes seared or insensitive, the child will find it difficult to respond to God's call to repentance. Do we want that to happen?

It is also important to teach children how to clear their conscience after wrong is done. Children respond in different ways to a guilty conscience; some are hyperactive, some are irritable, some withdraw, and some become fearful. Be sensitive to each child. Abnormal actions may be a clue that a child needs help to clear a guilty conscience. It will take time and attention to be so alert, but it will save time and worry in years to come. Patience is needed to probe into your child's mind and help him understand guilt feelings, then bring him to an attitude of accepting the responsibility for his actions. This is not done by accusing or manipulating. It is done by asking key questions that will lead the child to understand his feelings, see his mistake, and admit his error.

After responsibility for wrong has been accepted, then show him from God's Word (if there is a verse to fit the situation) how he has displeased God and must ask God's forgiveness as well as the person he offended. Sometimes instruction and prayer is all that is needed. But there is also a time when suffering a punishment helps to clear the conscience. When the conscience is clean, the child will feel

happy again. Help your child stay happy by helping him keep a clean conscience. This feeling of confirmation is God saying, "Great job!"

The devil is seeking to capture our children's souls, not in one great leap, but slowly and subtly. He does this by destroying bit by bit the keen sensibility of their conscience, thus hardening their conscience and blocking the avenue by which God speaks to their soul.

How will a child with a hardened conscience be able to hear God's still small voice and repent? Without hearing Christ's voice, how can he or she live, so they will hear God's voice of approval at the final day saying, "... Well done thou good and faithful servant ... enter into the joy of thy lord." or "... Come ye blessed of the Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you?" Matthew. 25:21, 34.

That Messy Room!

Sis. Charlotte Huskey

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

Jo you have a messy syndrome child? I had one. He delighted in kneading food and dessert through his fingers, then propelling them to his mouth with both hands. Fork and spoon were not tools for eating but extraterrestrial objects. Half-empty oatmeal bowls served as hats, prompting delighted squealing while slimy oatmeal ran down cheeks and neck.

After-breakfast routines were bathing and hosing down the high chair (when weather permitted.) That kind of routine didn't last long; I soon found out that it was much less work for me to leave other jobs, sit beside this child and see to it that he didn't make such a mess. Today he loves order and cleanliness.

Knott's Berry Farm is an amusement park in Anaheim, California, near Disneyland. Years ago entrance was free, and we lived nearby so sometimes went to visit it. At that time it was just a replica of an 1800 California town with shopkeepers

making and selling their goods as was done in the 1800's. There were also other attractions.

One of the attractions that interested me was "Old MacDonald's Farm." Old MacDonald had trained animals on this farm. Pigs pushed empty mining carts on a track through a gold mining tunnel and they came out full of oar! Chickens slid down a slide. Other chickens kept the merry-go-round spinning. One red hen walked around and around a tiny mill that ground wheat. A horse could spell. Just give a name and he picked up letter blocks with his teeth and placed them in a row to correctly spell the name.

Each of these animals was trained by the same common denominator—a desire for food. Now if a chicken that is considered on the lower end of the intelligence scale can be trained, I think a messy syndrome child can also be trained.

Like the animals, children develop habits. Whether the habits are good or bad depends on their keeper. Do you think the trainer taught the animals by getting mad and fussing, shouting or hitting them? Not likely. Did he use threats or scare tactics? When we lose control and give our children a "piece of our mind," they understand about as little as a chicken would of what performance we desire from them. So why waste time and breath fussing? Why not get busy getting rewards and consequences in place to make good behavior the most convenient thing to do.

If one day I visited Old MacDonald's Farm, and the animals were not performing as expected, do you think I would blame the animals? No. I'd think the trainer hadn't done his job. Would I accept this excuse from the trainer, "I've been fussing with them all day, but they won't do their tricks." No. Nor would a trainer say such. He knows the responsibility for getting the animals to perform properly is in his hands.

The next time you start blaming the children for their messy rooms maybe it would be better to apologize for not being responsible. Perhaps that would help you remember to see to it that these special children do clean their rooms.

The animal trainer makes things convenient and conducive for the animals to perform the way he wishes. He also rewards the animals when they do perform correctly. If they do not perform, starvation might be their option. The usual reward is love and an appetizer. Yes, an appetizer, just enough food so the animal will perform the same way again for more of the same reward.

I am not advocating we train our children like animals. I'm just thinking if dumb animals can be taught to perform right by giving approval and limited food, maybe messy syndrome children could be taught the same way. Most of them like to eat.



II Thessalonians 3:8-12 instructs us that everyone who eats must also work. If parents would make and enforce rules such as, "No work, no food," "Room clean before breakfast," "Homework and chores done or no supper," they might get more cooperation out of these special children. Parents should consistently make the consequences for being messy not worth the suffering that follows.

The parents would also have to make it convenient for their child to be able to do these things. He or she cannot have homework done before supper if allowed to play, visit friends, shop, etc. until mealtime. It is the trainer's responsibility to see that the child stops playing and has a quiet time to study, and that he bathes and tidies the room before going to bed. Then he or she must be gotten out of bed in time to put away sleeping clothes, straighten the bed, and have chores done before breakfast.

Keeping their room tidy is much easier if allowed to take out only coordinating toys for play. These must be put away before another group is brought out. (Example: playing house—dishes, food, dolls, etc.) These habits can be taught to toddlers. If you don't, you may have to put signs on their door: "Danger! Disaster area, child at play." Five-year-olds should keep "tidy" rooms, make their bed, and begin learning to cook and clean the kitchen.

Another consideration is the child's future. What effect will "being untrained" have on your child's marriage? A spouse not taking their share of responsibilities has caused many divorces; I personally know of such a divorce—also, a husband turned alcoholic because of an untrained messy syndrome child. Your child's self-esteem might be destroyed if his or her spouse, instead of you, has to train them. Have mercy on your messy syndrome child and train him or her now. She and your future in-laws will bless you for it.

I have also seen that messy syndromes seem to carry over into spiritual life. A person who is disciplined about natural things is also careful about spiritual duties. Our inner room must also be kept clean by "the washing of God's word" each day. Apologies should be made quickly and bad attitudes nipped in the bud.

Of course there are those children who just love to skip meals. So this idea may not work, you say. Don't say so until you try. Every child will get hungry sooner or later, especially when food is denied. Watch closely if he doesn't get hungry. A sibling may be sneaking him food, which is what happened in our family.

Some families have a child that is tidy without training. Thank God if you have one, and pray for the parents of the messy syndrome child. They need a lot of prayer.

A Mother's Heart

Sis. Karen LaCroix

hat a privilege to be a mother! God's love, His mercy and His guidance in motherhood are of great importance to us in our lives.

Several mothers are portrayed in the Bible. In I Kings 3:16-20, we are told the story of two different kinds of mothers:

"Then came there two women, that were harlots, unto the king, and stood before him. And the one woman said, O my lord, I and this woman dwell in one house; and I was delivered of a child with her in the house. And it came to pass the third day after that I was delivered, that this woman was delivered also: and we were together; there was no stranger with us in the house, save we two in the house. And this woman's child died in the night; because she overlaid it. And she arose at midnight, and took my son from beside me, while thine handmaid slept, and laid it in her bosom, and laid her dead child in my bosom."

The story goes on with the mother explaining her dilemma to the king. But the other mother denied that she had switched babies. She declared the live child was hers. It was up to Solomon to decide.

"And the king said, Bring me a sword. And they brought a sword before the king. And the king said, Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one, and half to the other. Then spake the woman whose the living child was unto the king, for her bowels yearned upon her son, and she said, O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it. But the other said, Let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it. Then the king answered and said, Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it: she is the mother thereof." I Kings 3:24-27.

These women were harlots! We think of a mother as having great virtue, but unworthy women also become mothers. Yet there is something in a mother's heart, placed there by God, which yearns for her child. These harlots came to have Solomon decide who the live child belonged to. There were no witnesses. Solomon, in his God-given wisdom, knew that there is a difference between a mother's heart and any other woman's. He counted on the true mother's compassion for her child to show him the true mother.

Along with compassion, a true mother's heart has a great unconditional love for her child. She understands her child and knows its needs. We may look at a child and think, "That child needs to be corrected." But its mother may handle the situation entirely differently. From experience, she understands better what that child needs. My child can do something and it may carry a totally different meaning to me than if another child does the same thing. What I know about my

child gives me a special understanding.

A mother's heart offers protection; it is full of love, understanding, and compassion that is willing to make any sacrifice. The real mother, mentioned above, was willing to let the other woman have her child in order to spare its life.

If we can understand a mother's heart, it can help us understand her motives and actions. Self-sacrifice seems to come more naturally to a woman. Women tend to say, "I'm sorry," first in time of trouble and misunderstanding. It is Mother who always passes the last piece of pie to someone else. A mother's heart seems to, for the most part, have a strong tendency to make a sacrifice of her own comfort for others. This is a beautiful attribute that is passed down from generation to generation. The mother mentioned above was willing to give from the depth of her heart to protect her child. It was an excruciatingly painful decision to give up her child, but it was worth the sacrifice to give her child life. It struck to the very depth of her heart.

In the event spoken of in Genesis 21:9-12 we might judge Sarah as being jealous. It says:

"And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking. Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac. And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son. And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called."

A mother's heart tends to look deeper than the present

circumstance to see the emotional impact of that event. Sarah saw Ishmael mocking young Isaac and it caused her great concern because she saw the effect this would have on Isaac. She took immediate action. She told her husband, Abraham, about the incident adding, "Ishmael has to go!" It was difficult for Abraham to send his own son away, but God helped him understand that he should do as Sarah said.



Sarah was fiercely protective of her young son. Like a mother hen, a mother is ready to flog anything that tries to harm her young. This trait in a mother is beautiful if it is balanced by wisdom from God. Otherwise it could get out of hand. If we go God's way, it will be right, but if we are overly protective trouble will result.

We also need God to balance our love. It is beautiful for a mother to be sacrificial but even that can do great harm if her sacrifices shield a child from the natural consequence of its wrong actions. Men tend to be best at tough love. They look at a situation and say, "Wait a minute. Let them learn it the hard way!" Women tend to be best at soft love; we need both. God made us as we should be, but sometimes we clash with our spouses because of these differences. But if we allow God to balance us, we will work together for the good of our children and home in the beautiful way He intended. It is so valuable that we recognize the importance of a man's role in the home as well as understand the heart of the mother.

Understanding the heart of a mother and how God made us will help us appreciate being feminine. Women's Lib says, "I don't need a man." God will be faithful to show us where we might be taking too much authority in a situation that is out of control. Men are best at carrying the brunt of the load; God has given them that strength. We need to protect our God-given femininity, or our family will suffer the effect of a woman out of her place. We need the balance of God in our mother's heart.

"And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison: but Rebekah loved Jacob." Genesis 25:28. This is a situation which is out of control. The father loved one son while the mother loved the other; each had their favorite. This favoritism caused problems which were passed right on down to their children. In such an instance there is danger in going too far in the opposite direction while trying to correct the situation that is out of control. Such situations put pressure on the relationships in the home. But God can bring balance and harmony. He will give guidance in correcting the problem if we seek it together as husband and wife. One alone is not enough. God's way is best. He has given women strengths that complement the husband's and offset his weaknesses. The same is true of men. Staying in our place and fulfilling the role He has given us will bring rich rewards.

Like Rebekah, our mother's heart can be awakened to an emotional need in one child, and we will stand up and try to correct it. This is beautiful if we allow God to balance it. But that protectiveness has gone too far if, in protecting one child, we hurt another one. We need God to help us to guard against favoritism among our children.

Women, generally, seem to have a natural gift for teaching. Titus 2:3 instructs:

"The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; and Deuteronomy 6:7 says, And thou shalt teach them 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."

Be teachers of good things—this is God's instruction to us. Daily and constantly as mothers, and even unto aged women—teach! How very important! God charges the keepers of the home to maintain a constant vigilance in the instruction of her charges.

God intends for a man and a woman to complement each other. We will pass down trouble and problems to our children if we try to belittle the place of a man in the home. If only the world could see the root of its trouble. Our world is in shambles because women are trying to be, "What I want to be." They crush the influence of a man in the home through their selfishness.

Part of Luke 2:51 says, "... but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart." Mary and Joseph did not fully understand what Jesus was telling them when He said He had to be about His Father's business. A vital difference between a man and a woman is that a man tends to process things through his mind, while a woman processes them through her heart. Women tend to react to things through feelings more than men. That doesn't mean a woman cannot see beyond her feelings. She has the ability to see the emotional needs because she processes the situation through her heart.

Because a man tends to process things more through his mind, we as women need to rely on the man in situations where we get too emotionally involved. We need to appreciate the man's strength and let God help us to back off and use the man's wisdom to balance us out. When we don't value that balance in the home, there will be a lack on both sides. God did not make this one-sided. As the woman needs the man's ability, so man needs the insight of the woman. God made her his helpmeet.

To better understand ourselves, we need to understand a woman's heart. In order to help God help us, women need to understand how He made us! When we see the balance, we will value the beauty of womanhood. When there is something out of control, God has all we need. We can go to our heavenly Father and seek His wisdom. We need God, through the workings of the Holy Spirit in our lives, to direct us and help us.

In my own life, there was an occasion where I had it all worked out; I had decided to do a certain thing. But the Lord came in and let me know, "Karen, you are being too independent. You need to back off and let Me work in this." We need God to pinpoint these areas in our life and then submit to His leadings.

A woman without a husband or with no one to help her with children in the home tends to "buck up" and try to fill the void. In so doing, we can crush the feminine side that God created us with. God wants to help! God is best in this area! He knows how to show us, "Back up a little bit, this is going to destroy some feminine trait I have given you."

Do you know, it is not wrong to be feminine? There is beauty in being the feminine woman God created us to be. We must be careful and not let the enemy get us out of balance. The devil has been successful in the world today. He has marred much of the beauty of being a woman. He will try every way he can to get something out of control in our lives.

When we try to crush or diminish what God made us women to be, we will pay the price. There are all kinds of problems in the world today because the mother's heart has not been balanced by wisdom. If we do not seek God's wisdom, we can hand down problems to our children that will be destructive to them in their life.

The ways of a mother's heart—protection, compassion, and sacrifice—are all a beautiful part of being a women. We must realize God has, and wants to give us, a balance in all these traits. Without God, we can become either too permissive or too judgmental. We must recognize these are qualities God gave us and that they can hurt the ones we love unless they are balanced by Him. We need God to help us to realize, when we get to a place where we need to submit to our husbands or we have to fill in a vacant area, that these beautiful traits that God gave to us need to be balanced by His wisdom. May God help us to realize the beauty of being a Godly mother who stays on her knees and seeks God's balance and guidance!

Real truth is not just the logic that is seen—the external—but real truth is balanced by logic and emotion. We must look at the motive of the heart to see the whole. God is looking on, and He knows what is going on in the depth of our heart. To get a full perspective of something, one must be able to understand the motive of the heart, as well as see the facts. This is why God puts some of Himself in man and woman. If we allow God to work with us, we all have His wisdom to some degree. We must remember—women have some areas of strength, while men excel in other areas. It will all work together if we keep God's balance. If we have a lack, God will supply it. He will be there to help us.

Biblical Nuggets for Godly Women

146

Value the feminine side that God created for you and seek often the wisdom of God to enhance and guide your mother's heart.

Children of the Royal Family

Sis. Charlotte Huskey

"Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul." Proverbs 29:17

Palance is very important in teaching God's character. God is love and God is also a consuming fire. These two characteristics of God must be taught with balance. We often hear about God's love but hear very little about His wrath. Children need to learn of and experience God's judgments if they trample over His principles.

Christians who have experienced God's protection, love, and blessings for many years will serve Him out of a genuine love for Him. Children, however, who have not had personal experiences with God are not endeared to Him, as are older Christians, and therefore will not obey Him just because of their love. They need fear of His wrath as a reason to obey until they do fall in love with Him.

Our training should include both the love of God and a healthy respect, or fear, of God. As well as learning John 3:16, they should learn such scriptures as:

"The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it." Proverbs 30:17. "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom . . ." Psalm 111:10. "Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God . . . And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God . . ." Deuteronomy 11:26-28. "He, that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." Proverbs 29:1.

There must also be a balance in the family structure. It is easy for parents, especially a mother, to fall into child-centered parenting and downplay the husband-wife relationship. The greatest influence you will have in parenting is your role as husband or wife. The marriage relationship is the first social relationship established; all other relationships must be subject to it. Many parents neglect this first relationship and center on their child. This is dangerous to the family structure and for the child. It fosters in the child self-centeredness, self-reliance and independence from the family—and comes perilously close to idolatry. God promises blessings on those who follow His principles; the family structure—father, mother and child, in that order—is one of them. If violated, the blessings are forfeited.

There must also be a balance between siblings. Children must be loved and treated equally. This does not mean the smaller children are allowed the same privileges as the older. Older siblings earn privileges as they demonstrate ability and trustworthiness to handle privileges.

Balance in work and play is also important. As the old saying goes, "All work and no play makes Jake a dull boy. All play and no work makes Jake a lazy boy." In play, children develop creativity. They dream and imagine what they will be in adult life. Often a child, when grown, has become the person he or she pretended to be in play. Many inventions are products of a childhood dream. Let your child dream and soar to great heights in play. The self-confidence he gains may be what will help to overcome some obstacle in the future.



Whether children are working or playing, they must be supervised carefully. We should know with whom and what our children are playing. Many a conscience has been blackened during unsupervised play. Question your children when they have played with older or questionable playmates. If needed, help them clear their conscience through prayer.

We are raising kings and priests in the kingdom of God or soldiers for Christ. Just let your imagination work a bit and think how carefully royal children are trained. Are they left alone to do their own thing? Or are they guarded so the crown stays in the family? Our crown is Christ's approval.

Many a parent has lost Christ's approval because they were neglectful or not willing to obey God's commandments about child training. Children of the royal family must be equipped to take responsibility when the time comes. Our sons and daughters must also be able to take responsibility for their actions so that they may keep a guilt-free conscience. Then they will not be condemned when they stand before God. They, too, are of a royal bloodline; an eternal bloodline. Do we treat them as such?

The self-confidence, approval, money or other rewards earned from work help children get a handle on life. Children who have learned to take responsibility for their own homes—keep their room tidy, bed made, clothes and toys in order, school books and homework in proper place and other housekeeping chores—will be far ahead of their peers who have not learned these disciplines. It is a curse to allow children to come to marriage without having learned these simple disciplines.

Let us keep balanced in all we do with our children. Let's teach both the love and fear of God. Keep balanced in the family, among siblings and in work and play. The struggle you have balancing all these things will be over sooner than you realize. Then you can enjoy your children. They will give you rest because you have, by example and training, taught them how to lead responsible, balanced lives. It can be done. Don't lose heart.

It Couldn't Be Done Edgar A. Guest

Somebody said it couldn't be done
But he with a chuckle, replied
That "maybe it couldn't" but he would be one
Who wouldn't say so till he'd tried.
So he buckled right in with a trace of a grin
On his face. If he worried he hid it.
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn't be done, and he did it!

Somebody scoffed: "Oh, you'll never do that;
At least no one has ever done it."
But he took off his coat and he took off his hat
And the first thing we knew he'd begun it!
With a lift of his chin and a bit of a grin,
Without any doubting or quiddit*,
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn't be done, and he did it!"

There are thousands to tell you it cannot be done,

There are thousands to prophesy failure,

There are thousands to point out to you one by one,

The dangers that wait to assail you.

But just buckle in with a bit of a grin,

Just take off your coat and go to it;

Just start in to sing as you tackle the thing

That "cannot be done," and you'll do it.

^{*}quiddit: quiddity, quibble (a petty objection or criticism)

III.

Understanding Submission

Husbands Who Won't Lead Could We Be the Cause?

Sis. Jeanie Samons

Often the common complaint of women is that their husbands will not be the leaders in the home, therefore it is difficult to be submissive to them. Someone must take the lead.

First of all, there are times when a woman has to take on responsibility that should not be hers because the man fails to accept his responsibility. There is no denying that fact. But this discussion is not to the men; they should be addressed separately for their needs. We women need to be aware of our potential to hinder our husbands in their calling to leadership. Why, in this day, are the roles being reversed in the home, thus causing the family unit to disintegrate? It is not functioning properly as the Lord designed. Please remember again, we are not addressing the men, but the women, in their position of submission.

It is common knowledge that the generation we live in today does not encourage men to be strong or women to fill the part of submission in the home. We are being weakened by exposure every day to the independent thinking of the world around us. It is affecting us. Women are being encouraged to take strong positions, completely contrary to the Word of God which instructs us to be submissive and keepers of the home. We'd like to discuss how we, as women, can protect our home and keep it from harm. How much are we applying ourselves to protecting our home, our husband's position in the home, our children and the wonderful institution of family that we have been given possession of?

From the Creation, God designed woman to be a "helpmeet" for the man. This is not a demeaning position. It is an honorable one. In any business, those who do the backup work are as important and valuable as those heading up the company. In a marriage, the wife's helping role is every bit as important as the man's leadership role. Please train yourself to look at it that way. "And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." Genesis 2:18. We need to stop resisting our roles and look to the Bible for the answer.

How many women long to be loved, admired, respected and needed by their husbands? But we are afraid to trust them in the position God has designed for them! Perhaps that is because we are afraid of our role—afraid that it will be demeaning. It is time to start seeking God for the reason why your husband is not leading. It could be that you are the reason. You may not be filling your position.

We must realize that we are helpers and that we were created for the man as a gift. "For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man." I Corinthians 11:8-9. Even if you think that your personality is to control, I believe that every woman still longs to be the

softer one, the one to be protected, the one to look up to her husband. God put it within us, if we will allow ourselves to be what God wants us to be. After Eve sinned, God said that her desire shall be unto her husband. All married women desire to feel protected, yet needed.

If you do not experience this kind of relationship with your husband, let us look at some possibilities that might be hindering this process. Simply said, a helpmeet is a helper, one who sees to the needs of her husband. Do you look at your marriage as something you receive from, or something you contribute to? Always remember that the getting is always a result of the giving. If you want a leader for a husband, learn to come under his leadership, learn to trust his decisions, or at least to accept them until you can trust them. If you want to be loved, learn to give of yourself unreservedly to your husband. He will be much more apt to seek your input in his decision making if you have proven to him that you need him.



In order to love and submit to our husbands, we must understand each other. One of the big misunderstandings in marriage is that we expect our husbands to think like us. God didn't make them to think like us. He made them with the tendency to be more aggressive, stronger; they think differently than women do and always will. They tend to form

opinions from what they see. Most men deal upfront with issues. And women? Most women deal with life from an emotional standpoint, which immediately puts us at opposite ends from the man. We have to rationalize things out and get the feel of things. It's the way God made us.

Remember Eve? God had told Adam the rules of the garden, what to eat and what not to eat. Adam probably accepted these words from God, and would never have questioned these rules. So why did the serpent come to Eve? Here is the first lesson for ourselves, women. We usually deal with things from our emotional side. Eve desired understanding, more than what God had given to her. She needed to know why they couldn't eat of the tree—what would happen? Isn't that just like us? If she had run to her husband and asked for his advice, the damage probably would not have been done. But the fruit looked appealing, and she reached out to eat of something God had forbidden. We are still doing that today. We are constantly reaching out for more understanding, more knowledge, better ways, asking questions.

When we bond ourselves to our husband, we immediately think that we have the right to make them understand things from our perspective. After all, we are one, says the Bible. So we interpret that as seeing everything eye to eye. Nowhere in the Word does it say that. True, every couple should work toward a complete bonding emotionally with one another. But more often than not, that means we accept our differences and work together in spite of them. The first thing that women generally try to do to their husbands is change them, to make them understand things better. We were not given to our husbands to change them; but only to enhance what they already are; to perfect them and make them men who are "known in the gates," as the woman's husband

in Proverbs 31 was known. "A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband." Proverbs 12:4. What an honor!

Not every man has the same personality. You should learn what kind of personality your husband has. All of us have weaknesses. Certainly, we should know our own. But very often we immediately find out our husband's weak character traits and never see our own. It should be the opposite. Find his strengths. Build on those. Know how to make him respond to life. This takes time and effort. If he's too strong, too commanding, learn how to work with him in those weaknesses until they are his strengths. Only the Lord can give you wisdom to know how to support this kind of man and not constantly be at odds with him. They have wonderful leadership qualities. If your husband is not talkative but quiet, not given to sharing, ask the Lord to give you understanding in how to draw him out so his deep thinking can be a strength to you and your family. This kind of man often has deep thoughts that need to be shared, which can make his children admire his wisdom and careful thought-out plans in leading his home.

Many times, we first find out what we think are our strengths. We try to build our relationship on them, when actually those strengths may be the very weaknesses that threaten our husbands. If we have a strong, straightforward personality, we immediately presume that our decisions are best. We often make quick decisions instead of getting our husband involved and encouraging him to give his thoughts about the matter. Most often, his opinions are more directly affected by the overall picture, while ours have been influenced by our emotional reaction to the situation. But if we are too quiet, many times our husbands want some input from us to help them make a decision to please the entire family

or those involved. We can appear stubborn or uncaring by not contributing at all.

Nowhere in the Bible does it say that the job of having a home is done by one person. It is a collective effort. And by effort, it means that much work is put into understanding how to do it. Too often, we put a lot of effort and attention into everything in our life except the most important one of establishing a godly home.

Remember that we women are emotional, affected for the moment by the circumstances around us—on today, off tomorrow. If we recognize this, it helps us to not only balance our own thought process but also to let our husbands balance us out. One of the biggest faults of women who think emotionally is that we immediately attribute our thought process (feelings, reactions, etc.) to being a better person. Women are known everywhere as typically being more interested in spiritual things. Who responds to appeals through the messages quicker? Women do. We often interpret our emotional reactions to things as spiritual. This is a mistake. It doesn't make men any less spiritual, just because they don't react emotionally to things. Their spirituality runs much deeper; it isn't just on the surface, and most often it is not as easy for them to express.

So often, because of all the above, we demand reactions from our husbands in those moments, because we are so caught up in our emotional involvement in the situation. Grave mistakes can then be made which cannot be easily corrected. For instance, you may think that someone is talking about you. So after assessing what you think are the facts, though you don't have any concrete evidence, just your feelings, you go to your husband and tell him. If your reaction is

strong enough and your hurt reactive enough, you may force him into a position of reacting or saying something, because he feels that you need him to respond to the situation.

We can make our husbands feel that they don't love us if they don't respond to things the way that we want them to and the way that we feel about it. Men don't often know how to respond to these very strong emotional reactions we have to things in life and will panic and make quick decisions because they want us to quit reacting. They feel very threatened and cannot take a lot of pressure and tears and emotional trauma. As a rule, men are much slower in reacting to this type of thing.

If you feel that you are having an emotional reaction to something in your life, learn to seek your husband's counsel and input, and hopefully his calming effect, and immediately it will calm you in your upheaval. Do not seek a reaction, seek his help. That doesn't mean that your husband will not hurt with you when you are hurting. But the Lord would have him walk us through it, pray with us and let us experience his protection from ourselves in this way. Men need us to need them. They want us to seek them out.

If you learn to deal with your emotions through your husband and seek his help, he will respond to you accordingly, be a comfort and help you understand yourself. If you are often unreasonable and wild with your emotions, he will not be able to handle it and will run. Prove to him that you need him by turning to him in your emotional needs. We need our husbands to help us understand ourselves, to pray with us and to balance us out, not to leave us stranded and abandoned when we most need support. If you feel neglected by his lack of response, instead of looking at it negatively—as a failure

to support you—look at it as something perhaps that you have not learned to seek for in your submission to your husband. You need his help. You must handle yourself in a submissive, humble way so that he responds to you with compassion and love. This creates the beautiful bonding that God intended when He said that we should be "one" when we married. It can happen!

By this process, we are protecting ourselves from disaster. We are protecting our husbands from needing someone else, because we have the right kind of need for him. And we are protecting and guarding our children's security through this bonding process.

A word of caution here. Do not become such a dependent person that your husband runs when he sees you coming. Do not make yourself so emotionally dependent that you are never confident in decisions that you have to make, or your efficiency in the home is threatened because you can't do anything. Through this emotional bonding with your husband, you very quickly learn what your husband's expected response is going to be. You are bonded and you learn to live your life accordingly, becoming the wonderful helpmeet that you need to be because you are running the home the way you know he wants you to. You are secure in that.

Our husbands cannot be by our side every minute, and God didn't want them to be. That is why our husbands are "known in the gates," as was the husband of the woman mentioned in Proverbs. It was because he had such a good wife; he was known because of it.

Take a moment and try to define what people are saying about your home, your husband. How is he known? Whatever you have built into your reputation, by your behavior, is

directly affecting his reputation, and he will be known for such. What an awesome responsibility for us women! The job of helping and keeping the home is a big one. What we have discussed is the keeping of our position in the home and making it a wonderful occupation. The Lord will honor us and bless our home if we are applying a scriptural pattern to the job. Doing that with an attitude of submission—being devoted to the cause, and many times not getting the credit for it—is quite a challenge! We'd all like to be recognized and receive credit for what we are doing. But perhaps the only credit you'll ever get for the job is that your husband is "known in the gates" and that your children "rise up and call you blessed."

Attain to that goal, women. It is a very honorable one. Really, it is the ultimate honor, that we have filled our Godgiven place so successfully that our husband and our children recognize us as "blessed." Isn't that our prayer every day?

Do you know why God instructed the older women to teach the younger women to be "keepers at home?" It was so that we would apply ourselves to understand our home and its needs. We are the core of the home, the one who keeps it together. Understanding our husbands is at the top of the list. It is not impossible, but it is work! Find out what kind of personality he has. Be aware that yours may be the very opposite. Your responsibility is not to change him, but to learn to work together with him.

Whatever you husband's personality is, never try to outshine him or change him. Your job is to enhance the man by being there. Build him up, love him, make him feel important. Make him appear as a hero to your children, and never discuss his bad traits with other women. Make him look like

the good husband he is and can be with your help. Give, give and give some more, and you will find that you somehow have begun to reap the benefits of the love of a husband who can't do without you. He will be "known in the gates" as having a virtuous wife.

Do you have that reputation? Take a moment to consider. Here are some words that the Bible uses to describe women: angry, brawling, busybodies, contentious, foolish, going from house to house, loud, tattlers. Do any of these fit you? None of these describe a virtuous, submissive wife. It is a calling that many of us do not know how to fill because we see too few examples. Titus 2 instructs women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children and to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good and obedient to our husbands. What an awesome responsibility to God and to our homes!

Submission: What do You require of me, LORD?

Sis. Karen LaCroix

ubmission . . . a subject I have stumbled over many times in my lifetime. I have asked the Lord, "What do you require of me, Lord?" Some of this I've had to learn through my mistakes. I have had to learn through the Lord leading and guiding me—and from others. I point no fingers at anyone. To me this is a serious subject, and we need the Lord to help us, because I know all of us women face these questions.

Romans 13:1 says, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God." Authority was ordained of God. From the very beginning, He ordained that there be rulers; those in authority. One time, Jesus was asked if they should pay tribute to Caesar. After looking at the coin He told them, "... Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's." Matthew

22:21. Then Hebrews 13:17 tells us to "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves. . ."

"The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished: But chiefly them that . . . despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities." II Peter 2:9-10. The Lord has great respect for authority. He ordained from the <u>beginning</u> that there should be authority in the home. He had reasons for this. He says in I Corinthians 11:3, "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God."

Remember when Sarah saw the son of the bondwoman making fun of Isaac? It would be easy to think Sarah had a little envy in her heart and that is why she complained to Abraham. But Sarah saw a danger. Have you ever heard of a woman's intuition? It is that ability in a woman that helps her discern what is going on. Have you ever been in a classroom or some place where one child continually put another child down? You see the damage that is the result of that child being repeatedly crushed down. In Sarah's situation, we don't know what all was going on, but she took her concern to her head, who was Abraham. Abraham took it to God, his head. Here we see the chain of command; God first, the husband as head of the home next, and then the woman.

"Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren;" Timothy 5:1. There are times when a younger person may need to talk to an elder about something that is bothering them. God made a way that we can go to those who are over us. He said to entreat him as a father. There was a way for Sarah also. She told Abraham to cast out the bondwoman and her son. This was grievous to

him. He could have said, "This is my son. I'm not going to send him away!" This went deep with Abraham. But Abraham cared, and he remembered that he had a Head over him also. This was something that was troubling Sarah. He was willing to take it to his Head and tell God, "This is what is going on, what about this?" The Lord talked to Abraham and helped him to know that he was to send his son away. Abraham probably could not have done that on his own but he got authority from his Head to help him to know, "I can do this. It's going to be right because my authority said it was right." This is the chain of command that God has ordained.

I Peter 3:5 says: "For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands." It is important to God that we keep our place; that the authority He put in place stay where it should be. The Bible tells us that the hair is a symbol of the woman's submission. It also teaches that she is to dress in a way that shows she is subject to her husband; she is not to expose or reveal the precious things in a way that is enticing to others.

Peter goes on to say in verse 6 "... as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement." To be a woman and fill our place in the home, we are going to have to be courageous. Abraham didn't always make the wisest decisions. When he told Sarah to go before Pharaoh as his sister, it put her at a great disadvantage. There seemed to be no protection for her against Pharaoh's advances since he did not know Abraham was her husband. Sarah had to rely heavily on the Lord to bring her through. There are going to be things come our way that we don't understand and don't know the answers to. We're going to have to be courageous and trust God.

"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them." Colossians 3:18-19. The Lord ordained authority, and He made a way for us to be able to submit to that authority; to fill our place in a way that would help us work together. This scripture tells the husband that he is to love his wife and not be bitter against her.

It is God's plan that the man rule by love. A minister once said that the husband was to help the wife; if he would rule by love, it would help his wife submit to him. He added that if wives are willing to let their husbands have their place, willing to submit to them, willing to give to them love and reverence as the Word tells us to, it will help the husband.

I know a woman who went through a trial. She came to a place where she felt like she needed to hold her ground. The Lord spoke to her and said, "You can do that and you may make him toe the line; but in doing so you're going to lose My favor. You will be usurping (*usurp* means: to seize by force and without right) authority over him. If you do this it will cause a barrier. It will cause him to have resentment; though he may not realize it. But if you'll take My way, the way of submission, then I will lead and guide you. I can take that submission and cause it to melt him down. I'll stand behind you when you are in My order."

In Matthew 5:25-26 it says, "Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing." God is saying here that He will stand by the place of authority. The one in authority may not always be right in what they are

doing, but when we override authority, God cannot defend us: He will stand by the order of authority. It says ". . . till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing." In other words, if you go that far, you're going to reap the consequence.

I remember one time there was a sister who was going through a hard place. Another sister knew some of her problems and thought, "I don't know how I could submit to that!" The Lord spoke to her so plainly and said, "The same way that you had to submit to Me in divine healing, this sister has to submit to Me in this." Submission—when we do our part, God puts Himself in the place to support us.

God will stand behind the place of submission.

In the chain of command, God is first, then the husband, then the wife. There are so many situations that women have to face. In thinking about this, these scriptures came to me: Philippians 2:12, "... work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," and II Corinthians 5:10, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." The man will be accountable to God for his place, and the woman will be accountable to God for her place.

What is the woman's place? Titus 2:4-5, "That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed." The woman's place is in the home.

She is to be sober and to love her husband. Do you think it is ever necessary to teach a woman how to love her husband? It would not have been in the Bible if there were not times this is needed. Love is cultivated. If on one side it is not cultivated and one partner is not doing their job, the other partner feels deprived. Love will leak out. But there is a way that the woman can love her husband.

In Ephesians 5:33 it says that the wife is to "see that she reverence her husband." One might ask, "How can I reverence my husband when he doesn't give me anything to respect?" He may be a drunkard and it seems there is nothing to reverence. God will stand behind the place of submission—remember that. There may be sin in his life that we do not love or like, but we must still respect his God-given place. We are to have a love for him; this is something that God can give us.

Love is cultivated; when you love, it draws love to you. But when we feel no love, we need to get down on our knees and ask God to give us true love for our companion—a love that can look beyond the fault, the thing we can't respect.

Realize that your husband needs you. As you look beyond his faults and see his needs, then God will help you to have a love for your husband, a love that will help you to get beyond your own self. When you look at his fault, you react to that fault, but when you can truly empty self's reactions to the fault—all that is not fair or right, lost dreams, unfulfilled desires, hurts, etc.—then God will flood you with a love and a different perspective of the situation. This then will help you reach out to his needs so you can be a help to your husband. One of the greatest things a woman requires is to be needed. When you see how your husband needs you, it will draw on something in you and God will work with that.

The scripture says, "to love their children." The same principle applies with your children as with your husband—if there's one that doesn't seem to "click" with you. The Lord can help you, in the same way, to get beyond your response to them and be able to love your child with a love that will draw them.

It goes on to say, "To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed." Keepers at home; what is a keeper? It means to keep under control, to keep what you have, one that guards.

This in the sense that the Lord gave me: keeper at home—guardian on duty. A woman is a guardian on duty. From the very beginning God made it that way. Remember when He made Adam, He made a help meet for him. *Help* in Greek means an aide. Aide means an assistant, a lieutenant. A lieutenant is a representative of another in the performance of duty. *Meet* means suitable, compatible. God created for Adam an aide that was suitable for him. It is amazing how God created man and woman. The things in us that sometimes seem to clash are many times the things God put there to fill in the gap for each other; they are meant to complement, not clash. Adam was not complete without the woman who God created for him.

God intended for the woman to have a place, to be a guardian on duty, a keeper at home. The Lord gave me an illustration of a two-wheeled chariot led by one horse. There are two wheels, both with a hub and that which is between. Those wheels are like the husband and wife. The hub of a man is different from the hub of a woman. The hub of a man is his job, to provide for his family. He might say, "Well, that's not the most important thing in my life." But what is it

that he spends the most time and energy on?

The hub of the woman is her home. Spoke's go out from the hub. The man has more than just his job; the virtuous woman also had many jobs. We read that she took care of the poor and looked well to the ways of her household. One definition is a guard; this is a defensive position. Defense is resistance against attack. So, the woman's hub is so much more than just cleaning house and keeping up the temporal affairs of home.

Most public jobs are built along the line of a man's hub. His first responsibility is to be on the job. But God gave him a guardian on duty at home; someone to keep up the home, to work with the children, and to guard her family. Using her God-given intuition, she is able to discern things that are coming into the home and affecting the family, especially if God, through the Holy Spirit, is working through her and revealing things that are happening. No, we may not be able to keep all spirits out completely, but the Lord can give wisdom and discernment concerning things that are coming in. We may not always be able to annihilate such influences, but the Lord can work to counteract it. Always remember, prayer changes things. God can do what we cannot do. The Lord has put the woman as a guardian on duty for her husband.

How important this defensive position is in a home! We need to know the beauty of being a homemaker. In today's world, the role of homemaker is not valued as being important. Often, the advice is, "Use your intelligence for something that will be more rewarding." But there is nothing as rewarding or important as being a homemaker, allowing God to help us to be that guardian on duty He wants us to be. He will direct and guide us!

Think of the word lieutenant. What is the place of a

lieutenant? In the military there is a captain, a first lieutenant and a second lieutenant.

A woman is a second lieutenant in the home. We are commanded to submit to all legal orders. I believe it was in Vietnam where a first lieutenant told his men, "Gather up everybody in this town, men, women and children and take them out and shoot them." That lieutenant and all the men were court-martialed because it was an illegal order. Had there been a second lieutenant he would have been responsible to say, "This is an illegal order and I can't do it."

In the same way, an adult woman has the responsibility to obey God when a man gets out of his place and requires her to do something opposite to what God, in order to fill her place, is requiring of her. She is then in a position where she must obey God; the captain is to be obeyed over first lieutenant.

But the Lord expects us to do it through love and with all humility. This is a place of danger; of splitting ranks. The devil will work overtime to erect barriers and cause bitterness. God will stand behind us when we choose to obey Him rather than man. He can melt the ice that would threaten the relationship.

But if, on our own, we take a stand to not submit, it will raise barriers and bring bitterness that will be harder for us and God to work through. God cannot support us in our rebellion; we will have some reaping to do. Yet if we humble ourselves when we recognize our mistake, God will forgive and work for us.

We must let God work in us to assure that our motive is righteous and not selfish. He will help us work in love so that, like salt, we can melt the ice the devil tries to bring. This is a fine line. We must have the Lord's assurance that it is something He requires of us and not just our opinion or something we don't want to do. The woman must be willing to submit to God and her husband. Sometimes we don't always understand and may think there is a better way, but if we prayerfully submit, the Lord can work and change things or just keep His hand on the situation. He will stand by us.

You may hear others say, "I wouldn't submit to that." That is a dangerous statement to make. The one in the trial may be doing all she knows to follow God and may be on the verge of giving up; that statement could be her downfall! We don't know what we'll be called on to submit to until we get there.

I thought about the scripture that says, "But godliness with contentment is great gain." I Timothy 6:6. Another scripture says, "... as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk . . ." I Corinthians 7:17. God called you to salvation, even if your companion is not saved. The Lord wants you to be content in Him. He can give contentment right where you are, realizing that this is the place He has given you to fill. Godliness with contentment enriches your life; it enables you to accept your lot and brighten that place with His grace. This makes your life a blessing to all you touch. On the other hand, discontentment will be like a canker sore. You will eventually get to the place where you feel you can't take it any more.

But, through the grace of God, you can come to the place where you overlook your husband's fault and instead see his need. The love of God in you can reach out to that need; you will no longer be reacting to his fault. Some may feel that no one else has had to go through what they are. But we must realize the love of God can conquer in any situation.

We may say, "Lord I'm willing to go across the sea; I'm willing to do whatever you want me to do. I'm willing to die

for You!" Dear ones, *He wants us to die out to ourselves right at home* and live the life so that maybe we can be the salvation of our husband.

What is the purpose of all this? Notice Malachi 2:14-15, "Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth," (The Lord will be the witness! He knows everything, even the very intents of our heart) "against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth."

God's whole purpose is to have a godly seed. He wants both the husband and wife to live according to His plan; then He can work through them to produce godly children. Remember the illustration of the two-wheeled chariot? Our children are those riding in our chariot. Wherever we go, they go along. Yes, ultimately it is their choice if they will live for God, yet where we're taking them is having an influence on them. He wants a godly seed.

If our companion is not saved, God wants us to live in a way that we might win him by our life. I Peter 3:1-2 instructs: "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear." Though there is no guarantee that our husband will be saved, our greatest desire should be to win our husband for the Lord, and in the end, he must make that choice.

In I Corinthians 7:13-14 we read, " And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased

to dwell with her, let her not leave him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy."

Commenting on the phrase, "else were your children unclean," Adam Clarke states that even before their children were born, the pagans dedicated them to the idols and demons they worshipped. By contrast, a child whose parents were converted to the Christian faith came into the world without these impure and unhallowed rites and was, from its infancy, consecrated to the pure God.

When both husband and wife choose not to live for God, they are choosing instead to live for the devil. By their choice, their example, the life they live and what they portray to their children, they are actually dedicating their children to the idols and demons that they worship.

However, if the wife lives a faithful life for God in the home, she will be able to guide and direct the children into the truth. It sanctifies the children, so to speak, so they are not completely dedicated to the idols and demons of the world. The same would hold true for a godly husband.

By her chaste conversation and faithful life, the godly wife will be able to stand in the gap for her husband, that his way might not be recompensed to him. Her prayers and life will be a channel through which God can deal with him. If we are faithful, there will be seed sown through our lives for our husband and children that will be a foundational basis for the Lord to draw their hearts—that otherwise would not be there. "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Proverbs 22:6. Such training gives the Lord a better chance to work in the hearts of the children.

We may say, "Lord, I'm willing to go across the sea—but get me out of this problem!" Many are in very hard situations; I don't make light of that. But God has grace sufficient for any difficulty. Whatever place we are in, the Lord wants us to live in such a way that He can have that godly seed that He desires. Pray for me. I want to fulfill this.

Melody Makers

A Sister in Christ

once heard a minister say that a man sets the tone of the marriage. That intrigued me, and I started asking the Lord what the woman did in a home. The following thoughts, which came from this study and seeking answers from the Lord, might help us all.

Tone is: sound quality; (Latin): the dependence of the pitch of a musical string on its tension. I was told that if the string on an instrument was tight you would get a sharp sound, and if it was loose the sound would be flat. Pitch is: (n.) the highness or lowness of sound, (v.) to set at a particular level.

I thought about sound quality. As all wives know, our home life really revolves around our men. If Daddy gets home from work early (or late,) we women learn to fit our work load around that. If Daddy works at night, how many of us enjoy settling for something like a "breakfast supper," whereas if Daddy had been coming home from work at supper time, we would have felt the need for something more substantial?

Being the emotional creatures that we are, women tend to pick up from the tone that is set in our home more than we realize. The old saying, "If Mama ain't happy, ain't nobody happy," contains a lot of truth. Stop and think. What affects the woman's happiness most? In a message, the minister brought out how it was the woman's place to see to it that she loves her husband. But he also brought out that it is the man's place to make it easy for her to love him. When a woman is fulfilled in her love for her husband and his love for her, it makes a big difference in her emotional state of mind.



I would like to insert this as just an example. If you are a woman who feels starved for love, that will effect your emotional energy and state of mind. You may find this coming out in different ways. "Hope deferred maketh the heart síck..." Proverbs 13:12. You may find keeping your housework up is a drudgery and wonder why. It is like a job without incentive to you. You may find yourself easily irritated. You may find yourself subtly sabotaging your husband's wants or desires, not because you feel the Lord is requiring this or that of you, but because you're hurt, and it's a subtle get-back at him. It could be possible you don't even realize what you're doing. This is the way the devil wants it to be, because he knows that all this creates a vicious cycle. For instance, if a woman lets it affect her to the place where her home is continually unkempt, the husband will come home and feel discontented to the point that his tone becomes sharp. This adds to her emotional down feeling. Thus the cycle goes on and

on. The Lord can help you realize this and heal you or give a balm to your emotional feelings and bring about a break in the cycle that would otherwise go on to the destruction of your marriage.

I think it is important to understand what the woman does in the home. As I sought the Lord about this, this is what came to my mind. The woman makes the melody in the home. Melody is the tune—the heart of the song.

You might say, "What if my husband is tone deaf?" Tone deaf means *relatively insensitive to differences in musical pitch*. The world would say that it is impossible to make a melody when the tone is not right, because the pitch is dependent on the tone, and if the pitch is wrong, you can't make a good melody. Think of the conductor of this music as the Holy Spirit. It is true that to get the music just right, we must let the conductor give us the right pitch at any given time.

I asked a brother who does a lot of singing if it was possible to sing a song with more than one pitch at the same time. He said that he had one music instructor who did that. He would bring one group in at one pitch and another group in at another pitch. The brother said that the thing that tied it all together would be the way he ended the song.

Sisters, the Lord can help you make a beautiful melody in your home even if your husband is insensitive to the differences in musical pitch. Remember, the Holy Spirit is your conductor. He will teach you by *ear* or by *note*. "By ear" is *walking in the Spirit*. There may be times you don't understand why the Lord impresses you to be quiet here or speak there, or do this or do that, but you find that if you follow the Spirit, the Lord takes your obedience and stands

behind it. "By note" is when the Lord reveals why He says to do this or that. He gives you understanding of just what is going on in your home; just what you're dealing with, and how to deal with it. Many times the Lord leads by ear first, allowing you to receive help from the instruction of others and what they have been through. He then ties together all these notes He has been giving you and makes the needed melody plain to you (Proverbs 24:3-4.) The importance of the notes is that we have a better understanding of the solution, rather than just trying to deal with the problem. Yes, it takes the Lord to ultimately bring the solution, but it helps Him do so when we know how to work with Him better.

I asked this brother what he did when someone sang off key or wouldn't keep on the right part. He said, "My wife has to tune them out, but I have learned to fill in to make the singing better." Dear ones, how true this is to our melody. If we tune out, then that is taking an "I don't care" attitude, creating an escape route by ignoring the situation. The off key can get louder and louder until it is impossible to tune out. This situation can also last and last, and the off-key can get harder to tune out, bringing frustration and an "I can't handle this any longer" feeling. Tuning out is something we do in our own strength.

Filling in is what we do in the strength of the Lord. If we learn from our Conductor how to fill in, we can help the song along. We may help mellow down the off-key part or even help him get on his right part. This means we have to receive *by ear* and *by note* instructions from our Conductor. To do this, we must also learn the lesson of Philippians 4:11, "...I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be

content." We must realize that this is the place where the Lord wants to use us. The Lord looks at things with the thought that "in the middle of every difficulty lies opportunity," as someone once said. We must submit the part of us that is saying, "Lord, let me out of this," and let Him use us in this place.

I would like to give three Scriptures here that state God's purpose.

"And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth." Malachi 2:15. "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives" I Peter 3:1. "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy." I Corinthians 7:14.

Concerning the children mentioned here, I would like to insert something Adam Clarke says: "A child from its very conception was dedicated to the idols and demons that they worshipped. As the parents were converted to the Christian faith, the child comes into the world without these impure and unhallowed rites and is from its infancy dedicated to the pure God." I will let the Lord expound this to you.

Another thing worthy of mention is that when there is discord in the home, check *your* melody, then check other causes. God will guide *by ear* and *by notes*.

I want to close by endeavoring to give a balance to this with the following scriptures.

"For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife? But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches." I Corinthians 7:16-17. "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised." Hebrews 10:23. "But godliness with contentment is great gain." I Timothy 6:6. "For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise." II Corinthians 10:12.

We can learn by the experiences of others. But we also must be careful not to put off on others what the Lord is doing with us. If someone who knows notes listens to the brother who is *filling in,* they might think, "What is he doing? Why is he doing it like that?" They may not hear the person behind him who is off-key, or not staying on his part.

May the Lord help us all in the making of our melodies!

IV.

Women of Influence

My Mission Field (Being a soul-winner for Jesus)

Sis. LaDawna Adams

an I be of service to the Lord? Would the Lord desire me to work in His vineyard? Where is my mission field? Where is my spiritual responsibility? What would the Lord have me to do? At what time in my life should I work in His fields? Should I start now? Or can I wait till I retire and my children are grown?

The Lord wants each one of us to be a soul winner for Him. And He is calling for you—right now. We are all called to be a soul winner for Him. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations . . ." Matthew 28:19. You do not have to be a pastor, minister or teacher. You do not even have to go overseas or to a foreign country. Your mission field is right outside your door, across the road, in the corner where the Lord has placed you.

"Do not wait until some deed of greatness you may do
Do not wait to shed your Light afar
To the many duties ever near you now be true
Brighten the corner where you are."

Years ago, as a young wife and young mother, I wanted to know how to handle my service to the Lord, to my family, to my husband, and to the people around me. Should I put my family first, my companion first, my Lord first? It became a frustration to me, and I sought the Lord earnestly for an answer to this whirlwind of questions. The Lord laid down these guidelines or priorities for me to follow. I trust they are a blessing to you also.



FIRST PRIORITY:

The first priority to the Lord is your own spiritual experience with Him. You cannot be truly effective to your family, and ultimately to the world, if your own spiritual life is in jeopardy. It is very easy to become so caught up in the daily responsibilities, duties and even good deeds, that we find no time for our own daily devotions, prayer and meditation. It is easy to wear out, and thus you are as the messenger running to his destination without a message.

SECOND PRIORITY:

Your second priority is to your companion. An excellent marriage grounded in the foundation of the Lord is a

perfect defense against enemy forces. Why do you think satan is attacking this one entity so vehemently? Because he knows an excellent marriage is the perfect environment to rear children that are strong arrows in the hand of God. Besides, how can you be truly effective to others if your own marriage is in shambles at home? It just isn't effective. Even a bad marriage can be made better if you devote time to the relationship. Nurture your companion. Love him. Let him know just how much you appreciate his integrity in serving the Lord. If your companion is unsaved, then you already have a mission field to work! "... They also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives." I Peter 3:1.

THIRD PRIORITY:

Our third priority is to our children. Children are such a precious gift from God. Treat them as such. They are your mission field. Take time to teach them lessons of God's ways, guide them in the ways of truth, listen to meaningful spiritual singing and tapes. There are so many opportunities to guide your family in the ways of truth. Look for them every day. Conversations while driving to and from daily errands is a wonderful time to discuss different topics. Your day to day living has an enormous impact on how they view God and His ways. Once again, I cannot over emphasize enough the importance of your own spiritual life being the first priority. Obviously, I cannot be effective to my children if I am irritable and spiritually drained. Interestingly enough, those bad days always seem to happen when I have failed to take the time for my own devotions.

There is only a small window of opportunity for you to mold your child/children. Seize that opportunity. Do not spread yourself so thin working in so many other fields that you neglect this great opportunity to win your children. It is not honorable, nor is it God's will, to sacrifice your marriage and children on the altar of good works. It causes children to become embittered against the Lord, the Saints and the Church of God. There is a perfect balance in this. Time moves on, and children do grow up and decide for themselves who they will serve. This is a heart-rending time for parents as they observe the wrong choices made by their children. You still have a responsibility in nurturing them in the ways of the Lord if they are saved. If they are not saved, then once again, you have a mission field. Build a relationship with them even if they are not saved. Let them know that they are loved. Do all that you can in praying for the enemy forces that are working against, through, and in them. A mother's prayer is very effective, and no one can pray for your child like you can.

FOURTH PRIORITY:

Our fourth priority is to our family: our parents, grandparents, siblings, nieces, nephews, etc. Families are a very precious gift. Be a helping hand, a shoulder to lean on, and pray for them when they are tempted. Let them know how much you care about them and about their souls.

FIFTH PRIORITY:

Our fifth priority is to our neighbors. Do you know them? Here is an opportunity to give them Jesus. Look for a chance to welcome a new neighbor with a freshly baked cake. Lend a helping hand to an elderly neighbor, take flowers to a single

mom, or bake cookies at Christmas time. (I have yet to see a door close on homemade chocolate chip cookies.) Do not delay. There are children right around us that need our Jesus. The Lord commanded this so many times while He was here on earth. Love "... thy neighbor as thyself." Luke 10:27. It does not hurt to take this literally.

SIXTH PRIORITY:

Our sixth priority is to the world. Yes, it does seem to be a little further down the list than what we originally thought. But I have observed that missions, ministries, teachings and helps are so much more effective if the other five priorities have been taken care of. How can I lend a helping hand to my neighborhood if my home life is filled with discontent and strife? How can I be a help in foreign lands if I have failed to help my neighbor next door to me? How can I expect to win the world and have not taken the time to win my own children?

The world needs your Jesus. Give them Jesus. Whether it is in the long line at a grocery store or that telemarketer that always calls at supper time. Be considerate. Have a love for their soul. Some areas of opportunity are listed here but are not limited to: nursing homes, neglected children, volunteering at a nearby Crisis Center, the homeless, the handicapped, the sick, the shut-ins. There are also the grouchy, the unlovable, the ugly, the hateful. Do you know what? They need Jesus too!

There are lots of areas of special needs, so don't limit yourself. Always prayerfully consider these needs before the Lord. Be filled with the Holy Spirit. Be willing to be open to the Holy Spirit leading in your life. He can lead and guide you to areas that can be a mission field for you.

Every soul is winnable. "The Lord is...not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." II Peter 3:9. Just because we do not see them tender toward the Lord does not mean that they do not need Him. There are some pretty tough 'cases to crack' out there, but the Lord wants them—and so should you. A soul that is lost is the greatest of tragedies. That means that soul is bound for eternal damnation. This should cause us to grieve over every soul that chooses to deny the Lord. And this should also spur us on to seek every opportunity to win a soul.

The Debt We Owe Clara Brooks & A.L. Byers

"The Savior hath given us freely Salvation and grace through his name, He bids us to publish his gospel Its words to all creatures proclaim. We're debtors to those who are dying, And never its power have known; Can we, who so richly are favored, Still leave them to perish alone?

They perish, they perish,

Yet Jesus to save them has died.

Go, pay them the debt that we owe them.

Those souls who in darkness abide."

The Influence of Women

Sis. Geneva Lowe

omen have a great influence in the world. My desire is to help us recognize and accept this ability to influence others in a positive way. First let's look at the definitions of the words: recognizing, accepting and influence. Recognizing is seeing, becoming aware of and having an understanding of; acceptance means getting hold of, tapping in to and making use of. Influence is the ability to sway, to produce change, to stimulate, to motivate to an effective result. This is what we want to do, recognize the power of our influence, see it, tap in to it and use it!

We acknowledge that man is the head; God gave him that place. But we, as women, are important. I'm glad that God made me a woman! I have no desire to be a man and have all the responsibility that he has. I'm thankful to be a woman and work in my little place.

Women have a lot of influence; I want us to get hold of this. Even though we are subordinate (we are under our head,) we have a lot of influence. We have the ability to effect those around us; even those out in the world. As women of God, we want to have a godly influence, a positive effect with positive results.

We have all heard the saying, "The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world." Generally, who rocks the cradle? The woman, the wife! There is another saying, "Behind every good man is a good woman." Where is she? Behind the man, and generally, that would be a wife, or it could be a mother or even a sister, but it's a woman. The man is influenced by the woman. I heard another saying, "The wife is the better half of the man," the tender side, the softer side. But, again, it is the woman—the woman is the better half.



Now the kind of influence we have on others is determined by what we have on hand. In order to have the kind of influence that God intends for us to have, we need to be possessors of Godly traits. That is the only way we will have a godly influence, the kind of influence that God would have radiate from us.

We will look at some godly traits that we need to possess. I Peter 3:4 tells us we should have a meek and quiet spirit. This is so important!

II Peter 1:5-7 talks about growth. It is not enough to say, "I'm saved," and just sit meekly back. We are going to have to increase, to grow. These scriptures name several godly traits. They tell us to add virtue to our faith. Virtue means purity,

holiness. We are saved, but we need to add virtue. And then knowledge is listed; we are going to need knowledge. It is important to study the Word. We need to know what we believe and why we believe it. Then we will have something to offer to others. We can have a good influence on them.

Temperance means to be balanced, sober, not up today and down tomorrow, see-sawing back and forth. It is not holding one point so high and paying no attention to another. People are looking at us, and they will be influenced by how we're handling ourselves. With our mouth we can say we have good traits, but we have to be possessors, not just professors; what is inside us is going to come out. We may fake it for a little while, but it is going to come out. Patience, kindness, godliness, charity; all of these things are important in order to be a godly influence.

Proverbs 31 describes the virtuous woman. That passage has been a challenge to me through the years. I have thought, "Lord, that is how I want to be!" She is described as a woman who is trustworthy. Those in the world around us, as well as our families, are looking on us—we must be trustworthy. Be industrious, not lazy, but be up and about. Don't be so caught up in yourself; be thrifty, compassionate, a woman of God who is dedicated to her family and to God.

A sister said, "Your husband is a reflection of you." I thought about the part of the scripture that says, "Her husband is known in the gates." That's because of how she takes care of him. I tell my husband that I like for his clothes to be pressed and for him to look nice. He may say, "Why can't I wear this?" But whoever sees him is not going to say, "Wonder why that man has on that?" They're going to say, "What's the matter with his wife?" Behind every good man is a good woman!

I want to encourage us to take advantage of the opportunities that God provides for us. How are we influencing those around us? Our family members, our husbands? Are we encouraging them? Or are we discouraging them by always complaining and whining, not being appreciative of what they do for us; how they are providing for us. We are responsible for helping to get our husband's soul to Heaven. We can tear them down and discourage them when they have a burden to work for the Lord. Our husbands are influenced by us.

We mentioned the saying, "The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world." How are we influencing our children? Children take on so many of our ways. Whether we are faithful to God, our children are looking on. Whether we are prayerful, our children know. How faithfully are we going to service? I have seen families that did not go to church and take their children. The children grew up and had little interest in going. They are following their parents. Then, even if the parents get straightened out and consecrate their lives to the Lord, they've affected their children. Then they may wonder why their children are so loose in their living and not interested in the service of God. They've influenced the children by not teaching and dressing them properly when they were little.

We want to have a positive influence. There was a man who I watched from his middle age until he grew old. He came faithfully to church. I prayed for him that he would be saved. I told my son, "His mother must have really brought him to church. I want you to remember to come to service." The things we do with our children will influence them in the years to come.

We have an influence on our siblings, though we are now adults. Since I profess to be saved, there are certain things that they expect from me; I want to perform them. My sisters-in-law were good women, professing to be saved. They noticed how I dressed. The issue of pants came up, so I explained the scripture in Deuteronomy to them that this is how the Lord wants us to dress. I just left it and went on. Those sisters-in-law quit wearing pants. I was thankful for the influence I had. This is what we want to do, to influence them in a positive way and take advantage of the opportunities to show them the truth.

Our neighbors are watching us, and they can be influenced by us. They should not hear us screaming and hollering at our children. They don't need to see us coming out scantily clad, or they will wonder, "I thought they were Christians." But when they see that you really are living for God, they will be asking you for prayer. Then we are effecting them positively.

I've lived in our neighborhood thirty years or more. The neighbors are older women. One who wasn't resting well called, asking if I could give her some scriptures to read. She had been watching me. I had never said to my neighbors, "I'm saved." But they watched me coming and going in and out. I'm glad to give them scriptures and pray with them.

Many times it is the women who are noticed most. That's why I want to encourage the women to live the life. Possess all the good traits of a virtuous woman so the world looking on can benefit. We should be marketing the fruits of the Spirit so people will be drawn to our God. This is what we want.

I want to mention some Bible women and the influence that they had. These women made a big impact on the lives of others and on the world around them. The first woman I want to mention is Eve. (All of us are familiar with her and like to blame her.) You know how she influenced her husband and you know what happened. We don't want to have

that kind of influence. If our influence is not godly, it can have a drastic effect!

Then I thought about Abigail. She was able to avert tragedy from her home. Also, as I considered Queen Esther, I thought of her as a praying woman. In order for us to have the kind of influence God would have us to possess, we are going to have to be praying women; we're going to have to stay close to God. Show a concern for others. When we have a concern for others, we will watch for opportunities to influence them in a positive way. Queen Esther was a courageous and wise woman. She handled the matter wisely. She didn't just run to her husband crying and cutting up and going on; she handled it wisely. She was able to avert this tragedy to the Jews who were around Persia. Her influence with her husband was a positive influence.

Deborah was a woman in touch with God. This is the way we're going to have to be to have the right kind of influence on others. She was willing to be supportive. We don't have to be out in the front; we're not supposed to be. We don't have to be the one to receive all the glory and praise for whatever good is accomplished. We can be supportive. Deborah was brave. It took a brave woman to do what she did. She was able to help deliver the Israelites out of the hand of Sisera, who was the captain of the king of Canaan's army, because she was in touch with God. Barak told her, "I am not going unless you go with me." She was willing to go and be supportive. Sometimes someone may need us to support them. If we have the goods on hand, and we've been living close to God, He can help us to be supportive.

So far we've talked about wives; Miriam was a young girl. She was a sister. In reading this account I found Miriam to be a loving person. She watched out for her brother. How

many of us have brothers and sisters who we need to influence in a positive way? I had younger brothers, so I tried to influence them positively toward God. Miriam was thoughtful and courageous. She bravely approached the princess, offering to find a nurse for the baby; she had thought out the best way to handle this situation. She went and got her own mother to nurse her baby brother. She could have gotten any of the Hebrew women, but she got her own mother. We have to be wise; we have to be thoughtful in order to have the right results. So Moses was allowed to be taught about God by his own mother. This produced a leader for God's people. We all know the story of Moses. God was in it all. He used this sister, and because of her influence, she was able to help save Moses and make sure he was taught about God. This qualified him to be mightily used of God later.

When we read the story of Ruth, we always focus on Ruth. But the Lord brought Naomi to my attention. Here's a mother-in-law; they can have great influence. Naomi must have been kind; she was thoughtful, desiring for Ruth to be with her own people. She was wise. Because Naomi was good and kind, Ruth said, "Thy God shall be my God. I want your God!" This is an influence I would love to have, to bring my in-laws to the Lord, to live before them so they will say, "I want your God! I want to live like you do." Ruth was willing to follow Naomi and take care of her. I believe that was because of the way that Naomi had lived and treated her.

Not only was Ruth won to the true God; she was even part of the lineage of Jesus. What an influence Naomi had! Mothers-in-law, how are we influencing our sons and daughters-in-laws? Let us possess those traits, so if they are not saved they will say, "Mom, mother, I want your God!"

Mothers and grandmothers have a great influence, as

Eunice and Lois had as they taught young Timothy. Grandmothers, when our children are grown, it's not all over. We still have some work to do. Some of us have grandchildren whose parents may not be saved. Reach out to them; work with them. How many grandchildren have been brought to God because of the influence of Grandma? Grandmas, we have some work to do! Mothers can't do it all; it's good to have a grandma to step in and help to fill some of the places.

Some of us can be mentors. If you don't have children or grandchildren, look at all the children around us. Let's be mentors. There are young men and young women that need somebody to look to. I thought of Priscilla, who along with her husband, found Apollos and taught him the truth more perfectly. There are those around us who love the Lord and have a little understanding; we can take them under our wing and teach them more perfectly. Live it before them. Apollos became mighty in the Scriptures, convincing his hearers that Jesus was the Christ. When we work with someone, the Lord can take them and make mighty women of God out of them. We may be able to do very little, yet our influence on another may cause them to go out and do a great work for the Lord.

We can all love others and show them what God is doing for us. That will influence them. Have you been positively influenced by another woman? Think about how she affected you. Maybe it was your mother or grandmother, a sister or a neighbor.

I want to tell you of women I have known and the difference their influence made. Years ago, the PTA in Tulsa met on Wednesday nights. One sister had children in the public schools. When she was invited to attend the PTA, she told the leaders, "Wednesday night is prayer meeting night. I go to church on Wednesday night. Can we move this to another

night?" Do you know, the city changed the PTA meeting to Tuesday night, and it still meets on Tuesday night!

Then there was a sister who got saved as a young woman. She was the only one in her family who was saved. She lived this salvation. Later her parents and quite a number of her sisters and brothers got saved—she had an influence on her family! See, sisters, we have power to influence. We just have to recognize this power and use it. I don't believe this sister was beating them up the side of the head saying, YOU need to be saved; you need to be saved! But it is the life we live and how we deal with the things that come our way that will lead them to be saved.

This doesn't just apply to old people; young people can have a godly influence too. There was a young sister who was working as a nursery school helper. You know how we dress; she wore skirts when she'd go to work. One of the little girls at the nursery school said, "I want to dress like her. I want to wear dresses and skirts all the time." See the influence she had on that child! We don't know where it may go from there. We have influence, sisters; young sisters, you too have influence!

I heard of a situation where there was a sister at home. I guess she didn't get out much, but in the summer she would read Bible stories and give cookies to the children in her neighborhood. One child would see another with a cookie and ask where they got it. They'd tell where they got it but explain, "But you'll have to listen to a Bible story." That was okay—they wanted a cookie! So she read them Bible stories. Some of those children got saved. What an influence! The Lord can show us places where we can make a difference that we may not have even thought of. But we have to be in touch with God, in tune with God.

As women of God, let's take advantage of the influence that we have. Let's not be timid and feel there isn't much we can do because "I'm just a subordinate." It's all right to be subordinate; that's where God put us. But if we'll just be available to God, He can do what He wants to with us. So don't be timid and unequipped. We have to be equipped. We must not neglect those opportunities that God puts right before us; let's take advantage of them. Let's live the holy life in all its beauty, and it will touch somebody.

Salvation is so beautiful that when people see us living it, it will get their attention. You'll be surprised at the lives that will be touched. We do not know all the lives we have influenced, we may not ever know.

Realize that you can make a difference in your family. Even if you're the only one that's saved, you can make a difference. We go to family reunions and everybody has on their shorts, halter-tops and all the other immodest stuff that they wear. A group over in the corner may be drinking, but we don't have to join in all that. We just live the beautiful life. They may start to hide some things—you're having an influence! That's a good thing—let them be ashamed, not us!

Things go on at work, but you just continue to live the godly life. When someone gets in trouble, whom do they come to? I had a little part time job and was working when the assistant director came up to me. She began telling me that she was having problems and said, "Will you pray for me?" I said, "Yes!" thinking I'd go home and pray for her. But she wanted prayer right then! Now I'd never as much as told the woman I was a Christian, but she watched me day after day, and she needed help from God. I didn't have the help, but God did.

The Lord brought to my attention that we might be the only one in a particular spot that can pray; don't be ashamed to do it! In crowds we may tend to draw up and back up, but people in crowds need help too. People, who seem, as they say, to "have the world by the tail," need help too. Let us reach out at every opportunity that we get, at work, at school or wherever. My daughter was attending OSU, and the classes were difficult. A girl, who was also studying mechanical engineering, remarked to her that the classes were so hard and asked how she managed them. My daughter said, "I just call my mother and I tell her I need help. She tells the church and they pray for me and I'm able to make it."

We want to have a godly influence. Therefore we don't want to do anything that might influence somebody in an ungodly manner. We want to have, as they say, the goods on hand. There must be nothing in us to influence those around us in a negative way. Let's be the godly influence that God would have for us to be in our congregations and in our neighborhoods. I mentioned about the Bible-story lady, about my neighbors—let's live in our neighborhood in such a way that we can influence those around us to know our God the way we know Him!

Be available to God. Be possessors of the goods. Mere professors won't stand. Keep in touch with God and walk in the Spirit, so that God can show us somebody that may need our attention.

Emotions and Womanhood

Women of God, Rise Up From Fear

Sis. Patricia Rhodes

I. What is Fear?

ear: an agitated feeling aroused by awareness of actual or threatening danger, trouble, etc.; dread, terror; an uneasy feeling that something may happen contrary to one's desires; a continuing state or attitude of fright, or alarmed concern; the possibility that something dreaded or unwanted may occur. Fear also means to be apprehensive over an unwanted or unpleasant possibility.

The Lord depends on us to be used by Him. We are His tools, every one of us. God has a special work for each one of us individually. But there can be hindrances. One particular hindrance that satan uses is FEAR. Fear brings bondage; it keeps you from being successful in the Lord. It will keep you from claiming victory.

Fear can be deeply rooted into our hearts and minds, starting from early childhood. In the past there may have been abuse, alcoholism, drugs, or some other kind of traumatic experience that has caused fearfulness. When I was a small

child, for as long as I could remember, I had a fear of the dead. (I imagine that my older siblings planted stories in my head.) I have attended and have participated in numerous funerals, but every time I have been afraid, so afraid. After having attended a funeral, I would not sit on the side of the bed for fear that the deceased would pull at my ankles! When I got older, I chose to live with my parents until marriage, instead of getting an apartment. Why? Fear of the dead! Well, that torment carried on over even into marriage, and motherhood. If we had attended a funeral, my children were prohibited from mentioning anything about it, especially after dark! This may seem so foolish to some, but those fears were real!

What is your fear? What fear is hindering you from being all that God would have you to be? Truly there is deliverance.



I John 4:18 says, "There is no fear in love; but <u>perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment</u>. He that feareth is not made perfect in love." Sometimes overcoming fear is a gradual process. As I got closer to the Lord, and as I developed a closer relationship with Him, He took that fear away from me! Praise God! I am still amazed that the Lord has delivered me.

One of the most common fears is speaking in front of an

audience, such as testifying. Suppose you feel led to testify and someone gets up before you with a fiery testimony. What should you do? Get up and testify, even if it is only to say that you are thankful for being saved! I have always had a stuttering problem. I also get so emotional sometimes when I'm testifying that I end up crying. Of course, satan brings those thoughts to me constantly. But I have learned to testify anyway, because I want to please the Lord. What you say in your testimony may be exactly what someone needs to hear.

One minister mentioned in a message, "It's not about you. It's not about me! Too many people are concerned about "me." What I do or do not do for the Lord effects the whole body of Christ. Think about that! What if there's a testimony that you could have given, a song you could have sung, an encouraging word, even taking time to make a phone call, and you chose not to do it.

We are part of a whole; that connection to the vine. We need to submit ourselves so that God can develop us. We need courage and spiritual boldness! Jeremiah 1:7-8 says, "But the LORD said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD."

Being fearful to stand up against those things that oppose God's teachings is another fear. Wanting to blend in unnoticed is common. It takes courage to witness for God, especially in adverse situations. I believe in dressing modestly. One day I was attending a meeting at school on a very cold day. The devil said, "You're the only one that has on a skirt; you're the only one!" I have decided that I am who I am! I am representing Christ! People who know we are Christians depend on us to be consistent. They don't

expect me to change my manner of dress, nor change my stand with Christ. I remember when one of my brothers had been saved and then he backslid. There were many people on his job who told him that they were so disappointed, that they depended on him to be a Christian, even though they weren't. This shows that, as Christians we have a great responsibility to live the life. My brother has since returned to the Lord.

The Lord has placed each of us in the body as it pleases Him. I felt impressed to sing a special one Sunday. Another group had gotten up before me to sing. The whole time I battled about getting up, because their special was so anointed. I tried to reason out why I didn't need to sing. My mind reeled back and forth. Finally, I decided to sing the special anyway. After service one sister said, "That's exactly the song I wanted to hear. We were just talking about it last night." That is an example of doing what God wants you to do, because you don't know who you're going to bless. Follow the Lord's leading. Even if two people may have the same gift, in this instance singing, each of us can be used of God in different ways.

We need to have a healthy balance of what people think about us. What if they don't like me? What if they don't get anything out of what I'm saying? What if they don't like what I have on? What if I mess up? What if my clothes aren't fitting as I like them to? We don't know what "THEY" are thinking, but Sis. Theresa Gaines taught us that "THEY" is the devil! Satan, again, is attempting to hinder us when these questions arise in our minds.

"For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise." II Corinthians 10:12.

Another fear is being fearful of rejoicing—lifting up holy hands, shouting, saying amen to the Word and witnessing. We all do not rejoice the same way, but make sure the praise is given to the Lord that is due Him.

A number of years ago someone told me this: "Fear can be **pride**!" I asked, "How can fear be pride? I'm humble, because I don't like to get up in front of people to testify." Any way you look at it, it is pride. Mark 7:21-23 says, "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed ...pride...: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man." When we're not humbling our will to God, pride rears its ugly head.

We may be so afraid of making a mistake, or we may cry, as I do, or we may feel that our testimony, song, etc. won't be effectual. A few years back, a student in my classroom was a perfectionist. She was so fearful of making a mistake. She was taking a multiple-choice test and instead of choosing an answer, either A, B, or C, she would write, "I don't know." She was so fearful of not being perfect that she chose nothing. We do not want to be so fearful that the Lord can't work with us and help us. Jesus wants us to take risks—while leaning fully on Him. Jesus challenges us to be risk-takers. If we lean on Him, we will be 100% correct. Psalms 56:3, "What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee."

You are not a failure until you stop trying. The Lord is going to bless you because He knows your heart; if you're sincere, you will not be a failure. Don't put off what the Lord has for you to do, thinking you will do it when you are no longer afraid. Step out in faith. Just do it, even if fearful. I heard someone say, "DO IT AFRAID!"

II. Satan's Purpose for our Fears

Why are we fearful? Satan is a master at keeping us from being effective Christians; and can hinder us from being a happy, contented person. He uses fear to make our lives miserable; causing us to be ineffective and unable to share faith. One of Satan's method of using fear is the memory of our past sins. Now, the Lord has separated us from our sins as far as the east is from the west. We can never forget everything because it's all programmed in our brain; but we can pray the blood of Jesus, so if the devil brings back the past, we will know how to defeat him.

Satan uses our potential for failure and uses the certainty of criticism. People may criticize, or may find fault in what you are doing. We are God's tools, every one of us. If offenses come, and they will, we can use our weapons of prayer, praise, and resisting, in order to be victorious.

Satan brings imagined fear. If a bear is crossing your path, you should have fear! That is one of the things that God has given us to protect ourselves. But if you're thinking there might be a bear waiting on the other side of the door, that's imagined fear. Let's use fear in the right perspective. The "what-ifs" were nailed to the cross. There is a song that says, "Victory is mine, victory is mine. Victory today is mine. I told satan get thee behind, victory today is mine!"

III. Overcoming Fear

God has grace to help us live above fear. I am a living testimony. Grace is power! We need to be empowered by the Holy Spirit, and He will give us grace to overcome fears. The Lord could do so many things for us if we would allow Him. So many people can be blessed if we will attempt to do what

the Lord wants us to do. Be assertive in prayer. Come boldly to the throne of grace where you can find help in the time of need. The Lord has the ability to get on all our levels and He knows what we need. If we make a mistake, stumble, or cry, Psalm 138:8 says: "The LORD will perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, o LORD, endureth forever: forsake not the works of thine own hands."

Submit your desire to be delivered from fear. Change your way of thinking by submitting. Do not use excuses because of the past. When you feel that the Lord is leading you, and you're fearful of stepping out, don't ask for someone's opinion. They may change your thinking, and as a result, you'll probably do the opposite of what the Lord is telling you to do. Remember Christian in Pilgrim's Progress? He stopped his ears, didn't he? We need to break out of our comfort zone. "And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." Matthew 11:12. So we have to put up a real spiritual fight and take it by force and say, "This is what I am going to do in the name of Jesus, with His power and strength!" It takes courage, unwavering faith, determination and endurance because of oppositions leveled at us. Shut the door on fear and unbelief. Be strong and valiant. Valiant means being powerful and courageous. We need to pull down those strongholds, those things that have hold of us that keep us from moving forward.

Count your blessings. Be thankful. Offer the sacrifices of praise to Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. II Timothy 1:7 says: "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

Most of the time our fears are from wrong thinking, but with Christ our mind is renewed. When I trust God to accept His way of thinking, I will be assured that He will take care of me. God gives power. We need to be empowered by the Holy Spirit. Philippians 4:13 says: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." He has the gift of power, the gift of love. The more that we love God, the less fear we will have.

IV. Conclusion

Fight fear and anxiety. Discover the root of your fears—Why am I so fearful? Why do I get so afraid when I need to do something for the Lord? The Lord can help you understand that. How many times have I failed the Lord, and those around me, because I gave into the fear of man? We need to allow God to excavate, dig up, hollow out, dig out, and exhume our bones of the past. The dead stuff needs to be removed so that we can properly serve God. Conquering fear is not a matter of self-determination. It is a matter of dependence on the God whom we can trust and love. In Christ you can conquer your fears!

Scriptures on Fear

"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love." 1 John 4:18

"What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee." Psalms 56:3

"And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." Matthew 11:12

"And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." Matthew 26:39

"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." II Timothy 1:7

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us," Hebrews 12:1

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Philippians 4:13

"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." Romans 15:13

"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." Romans 12:2

Songs Defeating Fear (from Evening Light Songs)

- 184 By the Grace of God—verse 4
 - 37 How Firm a Foundation—verse 2
- 270 Standing Firm—verse 3 and chorus
- 130 Press the Battle On—verse 2
- 172 Be An Overcomer—entire song
- 162 Be Not Afraid—entire song
 - 85 The Lion of Judah—verse 3
- 185 I'm Redeemed—verse 3
- 148 I've Enlisted in the Service—entire song

Womanhood and Emotions

Sis. Maxine Busbee

omanhood! A thousand words would not exhaust the subject of the woman. She is truly unique, but complex at the same time. Her nature can alternate between high and low emotions, and there are moments she can laugh and cry at the same time. God created woman with softer, more sensitive characteristics than her counterpart. Her emotions, or feelings, can be her strength, or they can be her liability, depending on the grace of God in her life. Without His touch, emotions can rule and control a woman's life, resulting in much hurt to others as well as herself.

When God formed woman, He had a plan for her to fill a place that the man could not. Though she was taken from man, the contrast between the two genders was very distinct—in appearance, in characteristics, and in emotions. The man was created the stronger of the two, with God-given abilities to face the pressures of life and bear responsibilities that required the strength of manhood. But the woman, though created as a weaker vessel, was endued with a strength that even man did not possess. She was given the stamina to bear great

suffering in childbirth, and then looking in the face of her babe say, "It was worth it all." The care and burden she bears for her children is often greater and more intense than the man, for she has carried that child close to her heart and passed through the "jaws of death" to give it life.

The First Woman

When Eve was tempted of satan in the garden, she did not know the high price she would pay for yielding! No doubt she longed many times for her former "garden life," when all was joy and gladness every day. But, now life was mixed with grief and sorrow, feelings she had never experienced while in the garden. The many diverse events of daily life would impact the way she felt—her emotional response.

Eve, as a woman capable of bearing children, would have a menstrual cycle. The hormonal changes during her cycle would have an impact on her emotions, and she would find herself with feelings she often didn't understand. At times, her patience, no doubt, may have worn very thin, and tears may have fallen over the smallest matters. There were days when the sun would be shining, but she would feel "blue." And then, when "those days" came, there would be an emotional relief mixed with a physical pain. This was now Eve's life as a woman, one that is familiar to most women.

Motherhood for Eve

The mother of all living bore her son, Cain, and rejoiced, for she was given "a man from the Lord." Beholding the face of her baby, a great emotion of love superseded the sorrow of childbirth. Motherhood would change Eve

forever, for she now held in her power the destiny of a little God-given soul. A very serious reality influenced her thoughts, with knowledge of physical death and eternal judgment.

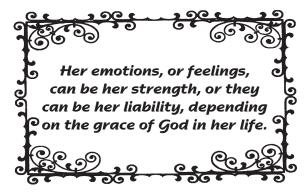
Eve experienced yet another emotion which seemed unexplainable. In the very midst of her joy and delight for her newborn son, a very real "down" feeling began to affect her, and she wept mysterious tears. This emotion, sometimes called the "baby blues," was the result of hormonal changes in her body after the birthing process. With her subsequent births, Eve was not as shocked by this emotion, for she realized it too would pass.

The Lord gave Eve another man-child, and she experienced feelings of fulfillment. But, God had said she would bring forth children in sorrow, even anguish and heartache, and sometimes heartbreak, all feelings that affect the emotions. When one son rose up against the other and slew him, only the hand of her God could comfort Eve's deep emotion of sorrow. This great loss brought a profound emotion, with a **real** physical pain deep in her heart, for she did not expect to outlive her children!

Balanced Emotions

All humanity experiences emotions. All have feelings of happiness, joy, pleasure, delight, etc. All have feelings of distress, hurts, heartache, disappointments, etc. God did not mean for us to always live in "sunshine" and never have a "rainy day." Our world would die without the balance of both the sun and rain; equally so with human beings of this earth. Emotional balance is necessary for a well-rounded life as a woman and mother.

There are few people who are bound by "high" emotions, but it does happen. These individuals seem to be unable to face issues of life logically. On the other hand, there are individuals who suffer from deep depression, a very controlling emotion, which can become a stronghold in one's life.



Charles Lewis Slattery expresses the realities of life very well from *Springs in the Valley*, June 8th:

Life is sometimes cloud and sometimes sunshine; sometimes pleasure, sometimes pain. Life is a great mixture of happiness and tragic storm. He who comes out of it rich in living, is he who dares to accept it all, face it all, and let it blow its power, mystery and tragedy into the inmost recesses of the soul. A victory so won in this life will then be an eternal possession.

"... We glory in tribulations...knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed..." Romans 5:3-5. The events of life can and will affect us emotionally, and if we allow our emotions to rule us, our families will be affected as well.

Personal Testimony

I would like to give my testimony. Though this occurred almost 26 years ago, it is still fresh and new, and a living experience in my life even today. Although I have given this verbally before, I feel it will glorify God to have it in print.

In life, there are many kinds of emotional problems, many of which stem from childhood experiences. One can suffer from deep feelings of insecurity and deep depression even as a child. This was I. On the surface one would never guess, for I was the "life of the party" so to speak. But in secret—Oh, the suffering! As I grew older, in my teenage years, I would often say to my friends, "I need a psychiatrist." I married with this emotional "baggage." Over the years this depression became deeper, and it seemed there was no escape. I was so bound, that even though I was saved, I was contemplating suicide. I know I would have been lost had I yielded to its temptation, but <u>God had mercy on me</u>!

The first Sunday of 1980, the Lord sent ME a message. The message was on "EMOTIONAL DISTURBANCES." I literally sat on the edge of my seat!! For the first time I had hope! For the first time I realized God could and would be my psychiatrist! (Didn't He say His name would be COUNSELOR?!) This message was not recorded and is forever lost; nor do I actually remember even one word, yet the MESSAGE is with me STILL.

The next day I went to the pastor's house. Again, I cannot tell you even one word of advice, but God met me when we prayed. The Lord spoke to me in a vision of my mind and presented me a box. The Lord said, "I can take all those things from your childhood, and I can put them in this box. I can

lock it, but I hand you the key. If you ever want those things in your life again, YOU WILL HAVE TO UNLOCK THE BOX!" Praise God! The power of depression was broken! Note what I have just said: THE POWER WAS BROKEN. The POWER, which controlled my feelings, lost its force. My faith was a very small faith, but, didn't Jesus say, "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, remove hence..."

The above paragraph begins the story of a road to recovery. You see, when one lives WITH a certain emotion for so long it seems to become a part of that person. This is where God became my Counselor. The first lesson He taught me was how meaningful my words were. Didn't He say, "By the blood of the lamb and the WORD OF THEIR TESTI-MONY they overcame?" This is not always referring to one standing up on Wednesday night and telling of their trials and victories. Our words are what we are, and we are what our words are. Words that I had said every day, over and over, were: "O! I am so depressed." The Lord spoke to me and said, "These are words you can never say again." Then, He gave me other words to take their place. I could now say: "I am fighting depression today." Do you see the difference?

This was the beginning of a new life, though it took some time to learn how to live without the oppression and depression of which I had been in bondage. Little by little, the Lord began to even show me why things happened in my childhood, giving me understanding and forgiveness. This deliverance has been so complete in my life that, to use it in helping others, the Lord has had to bring it back to my mind. Jesus Christ, our Counselor and Deliverer, is without respect of persons and is the same today as yesterday.

Warning Signs and Counsel

The emotion of depression can begin in young children through feelings of rejection or insecurities in the home. Should favor be shown to a sibling, it can be perceived at a very early age, and the seeds are sown. Should a child be somewhat different from other children and shunned, the seeds of rejection begin to germinate. Children may react in a way that won't reveal the deep feeling of hurt inside. They may demonstrate a very negative attitude and seem obnoxious, when underneath is the pain of rejection. These reactions, as well as the emotion of rejection, can mold and shape a child's personality.

Insecurities in the home have a profound impact on children, possibly even more than rejection, for if a child feels secure in its home life, with the love of parents, rejection of others can be covered by that love. But, when there is consistent trouble in the home, unstable emotions in the children often results. The affects of this atmosphere often shape a child's future, even with choices made for a life companion.

Satan loves for children to be affected emotionally, for their immaturity lacks the ability to logically express those emotions. Hence, they grow up into adolescence and adulthood with excess baggage of wounded emotions, only to face other emotions common to life in marriage and childbearing.

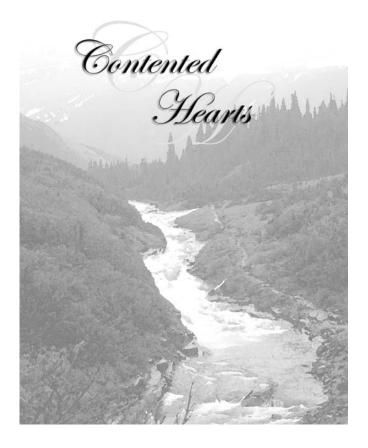
Carefully and prayerfully observe your young children's reactions and emotions. Watch for the mood swings. Look beyond the surface of reactions. Do not allow a child to pout or withdraw him or her self in isolation. Through a true burden of prayer and fasting, children can be saved from the "excess baggage" often carried into adulthood.

The Power of Hope

There was once a woman who cried unto Jesus, "Have mercy on me...my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil." This was an emotionally disturbed daughter for whom this mother desired mercy and a few "crumbs." Through this mother's persevering faith, "...her daughter was made whole from that very hour." Matthew 15:21-28.

A mother can receive the power of deliverance from her own emotions, and can also bear the burden for her children's emotions. The hope of deliverance is through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He was **sent** "to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives...to set at liberty them that are bruised." Not only can our God deliver, but He also will become our Counselor, teaching us how to live without emotions controlling our lives. This is a powerful promise to all who will have hope and believe.

VI.



No Money - No Time - No Help

Sis.Tricia Bell

od wants to bless His people abundantly in many different ways: spiritually, temporally, physically, and mentally. However, so often we miss the blessing because our self-pitying thoughts and attitudes prevent us from seeing God's gifts. Too often we say, "I don't have enough money," "I can't afford the time," "I do all the work around here," "I don't have enough space for things," "I never get a break," or "The husband and the children aren't helping me enough." These unhealthy attitudes will drive us and cause much unnecessary stress. How much do these discontented attitudes rule in your home? Take a check, and see how you and others are influenced by these fearful and faithless thoughts. We need to strive to praise and honor God not just in our words, but in our thoughts, attitudes, motives, and deeds.

One afternoon I was reading an autobiography to my children. Through part of the book, during her pre-teen years, the author describes her mother as someone she really didn't know as a person, but as one who was concerned only with the cares of life—her lack of provisions for the family, keeping

the house spotless, and making sure the children were not being lazy. All she ever heard from her mother were demands and statements that reminded the family of how poor they were and how much work there was to do. They couldn't have company because the housework wasn't done. They didn't have enough food to share or enough time to spare for the children to go play with their neighborhood friends. Things were never just right.

This attitude closed the children's heart to their mother until, through a series of circumstances, the Lord was able to help her understand that her lack of faith in God was the problem that caused the broken relationship with her family. It was then that she realized that God wanted her to serve her family instead of them serving her. She asked God and her children to forgive her for not serving them with a happy and willing heart. The episode in this book really spoke to my heart, because in our materialistic world we are faced daily with the worldly pressures that call for more time, more money and more help.

Let us search our thought patterns to be rid of these common complaints. It seems that they have such a hold on us that we think if we don't whine about something every day, we might miss out on something. Only faithless, self-pitying and discontented unbelievers can truthfully complain, because "God has given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness."

In our desperate need for understanding, we must cry out and ask the Lord to show us His will in our situation. The Lord is our Shepherd, and we shall have no lacks. God also gives us the advantage of asking for and receiving those things we desire. Sometimes, while claiming to be God's children, we act like He doesn't even exist when we stew around and continue to think we are missing out on something.

God wants to bless us abundantly in our fellowship and knowledge of Him and His ways. He desires to impart to us His fullness and complete joy. God sees every motive, hears every word, and knows even our thoughts. He expects us to be grateful for all He does for us. He daily loads us with benefits—He helps us accomplish our tasks, reminds us of our duties, and gives us enough time and money for whatever we need. Instead of wishing for more, let us turn our minds to listening to His voice, obeying His commands and honoring Him as God. As we obey Him more and submit to His wonderul plans for us, this will bring more excitement and enthusiasm into our Christian walk than we would have ever dreamed.

How do these negative attitudes affect our children? Our children catch more than we suspect. If we want our children to be in love with Jesus and be happy in His will, we must be the first to partake of His sufferings and example. The song says, "Jesus left His home of dazzling splendor." He came down to our level to show us how to live our lives to glorify the Father. As He willingly took up His cross, because He knew God's purpose and plan, we must seek Him daily and let Him guide us by His Word in personal visitations till we are in harmony with His purposes for the crosses that we carry.

More than anything else in the world, we want our loved ones to go to Heaven together with us. Do we act like Heaven is our priority, or are we worried about not having enough to make this life perfect? Our "not enough" attitude will keep us from joyfully living this life with purpose and meaning. Where is your heart? I personally want to invest in the eternal things. My greatest security comes from those things that no one can take from me. I don't want those around me to see me constantly irritated over temporal things. I really want them to know that I cry my greatest tears for the salvation of

their souls. I desperately want God to personally bless them and reveal His loving kindnesses to them.

Let us be a contented and grateful people behaving like we are children of the all powerful heavenly Father. This attitude will cause Him to feel praised and thanked, just as we feel appreciated when our children are happy and not whining over everything we ask them to do. Let us give thanks aloud instead of complaining. Let us realize that God is in control. He will bless every life that honors Him.

When one receives the grace to be thankful for all things and the grace to rejoice when being reviled, they will then be eligible for MORE GRACE. Isn't it wonderful? Thank God, we have the privilege to watch every day for miraculous ways that God personally reveals His love and shows His greatness to us individually. He doesn't want us to fret and worry about money, but to seek His kingdom ahead of everything. Read Luke 12:27-37. When we begin to thank God for things,



and begin to honor and bless Him with our words and attitudes, then we will be blessed. Our discontented empty souls will begin to fill up with love and gratefulness. A smile will break out in our heart! Start with the little things. Be thankful for the things you have, such as the ability to hear, to walk, and have the right use of your mind. The more you praise Him, the more you will be able to praise Him.

WHAT SPIRIT ARE YOU OF?

Sis. Sheri Rich

"But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding." Job 32:8.

he spirit is the avenue through which God is able to speak to us. If we didn't have a spirit, we'd be like the animals. There would be no way for God to make us a special visitation and for us to be able to reach to Him. There is a spirit in man. This scripture says the inspiration of the Almighty gives understanding. God gives our spirit understanding. God gives us His Spirit in our life for understanding.

Because we have a spirit, it can be contacted by other spirits. When we're in sin, it's contacted by the evil one on a daily basis. From a small child, our spirit is influenced by the evil one. We learn and understand things according to what the evil one has enlightened our spirit with. God has set up a way to change the influence over our spirit from that of the devil to His Spirit. Job says He will give us understanding. He wants to reveal to us who He is, what He is, what He can

do for us, how He can change us. This all comes down from God to us through our spirit.

We all have a spirit. One time when the Samaritans refused hospitality to Jesus, His disciples, James and John, were ready to call fire down from Heaven and destroy them. "But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." Luke 9:55. And these were disciples!

Do you know what spirit you are of? Who has talked to you, giving you understanding? Whose leadings in your spirit do you follow? What things have you learned in your spirit and where did you learn them? It is my burden that we might be able to understand of what spirit we are. Without this understanding, we don't realize how we are being influenced; we don't know to ask for help. The Lord wants to enlighten us and give us understanding in our spirit that we might be able to serve Him and escape the devil's tyranny.

Hebrews 4:12 says, "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." This is describing the Word of God as it is read, preached and in other ways enlightened into our spirits. It says the Word of God is quick; it's powerful. Did you ever have one scripture come alive and quicken and enlighten you? You may have read that scripture many times, but all of a sudden there is a quickening, an enlightenment that comes to your spirit. This is God talking to your spirit. Then it says the Word is sharp; it cuts. Sometimes the Lord must cut us a little in order to help us—a little spiritual surgery. It won't feel like God is doing this out of love. It may feel like we've been wounded. We must cry to God and pour out our spirit

before Him so He can work with us, as He desires.

I remember an incident that happened the day I got saved. I had just done the most horrible thing that a wife could do—I had thrown all my husband's things out of the house. My spirit was on fire! It told me it was the right thing to do, and that I would be so glad I did this. It said, "You don't have to put up with all this anymore!"

Then I went over to my two sisters-in-law, who were both saved, and I began to tell them what I had done. They just looked at me and didn't know what to say to me. They never did say anything to me. And the more I talked, the worse I felt, and the longer I talked about how glad I was about what I'd done, I wasn't so glad anymore. I talked and talked and pretty soon it felt like I was the one wounded. And I had felt so victorious!

The only thing my sister-in-law said to me was, "Would you like to go and pray with Sis. Huskey?" I said, "Yes," but didn't even know why. But there was another Spirit beginning to work with me.

The one spirit had goaded me and got me to do something "way off." And the other Spirit was trying to call me back. Some people don't get called back the same day. The Lord was merciful to me! We went over there, and when we got down to pray, Sis Huskey said, "Honey, just pray and ask the Lord to forgive you."

I thought, "Forgive me!?" But do you know, that's what I started to do, and the more that I prayed, the harder I cried, and the more wounded I became. I'd had no intention of repenting; I had just won a marvelous victory! But I got up from there saved. Then I had to go home to an empty house—the devil is so crue!!

I was in a battle. I knew that what I'd done was wrong, and I needed to ask forgiveness of my husband. My husband wasn't saved. The Spirit of the Lord came down and pleaded with me to ask forgiveness. But there was that other voice telling me, "You don't need to do that. Just wait for him to come home on his own!" My husband was pretty stubborn. I don't know if he'd have come home on his own.



So I went to apologize. He didn't go very far; he went to his mother's. And she lived across the driveway. But it was a big distance to me! I walked over there and all the doors were locked. I couldn't get in. I tried calling, and he wouldn't answer the phone. I was so torn inside. The Spirit of God was telling me "Make this right. Make this right!" The devil was trying to throw every obstacle in my way that he could. He wanted me to wait until tomorrow. But had I waited until tomorrow, I might not have had the same unction from the Spirit or been able to apologize in the right way. When the Spirit is moving is when we have to move!

I began to circle the house and check all the windows. I found a window that wasn't locked. Then I had to find a chair and put it up to the window, and I had to crawl inside. But I finally got in. I went in and knelt down by my husband who was lying on the couch. I begged his forgiveness. I told him

how sorry I was, and I think I told him the Lord had saved me. I wanted him to come home.

He said nothing. I pleaded and I begged, and he said nothing. I finally had to go back home.

The Lord could have ended that trial very quickly, but He saw fit to leave me in it for a while. He knew me. I had always wanted my husband to be saved first, and then I'd follow him. God knew that unless I got established in Him so He was my Friend and my Helper, I would just follow my husband, and I wouldn't last very long.

It was two weeks before my husband came home! All that time I was in the house by myself, praying every day. I read the Scriptures and they were so comforting. The Lord was dealing with my spirit, which was so troubled because of the place I was in. God was able to deal with me and talk to me about things that He wouldn't have been able to talk to me about if my husband had come home that first night. I cried and prayed and begged for help and forgiveness. I poured myself out to God. He was right there, bringing me into a place where I could lean upon Him, where we had a relationship. He knew my husband was coming home, and that he wouldn't be saved. Things were still going to be hard.

I was reading one night, and the scripture stood out in bold print that says "... weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." Psalm 30:5. And in the morning my husband came home! I was so glad to get out of that trial of my own making. But the spirit of God had dealt with my spirit.

What spirit are you of? With whom are you confiding, in your spirit? The devil is a good listener.

In Proverbs 20:27 it says, "The spirit of man is the candle of the LORD, searching all the inward parts of

the belly." Your spirit tells who you are. It tells all about you. It is the candle of the Lord and it is searching all your inward parts. It tells God, and everyone else, what's on hand. Nothing is hidden. It shows which spirit you're conversing with.

"He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls." Proverbs 25:28. The wall around a city is for protection. A person who can't rule his own spirit is like a city broken down and without any protection at all. It is vulnerable all around. When you don't rule your own spirit, everything breaks down. You are listening to the wrong one and being misguided. It will tell you, "If you show humility, that person will run over you the rest of their lives!"

A man who has no rule over his own spirit in his home breaks down his own home. If a mother, with the care of the children all day long, has no rule over her own spirit, she breaks down her home. How do we rule our spirit? One scripture says, "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." Proverbs 16:32.

A mighty army might break down every barrier, enter a city and conquer it. But the one that is slow to anger and rules his spirit is mightier than that! When I yield my spirit to God and let Him deal with my spirit, I am mightier than a conquering army. If the enemy comes against you with a legion, you are more powerful through God. When he comes into your home and tries to destroy it, you can conquer him. You are mightier! To rule your own spirit means to give yourself over to God so He can make you pliable, easily instructed and powerful through His grace.

Some spirits aren't about anger and a forward disposition, but about deceit and conniving to get my own way. I

may use my position in the home to get my way, in what sounds like a very loving manner. But if it's of the other spirit, it tears down the home. The husband may say to the wife, "Now you know the Bible says you're supposed to submit to me." He says it very nice and easy, but he just wants his own way, and he puts it off on you as if you're the one out of order.

Or the wife, when she wants something and the husband says, "No, I don't think we should do it quite like that," or, "We don't have the money for that." She may say, "O.K." but then she just gives him a good letting alone! If he walks in a room, she walks out. If he goes to bed early she stays up late. If this is your reaction, what spirit is ruling you? What spirit are you of?

Proverbs 16:18 says, "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall." A haughty spirit is not of God. Jesus never showed a haughty spirit, and if anyone had a right to be haughty, He did! But He showed us how to follow God no matter what the outcome. A haughty spirit can destroy a congregation when each one is busy looking at the other to see their faults or shortcomings, instead of turning within and asking, "What spirit am I of?"

Knowing a problem in someone's life is a call to prayer. It is just a call to prayer; that's all it is to you. We need more confidence in prayer, in our prayer! What spirit is it that pressures you to tell it to others? Before you take the matter to others as a request for prayer, pray many, many prayers yourself. Then wait to receive the leading of the Spirit before telling others. The matter does not need to be discussed. The Lord is able to reveal the need to others without you ever exposing the matter.

The prayer in Psalm 51:10 is: "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." God is able to fulfill this request and desires to do so. There are times we need renewing, when we realize that we've been listening to the wrong spirit and have drifted away from the Lord.

"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." II Corinthians 7:1. To cleanse ourselves means to acknowledge our need to God. You can't cleanse yourself, but if you bring to God your failures and needs, He will do the work. We must be willing to confess to God and others that our spirit wasn't right, without justifying our self.

If we apologize by saying, "I'm sorry for what I said, but what I said was true!" it will do no good. It will just erect more barriers. The Lord instructed me to name out to my husband what I was apologizing for. When I was wrong in a disagreement, He told me to tell him, "You were right!" Do you know how hard that is to say? We're willing to say, "I'm sorry," but to say, "You were right," just sticks in our throat!

The Lord is faithful to show us ourselves, but He wants us to be faithful to take care of the matter and cleanse ourselves; to admit to the other person, "I was wrong!" Then we are clear—it's just all gone!

1 Corinthians 6:20, "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." God gave us our body and spirit. We are to glorify Him in both. God never intended anyone to speak to our spirit except Him. The habit of listening to the enemy is hard to break, but He is able to cleanse us.

When the Lord shows us a need, we should attend to it quickly—while He's dealing with us. While His Spirit is dealing with our spirit, it's easy to confess our fault, that we don't want it and are willing to do anything to be rid of it. God will reward openly for everything confessed in secret. He will meet every need we bring to Him.

Continue On!

Submitted by Sis. Karen LaCroix

woman once fretted over the usefulness of her life. She feared she was wasting her potential, being a devoted wife and mother. She wondered if the time and energy she invested in her husband and children would make a difference.

At times she became discouraged because so much of what she did seemed to go unnoticed and unappreciated.

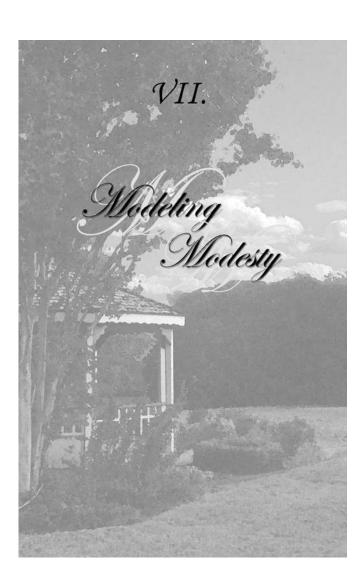
"Is it worth it?" she wondered. "Is there something better that I could be doing with my time?"

It was during one of these moments of questioning that she heard the still, small voice of her Heavenly Father speak to her heart:

"You are a wife and mother because that is what I called you to be. Much of what you do is hidden from the public eye—but I notice. Most of what you give is done without remuneration, but I am your reward. Your husband cannot be the man I have called him to be without your support. Your influence upon him is greater than you think and more powerful than you will ever know. I bless him through your love. Your children are precious to Me—even more precious than they are to you. I have entrusted them to your care to raise for Me. What you invest in them is an offering to Me. You may never be in the public spotlight, but your obedience shines as a bright light before Me.

"Continue on! Remember you are my servant. Do all to please Me."





God's Portrait of Women Professing Godliness

Sis. Karen LaCroix

Likwise, ye wives, be in subjection (obedience, submitting yourself) to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation (behavior) of the wives; While they behold your chaste (innocent, clean pure, modest) conversation coupled with fear (awe.) Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of the plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: Whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement." 1 Peter 3:1-6.

1 Timothy 2:9-10 says, "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shame-facedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works." The last verse in the Greek Diaglott says, "But with good works which become women undertaking the worship of God."

These verses paint for us a portrait of what God is wanting of women professing godliness. They deal mainly with dress, or the outward apparel. It is true that someone can dress completely right and in order, yet not be right on the inside. Apparel is not every thing, but it is a part, and we need a vision of what God is calling for when He says, "women professing godliness." When we look at the portrait the world portrays of a woman (a picture of the apparel she should wear), and compare it with God's portrait, we find that it is completely contrary to what the Word of God teaches us.

I Peter 3:3 says, "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning..." It is telling us that our adorning (or decoration) should not be an outward adorning. The Lord is not pleased with the "plaiting" (elaborate braiding) of the hair. Broided hair means with divers colors. Adam Clarke says the above scriptures are alluding to the custom among the Grecian and Roman women, whose hair was often crisped and curled in the most variegated and complex manner. They were known for their elaborate hairdos, which often were entwined with gold, pearls, and stones of different colors for decoration. God is saying, let it not be the external decoration. We must be careful that our barrettes do not become jewelry. It is inconsistent to not

wear necklaces, rings, or earrings and yet adorn our hair with extravagant hair clasps that look much like jewelry when worn elsewhere.

God's portrait is saying, "Let it not be the external decoration of immodest apparel, or the putting on of apparel; those things that are fake such as makeup, jewelry, false fingernails/eyelashes, etc. The Lord has a portrait without external decoration—modest, not displaying one's self. The fake decoration of makeup, jewelry, etc. is just an external decoration with the sole purpose of attracting and alluring. God wants our ornament to be a meek and quiet spirit to portray a character that shows Christ.

I Timothy 2:9: "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety. ..." The Greek meaning of apparel is a deposit; that is to say, specifically, costume. Costume means a complete set of outer garments—the style of dress, including the way the hair is worn, the kind of jewelry worn, etc. Our costume will depict who we are, what we are, our character and ideas, and portrays who we want to be. Just as we are what we eat, what we wear portrays our inner man.

Apparel comes from another word that means to put down, quell, appease, quiet. Quell means to put down disorder or rebellion. Our costume, (remember costume means a complete set of outer garments, including style of clothes, hair, shoes, etc.), should quell any lustful rebellion within ourselves or anyone looking on. People complain about the immorality that is rampant, and about women being taken advantage of, yet their apparel, (costume) is inviting and arousing lustful rebellion instead of quelling it. Our apparel can either quell lust or allure lust. Allure means to attract, abase, lead away or into something by arousing

desire. Much of the outer apparel available to purchase is alluring lust, rather than keeping it in check. When we dress in an alluring way to attract others looking on, we lose a power and protection that we will someday regret. Our prayers can become hindered. How sad to come to a place where we are in desperate need of God, but we have moved away from Him—there's something between us and our God. God has put instructions in His Word concerning dress. He knew well the need for it. When He tells us how to do



something, we do well to never deviate from it. It is a dangerous thing to know to do right and do it not.

We can't put the Lord in a box and say, "If I dress the way you want me to, I will never be taken advantage of; you can't let that happen to me." When sin is around, the innocent many times suffer. Yet when a woman dresses herself in a way that is modest and in subjection to her husband or companion-to-be, she puts herself under God's protection. I Corinthians 11:10 says, "For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels." One word for power is jurisdiction—the right or power of administering justice, territory over which authority extends.

Psalms 91:11 says, "For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways." There is an umbrella of protection that the Lord gives us when we follow Him. If we do not follow the Lord, we take ourselves out from under that umbrella of protection. Whenever a woman dresses herself in a way that the Lord intends for her to, it gives her the protection of God's angels. But when she steps outside the umbrella, she steps outside the protection of the Lord also.

Timothy says we are to adorn ourselves in modest apparel. The Greek meaning of the word modest comes from a part of the word adorning and means orderly, decorous, of good behavior. Decorous means well behaved, acting properly, in good taste, dignified. This is how the Lord wants us to adorn ourselves, in modest apparel, meaning something that is decorous—acting properly, in good taste. What is good taste? By definition, taste is the manner or style that shows ability to perceive and enjoy that which is beautiful and excellent. The Word of God lets us know that we are to dress according to what is excellent, beautiful, pure, and holy in the sight of God.

It is not wrong for women to dress in a way that is becoming. There is an art to dressing with that which is not of the external art of decorating—adding things to call attention to oneself—yet is clean, neat, and attractive. A style of dress that looks attractive on a slender woman may not be as attractive on a larger woman or vice versa. Not all styles look well on all people. Find the style that fits your body build. That may not necessarily be the latest style of the world. We do not have to look like we just stepped out of 1900, but many of the fashions of the world today are not becoming on women, and we must be careful to not be sucked

into the latest styles and fashions just to fit in. Learn how to pick out clothes that fit: not too big in the shoulders, sloppy looking, too tight, etc. Learn how to match colors so that they coordinate and complement one another. Make sure that your clothes are washed and ironed if needed. If the dress calls for a belt, wear one. By learning how to be clean, neat, and attractive, we can actually make the way of salvation attractive to the unsaved and our children coming behind us.

Dignified means self-respecting character or manner. The Lord wants those professing Godliness to dress in such a way that shows they do care about themselves—they are neat and like to dress in a way that is clean and respectable. This is modest, decorous, well behaved. Modest means not gaudy or flashy, humble in appearance, quiet, unpretentious (not fake), unassuming (not putting on airs or competing to dress better than others), decent, pure, especially not displaying one's body. This is the portrait God has set before us. There is real beauty in it. Do you see that beauty?

Modest means to dress in such a way that does not display one's body, which is a common and accepted practice in the world. The costume or dress that you wear must depict modesty within and without. We must have it right within, but the Lord wants it right without also.

We see immodesty displayed everywhere in the world. Revealing the body is commonly accepted. When Adam and Eve were in the garden, they were unclothed, and they were not ashamed. This was before sin came in. When sin came in, they automatically felt their shame, and both went to put on clothing. There is a place between a man and his wife where the Garden of Eden experience is ordained of God. The Bible says, "Marriage is honourable in all, and

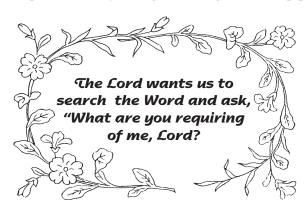
the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." Hebrews 13:4 Today there is a place that God specifically sets aside for that Garden of Eden experience between husband and wife, but outside of that there is shame because of sin. Shame is automatic whenever immodesty is displayed.

There is a place between husband and wife where the wife is subject to her husband. The holy women of old dressed themselves in a way that depicted subjection to their **own** husbands. Our apparel (costume—complete outer garments) is also a pledge of security for our husbands or husbands to be. Our apparel should not be meant for the allurement of other men, but should say, "I am subject to my husband only. I do not come out in such a way as to subject myself to other men. That's not the way the Lord wants His women to dress."

The looseness and immodesty that is prevalent in the world depicts that a woman is not only subject to **her husband** but to **all men.** I think about Pilgrim in Vanity Fair, seeing women offered for sale. When we bring in the external decorations and immodest apparel, we are putting ourselves on public display and saying, "I am subject to whoever sees me."

Let's think about the word *allure*, *which means: attract, bait, lead away or into something by arousing desire, to tempt.* Today it is common for people to go out into the public in a way that was meant only for a Garden of Eden experience between husband and wife. On the beaches, bikinis are common. In the market place, shorts, spaghetti strap or strapless tops, and uncovered midriffs are prevalent. A man is naturally more attracted by what he sees than a woman

is. It is the world's goal today to dress in a way that is alluring. As a result, men have to go out and face things commonly displayed that were meant only for the Garden of Eden experience. May God give them grace to keep pure!



Adams Clarke's commentary says the women of this time wore a garment called a stola, which was originally very simple, but often women would decorate it with gold and precious stones. He said, "a more modest and becoming dress than the Grecian was never invented; it was, in a great measure revived in England about the year 1805, and in it simplicity, decency, and elegance were united; but it soon gave place to another mode in which frippery and nonsense once more prevailed. It was too rational to last long, and too much like religious simplicity to be suffered in a land of shadows and a world of painted outsides."

He also brought out that some of the Greek women wore the stolas open on each side, from the bottom up to above the knee, so as to discover a part of the thigh. These women were termed *showers* (show-er; or discoverer) of

the thigh; but this was generally worn only by young girls or immodest women. What does this remind you of? Slit skirts! That's all it was, slits up both sides. We can be modest in every way, but if we have a slit in our skirt, it is *modesty—with allure*. It is automatically an attraction to see how far up the slit will go. Even in the Biblical times, that's the way some women would slip in allurement. We have to be careful now that we don't let a little of the allurement of the world come in. We can think we are dressed so much better than the world, but the world has gone so far from what God wants; do we dare to judge ourselves by them?

I realize there are people who dress in this way, contrary to God's Word, who do not have the knowledge of the Word of God that we have. We must have love, compassion and understanding toward them. However, there is a coming to light when the Lord pricks us and tells us, "Child, that's not exactly the way I want you to dress." It is an ongoing thing. When we go to buy another dress, we have another decision to make. We must be careful; buying our clothes makes us more vulnerable. It is easy, after we've shopped and shopped to justify some little thing such as a lower neckline, or splits. We wouldn't have made it like that, but we decide it would probably be okay to go ahead and buy this garment. Yet, when you get home you feel very small when the Lord says, "No, that's not what I want. My child, you are being influenced by the world a little bit."

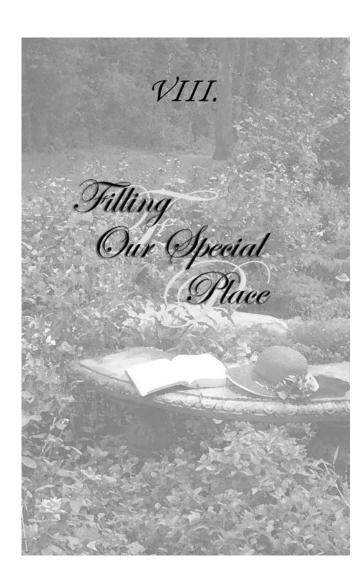
I feel constrained to give a warning about some socalled Christian advice that is out there in the world. This advice says that a Christian woman should do everything she can do in order to make herself attractive for her husband. She needs to take advantage of makeup, jewelry,

bobbed hair, (see I Corinthians 11:4-6; 14-15) etc.—everything there is to make herself attractive to her husband. If you go out into the public dressed in a manner that is an allurement to your husband, you will find that you are an allurement to other men also. You will become subject to all men, not just your husband. Some may have very expensive jewelry and want to put it all on to go out in the public. Then someone warns, "No, if you go out like that you are in danger of being robbed of the jewels you have." But there is a certain pleasure in turning people's heads with this expensive jewelry. There can be a feeling of power to have men allured or attracted to you because you are dressed in a way to allure. However, you are saying, "Here are my jewels of purity and innocence. They're here on display to be stolen if you want to steal them." Oh, let us be careful and prayerful.

The Lord wants us to search the Word and ask, "What are you requiring of me, Lord? How do I dress in a way that is becoming to modesty? Is this skirt or blouse too tight? Is the skirt too short? Does it show my knees and up my legs when I sit down? Is this dress too revealing of the body it is covering? Is this neckline too low or too large? Does it show more than You want me to show when I bend over? Does it allure the men's eyes to my bust line? Does this style of clothing bring undue attention to my breast, hips, or legs?"

God doesn't mind adornment as long as it is the right kind. 1 Peter 3:3-4, "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning... But let it be the hidden man of the heart... even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of GREAT price." This is what is acceptable to the Lord. He wants that which is not corruptible;

the purity of holiness within. An ornament is something added, often **permanently**, which especially suits a thing and adds to its general effect and beauty. The ornament we should have is a meek and quiet spirit. This ornament is of great value in the eyes of God and adds much beauty to our lives.



God's Presence in Widowhood

Sis. Nelda Sorrell

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." Romans 8:28.

hen a loved one is taken from us, it is hard to see how it could work any good in our shattered life.

I could never bring myself to even think what life might be like without my husband. God permitted me to be afflicted with muscular dystrophy, and it had advanced to the point that I could not walk without assistance. But God made a way for me; with my husband beside me, I could walk by holding his arm. I was very thankful for his patient, loving support. It seemed only reasonable that my husband would always be there to help me. God knew I needed him desperately!

Even when he became very afflicted, I expected God to heal my husband. Then—he was gone!

The children, family, and Saints surrounded me with love and comfort. They watched for ways to assist and made sure that someone was always with me to help fill the void.

The last week or two of my husband's illness was a time of constant, intense prayer. He could only sleep or rest a short time before the pain and discomfort would cause him to have to get up again. Each time we would go to God, begging for relief and committing our need into His hand. Although the affliction intensified, we both felt assured that God was in control. When death came, though it was so unexpected, I could only say, "Yes, Lord!" Somehow it had to be the best way; God had chosen it.



The children were hesitant to leave me alone and were willing to make any arrangements necessary to be with me. It had been about two weeks since the funeral. I assured them that I needed to face my situation right here in my own home. There were so many questions—I had to have time alone to seek the Lord for answers. I felt confident that this was God's will for me; He would be with me.

I had to review and test the very foundation and fundamentals of my faith. My whole world had been devastated. I had to know it was by God's edict. My place of prayer became my refuge. Many times, as I knelt down, I began by confirming the truths that were supporting me, with such scriptures as: "God is love"; He promised to always be with me, "even unto the end of the world"; "The Lord is my shepherd";

and, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day."

There were times when grief seemed overwhelming. I began to realize the danger of giving in to it, because with it came questions of God's love and wisdom in my situation. I knew that I must not doubt God's love or His presence, or I could be easily overcome by the enemy. I had to see God in His true attributes of love, mercy and power even though He had not seen fit to heal my loved one! God was my only hope—I could not afford to let doubt—or grief—separate me from Him.

Songs became a great source of comfort and inspiration. The Lord brought verses of song to my mind, such as, He loves me too well to forsake me or give me a trial too much; Tho'tried and pressed, yet I will trust—this one thing I can do; I'll lean upon thy loving breast, Thou'lt guide me safely thro'; and, God's way is best, heart, cease they struggling To see and know and understand; Forsake thy fears and doubts, but trusting, Submit thyself into His hand.

It came to a matter of choice. I must, by faith, accept the truth of God's love and presence even when I could not see love or mercy in the sudden change of my circumstance. To hinder His power through doubt and unbelief would cut off my only strength and security. I reminded myself often that this was God's will concerning me—He was still in control.

At times it seemed I had no strength, courage or even desire to face the challenges ahead. At such times and when it seemed I could not pray, I fell helplessly on God's mercy and simply told Him, "Yes!" I knew He could see the depths of my heart although I could not express myself. This one word was the affirmation of my love, trust and faith in my God;

whatever He chose, wherever He led, I accepted it as the very best for my life. Though it felt like everything in my nature was rebelling, I truly desired His will more than my own. He accepted that simple prayer and assured me that He would accomplish for me that which I could not—a total consecration and obedience. He gave me His strength and courage.

I made it a habit to pray with the Bible open before me. There are times that urgent requests or heavy burdens drive a person to their knees and prayer is spontaneous. But usually when I kneel in prayer, I feel utterly helpless. I want to draw close to God, but words fail me. At such times I just wait quietly. The Lord is so real and precious! Before long a scripture, thought, or even a song comes to mind that leads me right into His presence and I realize prayer is not just saying the right words; it is quietly submitting myself so the Holy Spirit can pray through me.

One evening not long after I was widowed, I knelt down, feeling a deep need and not knowing how to even pray about it. I opened the Bible and was led to the scripture found in Isaiah 54:5: "For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called."

That scripture was spoken to me so forcefully and personally that evening, it marked a major turning point in my bereavement. My husband had been a strong, loving, and faithful companion. He made the decisions and protected me. He was a good provider; I had no reason to be concerned about our livelihood. He was always right there for me if I needed comfort, counsel or just companionship. Now the Lord was telling me He would be all that to me—He was my husband! He was willing to fill the awful void left by my husband's absence.

I was a young teenager when I heard Sis. Ella Mae Huskey say, "The Lord is all to us that we will let Him be." I knew I could trust the Lord as I had trusted my husband. With deep gratitude, I accepted the Lord as my Husband and my Redeemer. He has been faithful to His commitment! I have been amazed time and again how He is right by me when I call out to Him. He has helped me time and again with small daily difficulties and made major decisions safely for me. The more I rely on Him, the more I feel His presence and concern in even the minutest details!

Then I had a great desire to learn more about God, my Husband. I wanted to become better acquainted with Him! I wanted to know His preferences so I could please Him. Prayer, preaching and the Bible all brought me a better understanding of the rich estate God had provided for me. I had heard about Him all my life, but now any mention of God and His wonderful attributes caught my attention. When I read about the mighty feats of the Lord of hosts in the Old Testament, it would thrill me to think—that is my Husband! He is my defense; He can do anything!

I never could have felt worthy to ask the Lord to fill such a place in my life; it would have seemed too presumptuous. But He offered Himself to me! He, my Maker, knew all my many faults and weak points, and yet He set His great love upon me! It was a joy to spend hours in His presence, separated from the world. Instead of dreadful loneliness, He filled those hours with His presence, love, joy and light.

Being alone after dark was something I had avoided from the time I was a child; I was not brave. I had never stayed alone in this house. Since the days were getting shorter, it was dark by the time to leave for night service; I would be coming home alone in the dark. It would have been easy to

stay home. But I knew my safety was in God's presence and that He would be where the Saints met together to worship Him. He proved that He was with me. He not only protected me, but He took away the fear and dread!

God promised to keep us in perfect peace on the one condition that we keep our mind stayed on Him (Isaiah 26:3.) Because of my natural tendency to be fearful, I took drastic measures to keep the devil from taking advantage of my thoughts. First, I sought the Lord for the portion of His Word that would sustain me for that day. But beyond that, I carefully guarded against letting my mind dwell on tragedies. I did not listen to the news or read a newspaper. When I heard the gory details of some event discussed, I asked the Lord to take care of the individuals involved and release it from my mind. The Lord gave me a peace above what I asked or thought of! He took away fear by assuring me that He was right there with me—I was not alone!

The command to "Rejoice in the Lord alway:" and emphasized by the words: "and again I say, Rejoice." Philippians 4:4, challenged me. How could I find joy when it seemed everything that gave me joy had been taken? The last verse in song number sixty-six in the Evening Light Songs, explains: Jesus bids be joyful ever, He himself the wondrous Giver, Flows within, a constant river, And my spirit must rejoice!

I was not joyful over the great loss but over the tremendous gain my loss had brought. Jesus filled the awful void Himself. He is an inexhaustible supply of love, joy and peace that will never leave me! I could agree with Psalm 16:6, "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage." I could accept God's will joyfully!

After almost forty-three years of marriage, I seemed so incomplete without my husband. I felt exposed and vulnerable

without his presence and protection. Gradually I have learned how to lean harder on the Lord and to acknowledge His immediate presence in every situation. The last words of the chorus of song number ninety seven, *Evening Light Songs*, say: *I am complete in Jesus' love*, *And my soul is satisfied*. I began to accept the fact that God still had a purpose for my life; I had work to do!

I know my experience is not unique. It is wonderful to know that God is a Husband and companion to anyone who will accept Him. My only purpose in relating my personal experience is to tell of His mercy to me and to lift Him up as the source of love, comfort and healing for anyone in the depths of grief and despair. He is able to meet any need; His great love will never fail you!

My Husband Is Not a Christian!

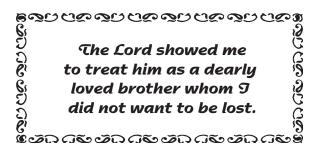
A Sister In Christ

ith a burden for our dear sisters living with unsaved companions, I will try to share some victories, lessons, and testimonies of different individuals who have walked that road before you. Due to the nature of the material and testimonies, this will be written anonymously.

First of all, I want you to know that your personal contact with the Lord is of utmost importance. I also pray that you will not become discouraged if you find that you have not had the grace that some will be sharing in this chapter. It is not meant to condemn, but rather to point to higher ground and a place with the Lord that we should work toward.

I will share a situation that one dear sister told me about in her life. Her husband was of a very jealous nature, imagining many things about her that were not true; but it was very real to him. She would get so hurt and crushed each time this arose, but she realized it was not her husband; it was the enemy trying to steal her salvation. She felt

there was a place of true victory with the Lord that would enable her to bear the accusations without retaliation or trying to explain. Each time the battle arose and she would fail of that grace, she would go down before the Lord and beg Him to send the battle again until she could get the victory over self defense. After much prayer and many battles, the victory was gained, and in time the Lord was able to work on her dear husband and help him to see the error of his ways. He repented greatly for that period of his life, but she first had to gain that place with the Lord of committing herself to Him fully. Don't become discouraged, but "... press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Philippians 3:14.



Because my unsaved husband's attention and substance were being diverted outside the home, my wifely emotions and needs were not being met. I felt I was on a roller coaster; impassioned to reach out and love and be loved, only to be met by coolness, sometimes freezing cold, other times indifference and rejection; but then occasional warmth and acceptance.

This led to miserable insecurity. The Lord showed me to set my wifely needs and emotions on the back burner, so to speak, and put my *pots of spiritual warfare* against the devils in my husband on the front burner, treating him in my spirit as a lost brother whom I dearly loved and did not want to be lost. So I did not look for it, nor was disappointed in the marriage relationship, when my emotional needs weren't met. I treated him as a brother who I would not let go. I determined, in prayers and fastings for him and myself, to have the grace, love and discernment to show Christ, to win him, to defeat and overcome ill-will, retaliation, indifference and coolness in my own heart towards him, and to target the demonic spirits that had him bound. Christ and His love won him back to us, and he's now saved. Praise His name!

Another precious saint that has faced many heavy burdens with her unsaved husband has shared the following for your encouragement. She remained true and was able to witness a change in her husband, but only because she would listen to that still small voice that would often tell her to keep quiet. Others felt she ought to oppose him more about the ungodly life he was living, yet she knew the only One that could change him was Jesus.

"Early one morning while still in bed, I looked up and saw as it were a figure standing halfway in the air dressed in the most beautiful white shiny robe. I have never seen anything like the beauty of it. As I looked up, I felt that it was Jesus and I began to say, "Jesus!" but He disappeared. I began to pray and tell Jesus I needed to know how to handle all the problems I was having.

"Then a voice said to me, 'As long as Peter kept his eyes upon Me, he was able to walk on the water' (Matthew 14:24-32.) I went into the living room and opened my Bible

and started to read. It seemed, as I was reading, I could see beyond the printed page to the boat and the people in it, with Jesus walking toward it. It seemed I could hear Peter calling out to Jesus who was bidding him to come. But as Peter came out, he began to sink! Then I saw how Jesus reached out His hand to help Peter and held on to him until they were in the boat. It is important that we keep our eyes on Jesus, regardless of what comes in our life. He is the one that will help us through every test and trial. He will always be there to help work things out.

"My husband had been asked to go along on a trip that I felt would be compromising to our marriage because of the nature and atmosphere of the place he was going. I felt that if he wanted to go, he should take his family. But he said he didn't want us to go. This seemed to put me in a very deep dark valley. It seemed that I was all alone in this valley.

"One evening while in prayer, I felt someone touch me on my left shoulder. (I was alone in the house at the time.) A voice said to me, 'I am here with you.' Jesus let me know that He was in the deep dark valley with me. Each day after that, it seemed I would climb a little higher on what seemed like a high mountain to the light of God's love. 'Bless the Lord O! my soul.'

"When my husband came home from the trip, he was upset because he didn't get to do some of the things he had planned. The car that was taken on the trip had to be repaired and time was spent repairing the car instead. The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.' Psalm 34:15."

I Peter 5:7 says: "Casting all your care upon him; for

he careth for you." Cast means to throw with force, hurl, fling, toss, put with violence, as to cast anchor, to reject, discard.

Care is anxiety. Cast all your anxiety on the Lord. Casting is a decisive act. It means to take the load we have been carrying and literally throw it on Jesus. What a relief when we do and realize Jesus is willing to be responsible for the things we are anxious about. "Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee . . ." Psalm 55:22. "For the LORD will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance." Psalm 94:14. "Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass." Psalm 37:5. "Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass." Psalm 37:7.

Bro. Ostis Wilson, in a series of lessons to the married couples, gave this instruction on the scripture Ephesians 5:22, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord." When you are living with an unsaved companion, they may require something of you that would violate your conscience; something dishonest, for example. He stated that we sisters have the right to not submit on that line and give the reason why we can't. But he also stated that it is important not to try to convince him of why we are not submitting; he is not going to understand. He doesn't want to understand, and for us to try to convince him of the reasons why we can't submit will only drive a wedge. We, sisters, want so badly for our husbands to understand us, it is easy to press the point. But we need to drop all reasoning and leave it with the Lord. He also told us to be sure at that time that we show the great-

est love and submission in all the other areas of our lives that is possible. This is a very valuable truth. It is so easy to become unsubmissive and begin to challenge our husbands along other lines, but may God help us to prove our love and submission everywhere we can.

There was a sister that faced this type of circumstance and desired so badly for her husband to understand why she could not do what he had asked of her. Though she was kind,



yet she kept trying to explain. It pressed him to the point of acting as he had never acted before. May God help us to be wise in these circumstances.

Just a word of encouragement to you who feel your emotions are almost numb, due to the circumstances you are having to handle and pray over. Do not allow yourself to doubt your contact with the Lord because of this numbness. Many times the battle is hard, and we have to—and should—control our emotions, as it would irritate our husbands to see us give in to those emotions. After doing this for a period of time, it seems that neither sadness nor joy can be felt, only a dead, numb feeling. At such a time, don't listen to the enemy. Do not let him convince you that you aren't saved or you

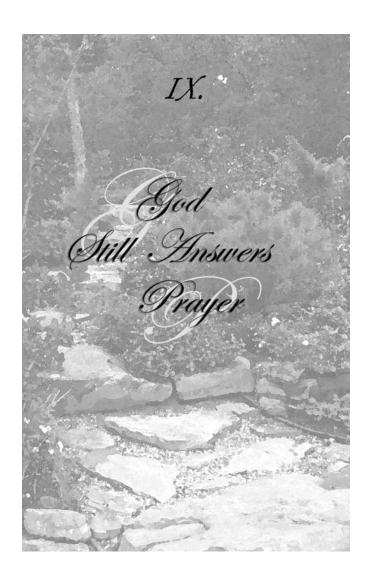
would be feeling joy. Press on and joy will come and the emotions will return. Psalm 32:11 instructs us to "Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart." I am not advocating being a hypocrite, but if you know that you are upright in heart, and you know that your desire is only to please the Lord, you have every right to be glad.

Search for things to rejoice about in your husband. It may feel awkward at first, but express it anyway, and as you practice rejoicing in those things, it will become natural in time. There will be a gulf between you when one is saved and the other unsaved, but work to bridge that gulf with love and compliments. Start with one thing that you can honestly appreciate about him and build from there. Who knows but what you may win your unsaved husband by the crucifying of your feelings.

We encourage you to take the time for your Bible study and prayer when your husband is not around. When he is home, do your best to spend quality time with him. If you go to your room and close the door for prayer, he will feel estranged from you even though he may be occupied with his own interests. It is important to stay so close to your husband that nothing can come between you.

The enemy may try to make you feel that you are not working for God if you do not talk to your husband about his soul or pray for him when he can hear you, but this will only make him resent you. The Lord that knows the hearts of men can deal with him about his soul, and He knows when the time is right to do so. Your duty is to love him, show him respect and appreciation as often as you can, and spend much time in private prayer for his salvation. True

love and a chaste life is our duty, and as the words of one song says, "When you have done your best, let Jesus do the rest. He will never disappoint your soul."



Divine Healing and Motherhood

PART 1

Sis. Anita Adams

dren, the question was raised in my mind—"Should we trust the Lord for the healing of our children?" People will tell you that they need to be old enough to make that decision for themselves! So, does God want us to entrust them into His hands? That question seems pretty simple to answer. Yes, God wants us to entrust everything into His hands. Let us look at the principles set forth in the scriptures.

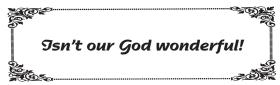
James 5:13-16: "Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray. Is any merry? Let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

Matthew 4:23-24: "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them."

Hebrews 13:8, Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.

One scripture that confirmed Divine healing to me as a teenager was II Chronicles 16:11-12,

"And, behold, the acts of Asa, first and last, lo, they are written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel. And Asa in the thirty and ninth year of his reign was diseased in his feet, until his disease was exceeding great: yet in his disease he sought not to the LORD, but to the physicians." Asa was a king that did what was right in the sight of God, but there was one thing the Lord was displeased with—he turned to the physicians. Even before the coming of Christ, the Lord had a plan for the healing of His people, and it was not in seeking out the physicians.



God talks about Abraham in Genesis 18:19 "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment . . ."

The Lord commanded Israel to teach their children. Deuteronomy 6:6-7 says, "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them 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." Here we find that God wanted them to teach their children all day long, in everything they did.

Lamentations 3:27: "It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth." Proverbs 22:6: "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Faith is built line upon line and precept upon precept. As we teach our children how to take things—small things—to the Lord, it builds their faith for bigger things. David first met a lion and a bear before he ever slew the giant. May the Lord help us to teach and instruct our children in faith.

PERSONAL TESTIMONY

I do not feel that I am more qualified than anyone else to write about this subject, and I hope there are others that the Lord will prompt to give their experiences so that we may benefit from them also. There have been times that Danny and I have felt like situations did not go as we wanted them to and wondered many times if we had done the right thing. But through it all, the Lord has stood by our side and helped us.

One of the first instances of sickness in connection with our children was just before we had our first son. I was about seven months pregnant when Danny came down with the flu and then took a back set. He was off work for approximately a month from a job that he had been on less than a year. From his symptoms, we believe he had pneumonia. He lost several pounds. Many times Danny's mom and I would start praying as he would start to eat because he could keep very little down. Almost the moment he would start eating he would start coughing and throw everything up. I began to wonder if the Lord would take my husband before our first child was born. Fears were great and anxiety was high. The Lord was very real though, and gave me songs.

LIVING BY FAITH

I care not today what the morrow may bring,
If shadow or sunshine or rain,
The Lord I know ruleth o'er everything
And all of my worry is vain.

I know that HE safely will carry me thro'
No matter what evils betide,
Why should I then care, tho' the tempest may blow,
If Jesus walks close to my side.

Living by faith, in Jesus above,
TRUSTING, CONFIDING IN HIS GREAT LOVE
From all harm safe in His sheltering arm
I'm living by faith and feel no alarm.

I never reached the place where I felt no alarm, but I did feel the great love of God and knew that, should He take my husband before our first child was born, He loved me and the little one very, very much and would take care of us. Trenton was born about one month after the Lord healed Danny.

No doubt because of the stress of Danny's illness, Trenton came about five to six weeks premature. His skin bruised very easily, and just trying to wake him up by gently pushing on his chin to open his mouth and insert the nipple would bruise him. One of the midwives really wanted us to have him checked over by a doctor, and told us that he could end up with bleeding on the brain. We didn't go to the doctor, and the Lord miraculously took care of him. When Trenton was between 3 and 6 months old, I saw a premature baby in the grocery store that had ridges in his head and found out that they were draining tubes to keep the bleeding from building up on his brain.

How gracious our God was to us! Both grandmas were invaluable to us during the first few weeks of Trenton's life and during Danny's illness. Granny Adams came out and stayed with me while Danny was sick and then returned during the first few weeks after Trenton was born. My mother and Danny's mother would take shifts through the night to make sure that he ate. One night I got up, and mother told me that Trenton had been jerking a lot as he laid in her arms. As I went back to bed, I told the Lord, "Lord, I don't know if this is a problem or not, but I know that you can take care of it." Later I found that my mother had prayed almost the same prayer and the jerking stopped and he slept calmly. Could that have been caused by bleeding putting pressure on the brain? I don't know for sure, but praise our God, He took it away and made him normal! He is a very energetic 16 year old now.

When Trenton was about 1 1/2 years old, we found ourselves looking forward to another little one to be added to our home. I did not have a lot of morning sickness and except for feeling drained all the time, felt good. At approximately the 25th or 26th week of my pregnancy, I began to have bleeding

and complications. Our daughter, Darla, came extremely prematurely, due to placenta previa. She weighed 1lb. 10 oz. and was 12 inches long. The doctor wanted to send her to the neonatal center at the Tulsa, OK hospital, and the helicopter even flew up to take her down there shortly after birth. We felt that we could not put her through that and opted not to take her down there. She lived on her own for one day and then went to be with Jesus.

How sad our hearts were, and yet we saw God's working in it all. The complication could have cost me my life had I carried her to full term. Before I delivered her, the doctor had asked me if I would accept blood, and at the time I felt that it was a natural substance and not medication, so I said that I would. The Lord took care of it, and when a few weeks later the news was reporting about blood supplies infected with AIDS, how thankful we were that I hadn't needed any blood. The spirit had interceded with groanings that could not be uttered because we knew not what to ask for as we should. (Romans 8:26.)

One thing that my nurse kept telling me over and over was that this was my body and I didn't have to do anything I didn't feel comfortable with. Sometimes doctors come across as having all the answers, but we are paying for their services and should realize that we have a say in the matter. However, with that said, I would urge anyone rejecting the advice of a doctor to do it in the spirit of meekness. If we come across as independent and defiant, we do not portray the beauty of Christ to them. That may be the very reason God has allowed us to be in the difficult situation, that we may show His beauty and righteousness to the doctors and nurses.

There were those who told me that if God had wanted me to have a girl, He would have given me one. That was hard for me to deal with. It made me feel that God saw that I would not be a good mother to a daughter. But the Lord helped me to see that I didn't need to blame Him for my loss. If Eve had never partaken of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, or if Adam had been strong enough to resist, we would not have to deal with sickness and imperfections in our life. So who is really to blame for the grief and sorrow we experience in life? The DEVIL, because he tempted Adam and Eve. Many times the devil does his best to make us bitter toward God in making us believe that God brought all this sorrow upon us, when really the person we should be bitter toward is satan. Satan has gained many a soul when they went through grief, because he got them to blame God instead of himself. Think of Job. Who was really to blame for all of Job's losses? The devil! God only gave permission to prove the devil wrong. He had that much confidence in Job.

Later, at the time of our second son's birth, I read an article about extremely premature babies. The statistics show that 85% of babies born at this gestation die. Out of those who do make it, at least half are blind, mentally retarded, or have cerebral palsy. Many require heart surgery because their hearts are not fully developed. Out of one hundred extremely premature babies only about fifteen live and only about seven to eight are normal. God's way is best even though it brought grief, and we have missed our daughter greatly. I told the nurses that if I kept her alive and she wasn't normal, I would feel guilty that I had forced her to live that way. But if God kept her alive, and she wasn't normal, I would be able to deal with it because it was His will. The Lord let me know that by trusting Him with our little girl, I had gotten her to Heaven. That is the highest goal that I have for all my children, that I will be able to teach them in such a manner that they will

make Heaven their home. I need your prayers.

Our second son came a little over a year later and the only complication I had was the fear and anxiety that it would happen again. The Lord blessed with a fast delivery and a very healthy baby boy. How we did thank the Lord for his blessings to us! However, between 3 and 6 months of age, he developed eczema, and our lives became a whirlwind of oatmeal baths and sleepless nights. Along with all that, we were trying to figure out what he was allergic to. I put him on formula at nine months thinking that something I was eating was bothering him. At one point my cousin gave me a book about allergies. I followed the diet plan they recommended to find out what he was allergic to. We really didn't see much improvement and decided it must be something in the air, such as mold or pollen that was bothering him. I even made cotton shirts and pants for him, rinsed my clothes twice, and used soaps free of perfumes and dyes.

When he was 22 months old, our third son joined our home. Five to six weeks before his due date, complications developed. When we went to the doctor she encouraged us to go to Tulsa to the Neonatal Center, telling me, "This baby is big enough to survive. This baby is not like Darla." She agreed with us that Darla was too early.

Danny and I discussed it. We realized they could send the baby down to Tulsa as soon as he was born. Since I would not be able to travel, Danny would be there making decisions by himself about the baby. I knew I wouldn't be able to see the baby after it was transferred until I was released from the hospital and could go to Tulsa. So, that afternoon I was transferred to a Tulsa hospital, and the next morning our third son was born.

Did we make the right decision? Should we have trusted

the Lord more? I'm not saying we did everything right, but the Lord has been good to us through it all. We ended up with a doctor that told Danny he knew that we hated doctors. How does one react to that sort of statement? Danny just didn't say anything.

The afternoon after our son was born, his doctor came in and told us that we had a very, very sick baby. He had gotten an infection from me, and they were not sure if he would make it. While he was talking to us, they paged him for the Adams' baby, so we knew there were problems. After the doctor left the room, we had prayer and prayed that if it wasn't God's will for our baby to live to please not allow the doctors to just keep him alive as a vegetable. We saw some babies there and wondered what hope they had for the future. God heard that prayer and worked in so many ways.

They asked Danny to sign a form giving permission for a spinal tap on the baby to find out what infection he had. Danny told them that he wouldn't sign it and that we didn't want it done. We found out that they are used to everyone giving them permission to do everything they can, even if the side affects could be very dangerous. They didn't know what to do when he refused. God blessed though and Danny signed another paper stating that he did not want the spinal tap done. Once again, we *do* have a say in what is done, even if we are in a situation where we are under medical aide. Again, I would urge you to do so in the meekness of Christ. A haughty, this-is-my-right attitude does more damage than good.

I really feel that we had a doctor that did not believe in God. A few days later when we went in to check on our baby, he said that our baby had gone from being his sickest baby to his healthiest baby—well, not totally the healthiest baby, for some of the babies were ready to go home and ours wasn't—

but his most improved baby. We let him know we had been praying about it and would continue to ask the Lord to bless him. His response was something about magic. Was that the reason God allowed us to be put into that situation—to show the doctor the power of God, not magic??? I don't know, but in every situation, God is able to work for His glory.

My doctor had tried to encourage me with the story of her daughter. She had come five to six weeks early and had to stay in the hospital for seventeen days. Now she was a healthy, active teenager. Danny looked at her and said, "If our baby is only in here for seventeen days I'll be happy." She agreed and said we had a very sick baby and he would probably be in there longer; they were telling us probably at least four weeks. Do you know, the Lord got him out of there in sixteen days, one day earlier than her daughter! Isn't our God wonderful!

Later we learned just how merciful our God had been in giving our baby a touch and sending him home. Someone else in the area had a premature baby at the same hospital shortly after we brought our baby home. While the baby was in the hospital, it and another baby developed spinal meningitis. Had Rodney been in the hospital for four weeks, he would probably have been there during that time and could have contracted it. Apparently a nurse brought it into the neonatal center unknowingly. What a Mighty God we serve!

Even the nurses were surprised when Rodney came home. They didn't have any idea he would be going home so early or they would have already ordered his hearing and eye tests. Hearing loss is a side effect of the antibiotics he was given, and the oxygen he had received could have caused blindness. To this date, Rodney hasn't needed glasses. He is an avid reader, ready to go into the fifth grade. His hearing also is good.

There are so many things I could tell that happened during that time. My sister was blessed with a scripture right after Rodney was born and she shared it with me. It was Mark 16:17-18, "And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." My faith took it in that whatever they gave our son, it would not hurt him because this was a promise of Jesus.

We learned during this situation that the nurses kept track of the parents who called to check on their baby. They logged onto Rodney's chart every time we called. We would call every morning and then, as soon as we could after Danny got home from work, we would drive the hour to the hospital to be with Rodney until visiting hours were over. Each time we had to sign in, so they knew whether we cared enough to come and see our baby or not.

We may seem strange to those in the medical field because we believe in Divine healing. But when they see us really putting forth an effort to care for our child, they realize our love for our child. The hospital staff pointed out some babies whose parents hardly ever came in to see them or had ceased to come at all. Showing a real love for your child goes a long way with the medical personnel. We must not be afraid to visit them even though we may be putting ourselves in an awkward situation. Sometimes we feel intimidated by the medical professionals and so avoid interacting with them. If you have a child in their hands, do everything you can to be friendly, happy, and show that you really care about your child. Let them see you as a real person. Actually this applies to interacting with *anyone* of a different belief than ours. Let

them see you as a normal person, enjoying life and loving your family.

Also, we learned that the doctors did many things that Danny and I thought they would have to first obtain our permission for. But to them, it was just their normal procedure, and they didn't even think about asking. When we are in their care, we just have to commit some things into the hands of the Lord and do the best we can.

Because of the stress in our life with a baby in the Tulsa hospital and grandparents taking care of our other two boys, Darren's eczema flared up terribly. At Rodney's six week checkup, the doctor noticed Darren's red, itchy arms and asked about it. As we talked to her about it, she commented that many times children will outgrow it by age five or six years. I told my mother, after we left the doctor's office, that I didn't know if I could handle another 4 years of this!

That summer was especially bad, and we grappled with how to have faith. God suddenly helped us to notice some commonalities when Darren would have an extreme outbreak. If we went on a picnic or went out to eat at Pizza Hut, he would get so much worse. We started looking at the food and common ingredients. On picnics one has lunch meat sandwiches, potato chips, etc. Pizza Hut uses pepperoni, Canadian bacon, etc. on their pizzas. Sodium nitrates and monosodium glutamate were the common ingredients. When I started reading the labels, I found that my bacon, sausage, canned soups, etc. all had one of these two ingredients in them. We started buying Healthy Request soups and Braums sausage after we found that they didn't have MSG in them, and quit using bacon for seasoning. How we thanked God for hearing our prayers to show us anything that we could change

that would be a help. As I stated before, I had tried a diet for about two weeks that was supposed to pinpoint any food allergies and it didn't work. Only God could have helped us figure out the cause!

After Darren entered the first grade and began eating lunch at school, he didn't want me to send special lunch meat for his dinner. That night Danny, Darren and I talked about it. Danny told him that the only thing he knew to do, if he didn't want to take the lunch meat to school, was to pray and ask Jesus to make him able to eat whatever they served at school without causing him problems. Darren wanted to pray, rather than take the lunch meat. As I have told others, I knelt with them, but it was Danny and Darren's faith that brought the answer. My rational mind was questioning how we could ask the Lord to help him eat lunch meat, hot dogs, etc. when we knew they were not the healthiest for us anyway. We knelt and they prayed and from then on Darren ate at school, Pizza Hut, and anywhere else we were—without problems. Prior to this, I couldn't even fix a cooked ham because it had sodium nitrates in it, but I do now. After allowing us to go through the furnace, God had brought us out into a wealthy place. To this day God is blessing Darren. He has drier skin than most people but eats anything and does almost anything. Our God is so GOOD!

In the frustration of not knowing what Darren was allergic to, one of the lessons I felt that the Lord wanted me to learn was to 'Praise God anyway!' I struggled with that. Do I thank the Lord that my baby is itching and so uncomfortable? He taught me that, while I may not feel like thanking Him for the trial, I can thank Him for His power. I can thank Him for the grace He alone can give. I could thank Him for my son. I could thank Him for a very supportive husband.

After Rodney's birth, Danny took over caring for Darren at night. Now, Danny is the type that lays down, closes his eyes and falls asleep and basically doesn't know anything until morning. He seldom knew when I was up with the babies feeding them. During this time, Darren actually came into our room and Danny was awake talking to him before I even knew he was in there. I had a lot to be thankful for. May we learn to count our blessings in the midst of our trials.

Now I would like to illustrate how that every situation is different, and each doctor you deal with is different and reacts to you in a different manner. We must have the Lord leading us as we interact with each one. One summer shortly before the Monark camp meeting, Trenton wanted to have a water fight. I thought I would be this wonderful mother and, even though there was oodles to do, I would take time to make memories with my son and have a water fight with him. Did I ever make the memories!!! Trenton came up next to me as I was filling my bucket. I put my thumb over the hose, turned and sprayed him, not realizing that he was short enough that the water hit him in the eyes. The pressure was increased enough with my thumb over the hose that I literally peeled off the outer layer of his eye ball!

When he was still having trouble with his eye the next morning, we thought he had something in his eye and took him to an eye doctor to get it out. That was when I was told what I had done to his eye with the water pressure. The eye doctor wanted to put antibiotic drops in his eyes, I believe every few hours. I asked him in a nice way if there was anything else we could do to keep it clean, as we preferred not to use medication. He was very congenial and told me to keep it washed with salt water, but if we saw any stringy matter coming from the eye, he was getting an infection and it could cost

him his eye. He told me to call him from camp meeting if necessary and he would fax me a prescription to keep the infection down.

We went on to camp meeting. Everyone knows how dry and dusty it can be in the middle of July. Trenton was out playing and running around, squinting with his eyes because the sun hurt them. At one point we saw some stringy matter and how the devil did torment me! I guess I felt guilty because I was the one who had caused the injury and I felt that I could not stand it if he lost his eye. Fear really gripped me. We asked a minister and his wife to come in our camper and have prayer with us. The Lord blessed and his eye healed completely. We never called the eye doctor for the prescription.

We went home on Thursday or Friday to do laundry. About 9:00-10:00 o'clock that morning the phone rang and Trenton answered it. It was the receptionist from the eye doctor wanting to know how he was doing. Trenton said, "I can see, and the light doesn't hurt it." I went on to tell her that we had seen some stringy matter but God had taken care of it and offered to bring him in for a checkup. She said, "No, it sounds like he is doing fine, and that is what we wanted to know."

Several years later we faced a similar situation with Andrew, our youngest. On Mother's day, when he was two years old, he got his fingers caught in a pallet jack and nearly cut his middle fingers off. It had cut the tendons, so when we went to the emergency room at Vinita to have them sewn up; they sent us to Tulsa. After waiting for about three hours, we finally got a specialist to look at them. He told us that our son had cut the tendons, and his hand needed to be sewn up right away. He had come in for another patient and said that when he got finished with him, probably about midnight, he would

sew Drew's fingers up. Later he came back and said that Drew would be first, since we were there first. We thanked the Lord out loud. I wonder what that doctor thought?

Later, an ambulance owner told Danny that he wouldn't have waited that long. We were the ones paying the doctor's wages, and we should have demanded that they give our son attention. But look how God took care of it without us getting irate. He works for His people!

After the doctor had sewn up Drew's fingers, he came and talked to us and told us he was sending a prescription home with us. We should have just been quiet and then not filled the prescription. Instead, I asked, as I had with Trenton's eye doctor, what he needed the antibiotics for. This Doctor was totally different. He let us know in no uncertain terms that Drew needed them. Now we were backed up against the wall. So every situation and individual is different, and some will be understanding, and some will be aggressive and pushy. All I know to tell a person, if they are ever in a similar situation, is to lean hard on God and endeavor to do what He wants you to. "When we have done our best, let Jesus do the rest, and He will fix it for you."

When Trenton was in the eighth grade, he had what appeared to be an appendicitis attack. He got to the point that he could not walk because of the pain, and we would wheel him down the hall to the bathroom when that was necessary. I believe he missed at least two weeks of school. During that time, we fought many fears. One thing I have learned with the public school system, (I believe this is something that Danny's mother always encouraged us to do,) is that if you keep them informed, rather than waiting for them to call you, they are much more willing to work with you. We would call the school every day and just say, "Trenton was still running

fever last night so he won't be at school today." Or "Trenton's not able to eat much, and can't come to school today." The Lord blessed that, during the time of Trenton's illness, they had several out of school because of the flu, and it was going especially hard with them. Many would have backsets, so they were not surprised that Trenton was sick as long as he was. God is so good to help in every detail.

We also feared the Department of Human Services. Danny's service manager knew that Trenton was very sick and that Danny had taken off to go home and have prayer with him. He had quizzed Danny about whether he was just going to pray for him and Danny had told him, "Yes." The service manager said he understood. This service manager was close friends with the DHS manager in our town; we even knew him fairly well ourselves. But when it comes to trusting the Lord with our children, it doesn't matter if you are good friends or how they respect you, they can't understand the power or wisdom of God.

With Trenton being the age that he was, I asked him at least twice if he wanted to trust the Lord for healing. One time he looked at me and said, "What else would I do?" How we thank God for giving him faith!

As we got into this very hot battle, I was so thankful to feel a clean, clear conscience before the Lord. Just about a month before this, I had noticed an attitude that I didn't feel was right. I had been praying about it and asking the Lord to show me how to overcome and the position He would have me to take. So, even though the circumstances had not totally changed, I knew that I had been honest before the Lord and was working on overcoming.

Dear ones, we *must* make sure there is *nothing between* our souls and the Saviour when we are seeking for healing.

In prayer one time for Trenton, Danny laid everything out on the altar and told the Lord that he was willing to do whatever God wanted him to. Had we gone into this battle without keeping our soul in tune with God, or had pulled back on our consecration, we could not have had the faith we needed. The scripture says, I John 3:21, "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God." We cannot expect to be able to have faith and confidence toward God if we are walking behind light, or not keeping our relationship with Him current. It is a very, very serious thing to be trusting the Lord for the healing of our child's body while covering up bad attitudes or hypocrisy or failing to allow God to have control in our lives. We are holding life and death in our hands.

My highest goal for my children is for them to make Heaven their home. In the middle of Trenton's sickness, I asked the Lord, "Lord, do I pray for healing?" I had told a mother that I used to baby-sit for that I would rather lose my child at a young age, than see them turn out to be a drug addict or a gang member. So I took it to the Lord in prayer and the scripture He gave me was, "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanks-giving let your requests be made known unto God." Philippians 4:6. I prayed for healing from then on. Praise God, He heard prayer.

There is so much that I could tell you here. Most importantly, I would encourage you to take every situation to God in prayer. He is able to give you scriptures and songs to help you have faith. I did not feel that I had the faith to face the severe battle of affliction we were in and told my husband and the Lord that. But praise God, He is the author and finisher of our faith, and He can, one step at a time, one scripture at a time, and with a song through the night, give us what

we need to follow His path. "Lean hard on Him, oh, tested soul, on Him thy cares and burdens roll." The LORD healed our son, and he is now a healthy 16 year old. All glory and honor belongs to our God in Heaven.

About nine months to a year after our battle with Trenton's illness, our youngest son who was in kindergarten at the time, complained of hurting when I would lift him from the top bunk bed. Upon inspection we found a lump under his arm. It grew to about the size of a large egg and was very sore. I showed it to Daniel, and we prayed about it that night. He was acting fine other than his underarm being sore. He didn't have any fever, nor was he vomiting, so we sent him to school the next morning. Later the school nurse called and asked me if I knew about the lump. She really encouraged us to have it checked out as she was sure it was a lymph node that was swollen. Drew's teacher had this happen to her daughter, and they had done emergency surgery on the girl because they said if the lymph node burst it would spread poison throughout the body. I believe this happened on a Friday.

By Monday, Drew was running fever, so we kept him home. The school nurse called me to see how things were going and when I told her he was running a fever, she said that was probably the reason the lymph node was swollen—he was fighting an infection. After that, I would call the school each day and tell them whether he was running a fever. They didn't want him to come back to school until he had been fever free for 24 hours. Once again, if you call the school, instead of waiting for them to call you to find out where your child is, they are much more agreeable to work with. Thank the Lord, they never tried to force us to take him to a doctor, and the lymph node went back to normal after his body fought off the infection. We are so grateful to God that the lymph

node did not burst and that the Lord healed him. Our God is so great!

When Trenton was in the second grade, he had a very minor bike wreck and broke his elbow. I took him in to have it x-rayed, and we found that he had broken one of the nubs off the upper arm where it sets onto the elbow. They had us see a specialist the following Tuesday. He would not even try to set it without putting him to sleep and being able to put a pin in it if it was necessary. This was one of the times that I prayed until I felt that God would set the bone, and he wouldn't need to have the pin put in it.

We took him to Tulsa, and they tried to set it but were not able to, so they immediately did surgery and put a pin in the elbow to hold the bone in place. They told us he would need a pain killer, but, praise God, He heard our prayers. After we got home, Trenton became uncomfortable and asked us to pray for him. The Lord heard prayer, and he went to sleep, sleeping all night. What a MIGHTY GOD we serve!

I really battled with the thought that I had prayed until I felt I had faith, but God had not rewarded that faith. It was one time that I felt that I was exercising faith to the best of my knowledge, and the Lord had seemed to give me Scripture to confirm that He would set the bone for us. Why hadn't He set the bone? I still don't know all the answers, but several years later the Lord used the story of Job to help me understand that He wanted us to have faith in God even when it looks like He didn't keep up His end of the bargain. The devil told the Lord in Job 1:9-11, "... Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is in-

creased in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face."

The Lord pointed out how that, in the Early Reformation, there were many instances of healing, almost with every prayer. My grandparents had mighty healings from the Lord. Then the Lord put the *church* in place of *Job* in the scripture, and I got a picture of satan saying, "Does the Church of God have faith in You for nought? You answer every prayer they pray. When one gets sick, You heal them—You've put a hedge about them. Take that hedge away and cause doctors to appear to know more than You, and they won't have faith in You any more." And the Lord answered satan and said, "Go ahead and try them. I believe I will still have those who will trust Me in spite of you making Me look like I have failed them."

What a challenge to serve the Lord, not just because He will heal me, but because I know this is the way His hand doth trace. Have faith and trust God, because this is what His Word teaches—to have faith in God even when the devil will tell us that God failed to stand beside us. I desire more faith in God.

May this be an encouragement to all who read this to put their trust in the Almighty God who made Heaven and earth.

Not My Will, But Thine!

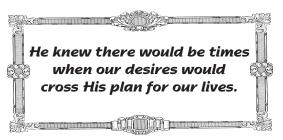
Sis. Irma Sallee

have shared extensively of God's many answers to prayer when He healed our daughter, Karen, of malaria in 1997. The Lord miraculously spared her life. It is a current testimony of divine healing. But is God still answering our prayers even when His answer is the direct opposite of our request? The Bible plainly states, "... if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done. And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." Matthew 21:21-22. There are many more scriptures that, taken individually, appear to give us control over our lives and seem to put God's power at our command.

Yet another scripture says, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." Isaiah 55:8-9. Why would God find it necessary to share that information with us unless He knew there would be times when our desires would cross His plan for our lives?

There are balancing scriptures such as 2 Timothy 2:15 which says, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." As we study the Word of God, we find many examples of those who submitted their desires to the will of God. Jesus Himself prayed, "... Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done." Luke 22:42.

Through painful experience, God has shown me that faith in His healing power is not a magic wand that we can wave at will, demanding that our request be granted. I have experienced many times when my prayers were not answered as I had requested. The lesson of submitting my desires to the will of God was never so forcefully applied as at that devastating, consecration-testing moment when I saw my husband, Bob, slip into eternity at the age of 50 years!



Two years previous, the Lord had given us a burden for Malawi, Africa. All our dreams and plans had focused around the consecration we both made at the altar the night Bob fully consecrated his life to God's service. We knew the consecration could be tested by life threatening experiences, but God had become so precious to us that it was with little reluctance that we both made that consecration.

Whatever It Takes

There's a voice calling me from an old rugged tree
And it whispers "Draw closer to Me;
Leave this world far behind,
There are new heights to climb,
And a new place in Me you will find."
For whatever it takes to draw closer to You,
Lord,

That's what I'll be willing to do For whatever it takes to be more like you That's what I'll be willing to do

Take the dearest things to me
If that's how it must be
To draw me closer to Thee;
Let the disappointments come,
Lonely days without the sun
If through sorrow more like you I become!

Take my houses and lands,
Change my dreams and my plans
For I'm placing my whole life in your hands;
And if you call me today to a land far away,
Lord, I'll go and your will obey.

We were praying for the Lord to show us His will, and we felt the future might include a move to Africa. We consecrated to leave our comfort zone here in America, and we placed the care of our aging parents into God's hands. We knew we were at the threshold of a more abundant life with the Lord, and we were aware that His total control of our lives was essential. We were confident that nothing we faced would be more than we could bear.

In 1998, almost one year after Karen was healed, there was a famine in Malawi. Bob returned for a short visit to help purchase and distribute food to the saints in need. Soon after arriving home, he became extremely ill. We prayed, exercised faith, called in the saints and did all we knew to do. Although Bob's condition continued to decline, I was confident that this was just another test of faith.

Then one night the Lord took Bob. I didn't expect it, and I was not prepared for it emotionally or in any other way. We never knew for certain that Bob had malaria until after his passing. The strain of malaria that he had was so different from Karen's that there were very few similarities. In the beginning, his symptoms resembled a severe case of the flu. But his condition worsened, and he died within eleven days of returning home.

I remember that night so well. I walked into Bob's room and was so shocked as I saw he was only moments from the crossing. I rushed to his side, took both his hands in mine and prayed with all my heart, "God, if You don't do something, Bob will be gone. Please review all Your evidence (That may have been a poor choice of words, but it was all I could express at the moment) one more time and see if You can change Your mind and allow Bob to stay. But God, even at this moment, I will not remove my consecration from the altar. If after reviewing Your decision, You still see best to take him, I promise I will not deny my faith in You nor charge You foolishly."

Within one minute, Bob slipped into eternity. God's answer was clear. Later someone said maybe we should have

rebuked death and prayed life back. I could not have done that. I believe God gave me my answer, painful and frightening though it was. He gave me a confidence that this, too, was all in His plan.

I literally felt like the bottom dropped out of my world. For the next hour it seemed my very faith in God was being put to a greater test than ever in my life. It was as though I was holding to a rope coated with Vaseline—I had to get a knot in the end of it fast! My knot was the song, "I Still Trust You!" We had played it many times on a tape. I begged those around me to please sing any of it they could remember. As they sang, my heart lifted up to God and He gave me a knot at the end of my rope. As I look back now, I can see where the Lord carried me during that time. I was mentally, physically and emotionally drained.

I understood the scripture even better that says, "they twain shall be one flesh." As Bob passed, I felt a physical tearing in my heart that left me feeling like I was only half a person. The only way I could describe it to others was that it was like hopping around on one leg. The torn side was so vulnerable to the elements that I felt I could hardly protect the exposed wound from germs and contamination. I hurt deeper than I had ever hurt.

The next morning after Bob passed, I remember standing at my back door looking out at nothing in particular. I was feeling such a pain and emptiness, and yes, some fear, disappointment, and confusion. I was confiding to the Lord, "I feel like I'm at the bottom of a mountain, and I can't climb it. There's no way to get to the other side but to climb. I have never climbed a mountain before; I don't know how to do it. I'm walking in pitch black; I can't see the next step ahead of

me. I have to keep walking, but I'm not sure there's going to be ground under my foot when I put it down. I don't know which way to turn."

I just stood there quietly and heard the Lord speak to my heart so clearly, saying, "Take my hand and we'll walk together."

I could relate to that. When Bob and I would get out of the car, I was the one who sprinted for the store as he casually followed. Once, turning back to wait for him I said, "If you would walk faster, we could walk together." He replied, "If you will take my hand, we will walk together." From then on when we got out of the car, I would grasp his hand or arm. I'm not sure if I pulled him along or he slowed me down, but it worked. The Lord's instructions to me were clear and brought direction to my path. God did give strength and guidance for each day.

As I reflect over the past eight years, I see God's hand directing my path—a path that was dark, uncertain and frightening. When Bob died, I had three children still at home, no insurance, no savings and a credit card bill covering his last trip to Africa. The mountain seemed insurmountable. Without divulging my financial status to anyone but the Lord, shortly after the funeral enough money came in to cover the funeral expenses and the credit card bill. My heart is overwhelmed even now as I remember how our friends, family and church family stepped forward with their love, support and prayers. After all of the outstanding bills were met, we had about \$200 left. Step by step, God led us safely through the valley that seemed like a minefield.

By choice, I had always been a stay at home mom. I took my role of homemaker and mother seriously. The jobs I had as our children were growing up were those I could do

out of my home or in the school they were attending. These jobs brought in extra cash, but they would never have supported a family. I faced these financial fears the first morning I got up as a single parent. I prayed, "Lord I have no employable skills, and I still have three children at home. I'm not expecting a handout. I am willing to work, but please, would You provide work that will allow me to be home with my children when they are at home?"

God did just that. Soon after the funeral, we started receiving SSI. By the fall of 1998, I was able to enroll in a local vocational school, which one of my daughters, Angela, was already attending. Grant money was available through a program there called Displaced Homemakers (I cringed at the title.) This opportunity allowed me to be in school while my children were in school. I was also able to be at home by the time they got home.

After completing schooling, I still had one son, Steven, at home, and both of my parents were severely handicapped. Again I prayed, "Lord, I have employable skills now, but I still have one child at home. Would you please allow the jobs to come to me that will accommodate Steven's schedule and allow me the time needed to care for my Mom and Dad?"

Within two weeks, I had a call requesting a Home Health Aid. Since that was not the field I had gone to school for, I almost declined. But while still on the phone, I felt a nudging from the Lord saying, "You asked Me ..." I accepted the job on a two-week trial basis. That launched my career as a Home Health Aide. I was able to be home with Steven and care for both of my parents as needed. I have never put in an application, yet I have had more work than I can do.

I still cannot tell you why God saw fit to take Bob, but God has long since reminded me of our commitment to Him. He has also reminded me of the value of one soul. Several people have told me that Bob's life and death challenged them to a deeper walk with God. That's enough for me. Besides, as I look back over these last eight years, I see God's hand so clearly as He guided us around potential problems. He has adequately provided for us financially, allowed me to be a homemaker to my children and an aide to my parents. He granted all my requests. Nothing could fill the void Bob's death left in my life, but God's presence in the furnace made the flames bearable. Since that day, God has reinforced in my heart and mind the understanding that He is in control.

Sometimes we forget that we are pilgrims here. Heaven is our goal. When we have lived and prepared for it, how can arriving at our final destination be called defeat? "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" I Corinthians 15:55.

We trust God's wisdom as well as His power to heal. Our faith in God should supersede physical outcomes and work for our spiritual good. It is this faith that brings about real peace and rest in whatever trials and afflictions we face in living or dying. Even when we don't understand why God doesn't grant our request, we can be assured that His way is best. God's power and love is no less in those times, and His grace will enable us to meet every test with victory. Hence, may the prayer of our heart always be, "Not my will, but Thine".

The Ultimate Health Care Plan

Sis. Irma Sallee

or several years now I have worked as a Home Health Aide. Prior to this job, I have assisted with the care of many saints in their last months and days. The contrast in these experiences has given me an appreciation to God for including Divine healing in His Son's sacrifice on the cross.

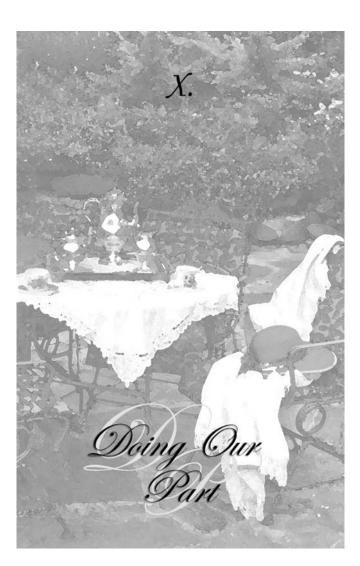
When we are in pain, the devil may cause us to think, "Relief is just one pill away." I am caring for people who are trusting in the hand of man for their help. They are still suffering; relief is only temporary. The painkillers do not correct the problem; they only alleviate the pain. Surgeries and medications intended for healing may have severe side effects—many times necessitating even more medication. Worst of all is standing by a patient as they hear the doctor, their only hope of recovery, say the dreaded words: "I am sorry. We have done all we can do. You need to get your business in order and call in your family. You have only days/weeks to live." The despair and hopelessness of that moment cannot be put into words.

I have assisted many saints as they faced death and have never seen this despair. I have seen God take the hand of His child when death was imminent. I have witnessed the brightened countenance and the transfer of interests from this mortal life to the home beyond. I have watched as God monitored the pain and many times have seen Him remove inevitable pain and discomfort. I have been with others as they stood around the bedside of their loved one, watching as their eternal spirit slipped into the portals of glory, and have observed the peace and comfort, resulting from God's presence in the battle, bring balance to the grief of the loss. These experiences have strengthened my faith and cause my heart to fill with gratitude for His faithfulness.

> Who can be more capable and trustworthy in the upkeep of our bodies than the One who created them?

I do not minimize the sincerity of medical professionals, but my heart swells with gratitude that God has a better plan for the care of our bodies, which is not subject to human error! While men may make errors in their attempts to bring healing to sick or injured bodies, our trust and confidence in God's ability to heal us is not based upon their skill, but upon His promises and the many instances of answered prayer we have witnessed.

I have recalled many times a statement Sis. Anneta Williamson made concerning the illness of her son, "I honestly believed my son's best chance of recovery was in trusting the Lord." That statement echoes in my ears over and over. I say it from my heart to those I work around who question my convictions of Divine healing. Who can be more capable and trustworthy in the upkeep of our bodies than the One who created them?



Nutrition, Divine Healing and Motherhood

PART II

Sis. Anita Adams

od designed our bodies to fight off disease. Think of a cut in your flesh. God designed our skin to grow new cells and knit back together until one can hardly tell there was ever a cut there at all. If we fail to give our bodies the nutrients they need, our bodies cannot do the job God designed them to do. I am not a nutritionist, but will pass along some basics that have been given to me, either passed from one generation to the next, or from health classes at school.

As I stated in the chapter on "Divine Healing and Motherhood," Darren's allergies were from preservatives in the food. These are really hard to eliminate, and many times we have to do the best we can and let God do the rest. I feel that many of our health problems are due to additives in our food. Our forefathers grew or raised almost everything they ate.

My grandparents had a garden, raised their own beef to eat, had chickens for their eggs and meat and dairy cows for their milk and butter. It was natural. Today it is difficult to grow or raise everything ourselves, but it is wise to get the most natural ingredients possible. Sometimes we cannot afford the more natural because it is so much more expensive.



Since we don't have the opportunity to grow everything we eat, let us look at how we can help our bodies get the vitamins and nutrients they need to ward off sickness and disease. As parents, we are responsible to train our children in their eating habits to help them get a balanced diet and thereby be stronger and healthier. I started noticing that one of my sons liked to eat cereal, graham crackers, etc. and then when supper time came he didn't want to eat the meal. He was getting too many carbohydrates/sugars, and he didn't have a balanced diet. As his mother, I was responsible to see that he ate meat, vegetables, bread and milk, and didn't eat just sweets, or his body would be void of the nutrition it needed to be strong and healthy.

There are some basic food groups. We and our children need to get a proper amount of each, or we are missing out on vitamins, minerals and nutrients that will make our bodies function properly. Our bodies have been designed so

wonderfully by a great Creator. A car cannot run without gas, nor with gas alone; it also needs oil for the engine. So our bodies need some of each of these food groups to keep us healthy. Even then, we will have sickness, but at least our bodies will be better equipped to fight them off.

PROTEIN

Foods in this group are meat (fish, poultry, pork,beef,etc.) beans, nuts, eggs, etc. Protein is needed for building and repairing muscle tissue, developing enzymes, hormones, and antibodies, and giving us the essential amino acids that our bodies cannot make. You need 5-7 ounces of protein, besides what you get in 2-3 cups of milk.

VEGETABLES

Foods in this group are corn, green beans, carrots, greens, cabbage, broccoli, potatoes, etc. There are several more like Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, squash, okra; the list goes on. Vegetables are packed with vitamins and minerals. You need 3-5 servings a day. An adult serving size is generally 1/2 cup cooked; and about 1 cup raw, leafy vegetables.

This is probably the area in which we are most deficient. How many children do you know that ask for and enjoy a variety of vegetables? We must train our children to eat a variety of vegetables and fruits and encourage them to try new ones. I have found that if I ate a variety, many times my toddler would ask for what was on my plate without me even forcing him. I have had this happen with salad. Your child should also eat vegetables besides just potatoes and corn. These are good in moderation and have many vitamins, etc.

but along with peas, they are starchy vegetables that break down into sugar when digested by the body. If they are eating only starchy vegetables, it can overload their pancreas. The pancreas creates insulin that helps the body digest sugars. Everything works together for the proper function of our bodies.

FRUITS

Fruits are such a delight—oranges, apples, blueberries, cherries, bananas, strawberries, blackberries, melons, cantaloupe, etc. These can add quite a variety to our meals, as well as color. (My Grandma Eck used to say that she liked to have a green vegetable and a yellow vegetable on the table to add color and make the meal pretty. As well as a colorful table, she was also bringing a variety of vitamins and nutrients to the meal.) You need 2-4 servings a day, generally 1/2 cup.

BREADS, CEREALS, RICE AND PASTA

Bread, rice, spaghetti, macaroni, etc., oatmeal, cream of wheat, grits, bagels, and cold cereal are all foods in this group. It is suggested that we have 6-11 servings of this food group; generally, 1 slice of bread or 1/2 cup of cooked cereal 1 cup for some of the pastas. However, I would caution you to not over indulge in the white flour pastries and bread, which contain little fiber and have most of their nutrients bleached out of the flour. Whole grain bread has much more of the fiber and nutrients that the body needs. Brown rice is higher in fiber and therefore turns to sugar more slowly, making it easier on the pancreas. Fiber has been praised for helping ward off diseases such as diabetes, cancer, etc.

DAIRY PRODUCTS

This group includes milk, cottage cheese, sour cream, vogurt, and, ves, ice cream. However, we cannot eat enough ice cream to get the calcium we need without taking in too much sugar. I am amazed at how many people, including children, won't drink milk. There is a lot being said by the medical world about osteoporosis. We must get plenty of calcium for our bodies to be able to build strong bones. If your child will not drink milk, you must find other foods that are calcium rich and make sure they eat them. Brazil nuts, egg yolks, and other nuts and vegetables have calcium in them. There are calcium enriched apple juice and orange juice. These are all good sources of the calcium your child needs. One research article I read stated that the amount of calcium taken daily during the teen years determines how sturdy or porous the bones will be forty years later. It is very important that we make sure that our children get the calcium and vitamin D they need—2-3 servings of dairy products a day; 1 cup of milk, 8 ounces of yogurt, or 1 1/2 to 2 ounces of natural cheese.

FATS, OILS AND SWEETS

Foods in this group are butter, oil, oleo, lard, shortening, mayonnaise, etc. While we do need some fats and oils to help us with proper digestion, they need to be limited. Our society consumes many meals at the fast food chains, and as a result we get far too many fats and oils. Many salad dressings are 90% fat content. Many of the desserts we eat are loaded with fat. Use foods in this group sparingly.

I would give a warning here. It is difficult to eat out frequently without consuming too much fat. The mayonnaise,

salad dressings, french fries, onion rings, sausage biscuits, cherry pies, milk shakes, etc. all have a very high fat content. I will not tell you that you should *never* eat out, but if you want your children to get a balanced diet, eating out needs to be limited. By limiting it, you will also help your family budget. If your child's diet consists mainly of pizza, fast food hamburgers, lunch meat sandwiches, french fries, tator tots, donuts, Little Debbie cakes, etc., they are not getting a well rounded diet, balanced in all the nutrition their bodies need to help keep them healthy. I want to reiterate that just because we eat healthy does not mean that we will never get sick. But it does mean that our body has the nutrients to do what God designed it to do—that is, to fight off infections and germs.

Here are some ideas for planning your meals:

Breakfast—Juice or fruit, cold or hot cereal, milk, eggs, toast, ham, with a serving of milk and/or juice.

Lunch & Dinner—Meat (chicken, beef, fish, etc.) Vegetables (preferably 2 servings.) Fruit (at least 1 serving.) Bread, potatoes, rice, or pasta, etc. (1 serving.)

Guidelines for a Healthy Diet

The following guidelines can help you make healthy food choices. They apply for all family members two years and older who are in good health.

- 1. Variety. No single food supplies all the nutrients in the amounts you need.
- Each day eat a variety of foods from the five major food groups: vegetables and fruits; breads, cereals, rice and pasta; milk, yogurt, and cheese; meats, poultry, fish, dry beans and peas, eggs and nuts. (The majority of your fats will come from these foods.)

- Your best source of vitamins and minerals is from food. If you take supplements, look for multiple vitamin and mineral supplements at or below the Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDA), since these generally are safe to take.
 - 2. Healthy weight. If you need to lose weight:
 - Get more exercise.
 - Eat fewer calories
 - Eat less fat and fatty foods.
 - Eat less sugar and sweets.

If you are within normal weight range:

• Maintain your weight by eating and exercising appropriately.

If you are underweight 20 percent or more:

- Increase calories and exercise moderately.
- 3. Lower fats, saturated fat and cholesterol. Many nutritionists feel that a diet low in fats, saturated fat and cholesterol reduces the risk of heart disease, obesity and some forms of cancer. Fat should NOT be limited for children younger than two years.
- Limit the amount of butter, cream, hydrogenated margarines, shortenings, coconut oil, and foods made from such products.
 - Choose healthier oils, such as olive oil or canola oil.
- **4. Vegetables, fruits and grain products**. These foods are generally low in fat and good sources of fiber and starch. The more you include in your diet, the better.
- **5. Sugars only in moderation**. Frequent exposure to sticky, sugary foods promotes tooth decay. Sugar is low in nutrients.
 - Limit the use of sugars and foods with added sugars.
 - Select fresh fruits or fruits canned without sugar.

- 6. Salt and sodium only in moderation. Sodium is one of the factors that contributes to high blood pressure, especially for about 20 percent of Americans sensitive to sodium. There is no test to tell who is sensitive to sodium. Table salt contains about 40 percent sodium.
 - Don't add salt at the table and use little in cooking.
- Use salt-free Mrs, DASH to season food. Your taste buds will soon adjust to the lower salt.
 - Check labels for amount of sodium in foods.
- Limit salty foods (potato chips, pretzels, salted nuts) and condiments (soy sauce, steak sauce, garlic salt), some cheeses, pickled foods and cured meat.

RECIPES FOR SICK FOLKS

BAKED CUSTARD

3 eggs, slightly beaten 1/3 cup sugar Dash of salt 1 teaspoon vanilla 2 1/2 cups scalded milk

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Mix eggs, sugar, salt, and vanilla. Stir in scalded milk gradually. Pour into six 6-ounce custard cups; sprinkle with cinnamon or nutmeg according to your taste. (A sick person may not want cinnamon or nutmeg.) Place cups in oblong pan, 13x9x2 inches on oven rack. Pour very hot water into pan to within 1/2 inch of tops of cups. (If you do not have custard cups, you can place an 8"x10"x2" pan inside an 11"x14"x2" pan, fill the larger pan with water within 1/2 inch of the top of the smaller pan and bake. It will probably take longer to bake, but I have done it this way and it has worked well.)

Bake until knife inserted in the middle comes out clean, about 45 minutes. Remove cups from water. Serve warm or chilled. This is a protein rich, yet soft food that can give a sick person strength when they can take very little nourishment.

BEEF TEA

This recipe was given to my mother by my grandmother, Eva Probst. I wish she had written down her wisdom with the sick, before the Lord took her to Heaven. She seemed to know just how to help.

Chuck, rump, or arm roast cut into stew size pieces;

Loosely pack beef chunks into a pint jar.

Add 1/4 cup water per pint

1/2 teaspoon salt per pint.

Put flats and rings on jars and pressure for 75 minutes at 10 pounds pressure. The broth from this meat is very nourishing. If the patient cannot eat the meat, press all the broth you can from the meat and feed to the patient. This is the one thing that Trenton could eat when he had what appeared to be an appendicitis attack.

CHICKEN SOUP

2 leg and thigh portions of a chicken

2 stalks of celery sliced

1 small onion chopped

Salt and pepper to taste

3 chicken bouillon cubes

Put all ingredients into a large pan and cover with water. Boil until chicken is tender and pulls away from the bone.

Remove chicken from broth and de-bone. Add noodles, if desired, and cook until noodles are tender, or use broth to give nourishment to patient. (If I am making chicken and noodles I like to add a can of cream of chicken soup.) Chicken soup has been proven to be helpful when you have a cold and sore throat.

My husband's mother, Eula Adams-Shirrell, would fix tapioca pudding for her children when they were sick, and that seemed to be something that tasted good to them.

TAPIOCA PUDDING

1 egg, beaten to lemon color 2 3/4 cups milk (2% or whole) 1/2 cup sugar 1/4 cup quick cooking tapioca 1 teaspoon vanilla Dash of salt

Combine ingredients in a 2 quart saucepan and let stand 5 minutes. Heat to boiling over medium heat, stirring constantly. Remove from heat and add vanilla. For creamier pudding, place a lid or plastic wrap on the surface of the pudding while cooling. 2% or whole milk is best. Serve warm or cold.

WISDOM GIVEN BY GOD FOR SICK FOLKS

When Grandma, Margaret Eck, was living in Grubbs, Arkansas, Sister Della Anshultz had not been able to eat anything for days because of what appeared to be a gall bladder attack. Grandma was fasting and praying, asking the Lord to show her what she could eat. The Lord told her to take **Whole Wheat Bread** and toast it in a low oven,

300 degrees, until it was toasted through and through—like croutons are toasted all the way through. Then pour hot water over it and let it set for a few minutes. She then pressed the water out of the toasted bread and fed it to Sis. Della one teaspoon at a time. That was the first food Sis. Della had been able to keep down. The Lord healed her of the gall bladder attack. Thank the Lord for His power!

RICE WATER

1 cup of rice (not Minute rice)

4 cups of water

Boil until rice is done. Drain off water, season with a little salt and serve to sick patient sparingly.

STOP DIARRHEA

Always remember the A, B, C's when your child has diarrhea.

A pples / apple juice

B ananas

C herry juice

Make sure you are getting 100% juice. So much of the juice available in the grocery store is only 10-15% actual juice. The rest is just food coloring and sugar water, not nourishing at all.

Another thing that has checked diarrhea more quickly with our children is the following recipe:

Scald 1/2-1 cup of milk. Pour hot milk over crushed saltine crackers. Sprinkle with sugar to taste and serve after it has cooled enough to eat. We have also poured this hot milk over buttered toast sprinkled with sugar. When nothing else was working, this always did.

GENERAL ADVICE GIVEN FROM MOTHERS

- Never send your child to school without breakfast unless they are able to eat breakfast at school. It will help them concentrate on their school work better than on an empty stomach.
- Should a nursing mother have a plugged milk duct, use warm moist heat and gently massage affected breast several times a day.

Keep a bottle of Aloe Vera Gel in the refrigerator. This is extremely soothing when one has burned their finger on the cook stove, iron, etc.

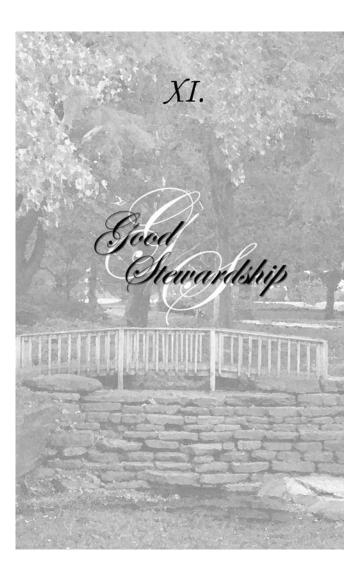
Butterfly stitches many times will hold a cut together tighter and leave less scarring than stitches. To make a butterfly stitch, cut the center of a band aide or bandage tape with a V on each side, leaving a narrow strip in the center. Place one end of tape on one side of the cut and pull the skin together with the other end of the tape or band aide. Use as many as you need to hold the cut together.

Dissolve 1 teaspoon of salt in 3/4 cup of warm water and gargle when you have a sore throat. It tends to cut the phlegm, and attack germs in the mouth. If young children have a sore throat, encourage them to eat salty foods like crackers, or plain potato chips.

Should your children come down with measles, chicken pox, etc., keep them warm so they will break out on the outside and not the inside. Keep them in the house out of the cold damp weather.

As a mother, there will be times that we will miss out on some of the fun because we are taking care of a sick child. I remember missing some family reunions and Christmases because of a child with a fever. That is part of being a mother. It can be lonely, but know you are doing the best you can to help your child get well.

If you want something to drain, apply warm compresses. If you want to reduce swelling apply cold compresses or ice.



Finances and The Home

Part 1

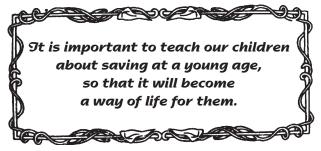
Sis. Anita Adams

"Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways and be wise: Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, Provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest." Proverbs 6:6-8.

he ant is not the only animal that does this. The squirrels gather nuts during the summer and fall and hide them in the nest for the up-coming winter. Let us consider the wisdom the Lord gave to the animals. How will the ants or the squirrels survive the harsh, cold days, when snow is on the ground and the food is covered up, if they do not lay in store for future use? They will not survive if they do not follow the plan that the Lord built into their instincts.

Each one of us has a summer of our income. We, too, will not survive well if we do not lay up in store, during that summer, for the coming winter. Summer time—a time when things are going well, work is steady, and the income is stable.

If we fail to save up for the winter—the time when there is a downsizing in the company, when we are sick and not able to work for a week or month, or old age when we will not be able to work at all—we are not applying the wisdom that God gave even to the animals. I saw my grandparents able to support the work of the Lord while on the very limited income of Social Security because during their summer of life, they had spent carefully and laid in store for their winter of life—old age.



Our society is trained for instant gratification. People tend to live for the moment, not thinking about the future and how they will handle its ups and downs. Society, in general, is conditioned to think, "If I want it, then I deserve it, so I'll just pull out the credit card and charge it so I can have it." We use credit cards. But credit cards have ruined many a family's finances because they bought what they wanted, maybe even something they felt that they needed, and did not have the money saved up to pay the credit card bill when it came in. It is best to use credit cards only when you can pay them in full each month without paying interest. Interest rates on most cards are exorbitant.

One time we bought a computer with no interest for a year. We did manage, but it was like a noose; every bit of extra money that came in had to go to that payment. I was so glad when it was paid off! If you have to borrow money, by all means, do it with a very low to zero percent interest rate. Even then, it is easy to get so many bills that your paycheck is spent, before you even get it. It will put you in such a bind that you have nothing "to give to those in need," as we are instructed in Ephesians 4:28. It would be better to put money back a little at a time. Then when the vacuum sweeper needs to be replaced, you have the money to go and buy one, without a monthly payment.

I am not condemning those who have chosen to finance many of their purchases, but as one scripture says, "... yet show I unto you a more excellent way." We have found that this path is a path of freedom.

A sister shared this experience with me. Her daughter needed eye glasses because those she had were too small; she could tell they were uncomfortable for her. She thought about charging them on a credit card, but she didn't want to teach her children to just pull out the credit card. She told her daughter that they were going to start praying about it, and ask God to supply the need. During this time, she struggled with the idea of her daughter wearing eyeglasses that were too small for her. One day, they got a check in the mail from the electric company. It was within a few dollars of being the exact amount needed to purchase the new glasses. Isn't our God good to supply our needs if we will just wait patiently for Him!

When I was still at home, working and making my own money, my mother gave me the advice to "Give the Lord a tenth, save a tenth, and spend the rest wisely." This started me on the path of giving to the Lord and saving something out of each pay check. The Lord really owns everything; we

must not limit our giving to just a tenth. He may ask for more. I have heard of those who purposed to give the Lord 15% when they were not in a financial position to do so, yet the Lord blessed them and helped them to meet their bills. I am convinced that if each of us would make sure to give at least a tenth, the work of the Lord would no doubt prosper more.

Once a person is married and has the responsibility of clothing and feeding children, etc. you probably will not be able to put back a tenth for savings, but you can put back something. It is important to teach our children about saving at a young age, so that it will become a way of life for them. One sister exhorted us all to save. Even if you save only quarters or your change, you will be surprised to see how fast it adds up.

My husband and I used the money we had saved before marriage as a down payment on our first home. What a blessing to have been taught to store up and save as the ant does. Some seem to feel that if our children have earned the money, then as parents, we should not tell them how to spend it! That is not being a responsible parent. We must train our children in finances, just as we train them to be clean and neat. Allowing them to spend \$100 on a pair of pants, just to have the latest fashion, is not training them to be responsible stewards of the Lord's money. How are they going to have the money for a down payment for a home when they are in their twenties if they have spent all the money they earned in their teens on their whims: an extravagant stereo, exotic vehicle accessories, expensive fashions, etc?

I realize that sometimes we must allow them to stretch their wings and make decisions that we see are not the wisest, so that reality will sink in and teach them a lesson. As parents, we have to be careful that we don't shield them from reality. They may not be able to buy gas to go with the young people or have money to go to Braum's during camp meeting because they have been unwise in their spending. We must not bail them out just because we want them to have a good time, and they are with saintly young people. We have to let their bad decisions hurt, so they will learn from them. That is hard to do sometimes.

"So," you say, "How do I start saving? It seems that my money is gone before I know it, and I don't know how I would set any aside." This is where I would encourage everybody to get on a budget. What is a budget? A budget is taking all your known expenses, figuring out how much you need out of each paycheck to meet those expenses, and then setting aside that amount for each expense so that the money will be in the checking account when the bill comes due. Then you know how much you can spend on groceries, gas, clothing, etc. A sister told me that we all live on a budget—it's just that too many times our budget does not match our income; it is more than our income, so we end up in trouble.

Let me give you an example. Let's say that you get paid every Friday. You have rent or a house payment for \$400.00 a month. You know that the electricity runs approximately \$125.00, the water and sewer about \$40.00, the telephone bill \$55.00, and car insurance \$30.00 a month.

Rent	\$400.00	divide	d by 4 v	veeks e	equals	\$100.00
<i>Electricity</i>	\$125.00	"	"	"	"	\$ 31.25
Water/sewer	\$ 40.00	"	"	"	"	\$ 10.00
Telephone	\$ 55.00	"	"	"	"	\$ 13.75
Car Insuranc	e \$ 30.00	"	"	"	"	\$ 7.50
Total						\$162.50

That means that you must bring home more than \$162.50 each week or you will not have money to tithe, eat, or buy clothes and toiletries that are needed. The above expenses are very conservative. (I doubt that you can find a nice family-size house in the Carthage, MO, area for \$400.00 a month.) It is important for the parents of sons to make sure they learn a trade with which to make a living. Flipping hamburgers at McDonalds or sacking groceries at the local grocery store will not provide enough for a family, unless they have other income, such as cattle, or work two jobs. It takes \$4.07 an hour, after taxes are taken out, with 40 hours a week, just to come up with enough money for those expenses. A family has to eat, have clothes, buy gas for the car, etc. We are doing our sons a disfavor when we fail to encourage them to get a trade that will allow them to make more than minimum wage. Sometimes that will require either college or a trade school education, but they must apply themselves so that they can fulfill the place the Lord has prescribed for them—to be the provider of the household.

I have received permission from "Crown Financial Ministries" to use some of their information to help give families guidelines for their budget. In these guidelines you will find percentages of your income that can go toward Housing, Food, Auto, etc. If you exceed these percentages in one area, then you must reduce the percentage in another area or your budget will not work.

You can also go to their web site at www.crown.org and find more helpful information, plus forms to print that will get you started on a budget. Or you can call them at 770-534-1000 and either buy a budget kit or receive helpful information about setting up a budget.

STEPS TO SETTING UP A BUDGET

- STEP 1. Fill out **Monthly Income and Expenses**. Enter either the known amount for an expense, or an estimate.
- STEP 2. Once you have figured out all of your income and expenses, divide the monthly income and expense amounts by the number of paychecks you receive each month.
- STEP 3. Next you will need to make copies of the **Individual Account Page**, and title a page for each expense that you have along with the amount you need to deposit from each paycheck. Example: Mortgage/Rent—\$100.00; Electricity—\$31.23, etc.
- STEP 4. The next pay check you get will need to be divided between each of these expenses according to the amount needed to pay the bills and buy the necessities. Enter the amount under the **Deposit** column and add it into the balance. Use the same date and name for the income source for each entry on the Individual Account pages. Since Daniel works at Carthage Ford, ours would say: 1/01/06 Carthage Ford and then the amount for that expense entered under the deposit column. If you are working on a cash basis only and do not have a checking account, then label envelopes with each expense and divide your money between the envelopes.

STEP 5. Whenever you write a check at the store put it down in your budget under the right expense. Example: Clothing 1/01/06 (check number) 10001 Sears for shoes \$17.74. Enter this amount under the **Withdraw** column and subtract it from the total you have in clothing. If using cash only, then pay for the shoes out of the Clothing envelope and write it down on the outside.

If you buy several things from one store like Wal Mart, then estimate the amount for each expense and divide the check between those expenses. For example: you buy hose for \$4.88, milk for \$3.23, butter for \$1.99, and toilet tissue for \$2.48. The hose, with tax, would cost approximately \$5.00. Enter that under the clothing expense sheet. The toilet tissue would cost approximately \$2.75 with tax so enter that under your toiletry expense sheet. If you add \$5.00 and \$2.75 together you get \$7.75. Subtract that total from your check total and you have the amount you would enter into your grocery expense sheet. Use the same date and check number for each entry.

The total of all your **Individual Account Pages** will be the total amount that you have in your check register. You are just dividing the amount among your several expenses so that you don't think you can spend all the money in your checking account. Sometimes people see money there and think that, since all the bills are paid this week, they can spend the rest. In reality they need part of this week's paycheck to help pay for the house payment, or electricity, etc., next week. If you have any left over after depositing into

each **Individual Account Page**, then that is extra either to be put into savings or to buy something you need but normally do not have the money for.

May God bless us all as we endeavor to be good stewards for Him.

Finances and the Home

Part II

Sis. Anita Adams

"And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Luke 12:15, 22, 29-34.

ebster's Dictionary says that *covet* means to desire ardently (especially something that another person has). *Covetousness* means greedy; avaricious—too much desire to get and keep money; greed; cupidity.

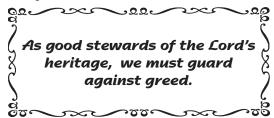
The following definition of covet and covetousness is taken from "The Popular and Critical Bible Encyclopaedia and Scriptural Dictionary," 1902.

Covet 1. Sinfully and immoderately to desire earthly enjoyments, as honor, wealth, pleasure. 2. To desire earnestly in a lawful manner (such as to "covet earnestly the best gifts..." I Corinthians 12:31.)

Covetousness—unlawful gain; the desire to have more. It is an inordinate desire of earthly things, or of what belongs to our neighbor. Covetousness is a vice that becomes stronger in old age, when other vices are weakened; it can never be satisfied; it renders men the abhorrence of God, cruel, oppressive, and unjust towards neighbors; and it betrays the man into sins and miseries unnumbered.

I Corinthians 6:9, 10: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards . . . shall inherit the kingdom of God."

The Word of God is very strong against being covetous. We live in a very covetous age. Our society feels that they must have the latest fashions, the latest gadgets and vehicles, the fanciest houses; the list goes on. People who can't afford adequate necessities will pay hundreds of dollars for a certain brand of shoes. If we are not watchful and prayerful, we will find ourselves affected toward covetousness. May the Lord help us!



The devil will try to slip in covetousness when he sees that we are trying to be careful with the money the Lord has entrusted into our hands. He will plant the seed of covetousness in our heart and give us an inordinate desire for earthly things, especially things that will raise our social status. I have had the Lord tell me that I was buying certain items because it made me feel richer. Not that the items were sinful; I was being drawn toward covetousness. We have to be careful; we can get ourselves into debt—when God would have provided something less prestigious, but within our budget and just as durable.

As good stewards of the Lord's heritage, we must guard against greed. The devil would like to give us an inordinate desire for money in the bank; to hoard money like misers. He will get us so caught up in how we can make more money that we fail to keep our soul in tune with the Lord. It will then be easy to hold a grudge against a brother or sister over a dollar that they may have forgotten to repay. Most of all, the devil will do everything he can to hinder us from giving to God's work. Jesus realized the grip covetousness had on people even in His time, and He warned against it. We must

seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness or we will fall prey to covetousness. What will it profit me to have money in all the banks if I lose my soul in hell? (Mark 8:36-37.)

As parents, we must guard against planting the seed of covetousness in our children's hearts. We battle this much more than our forefathers did. **Did you know that it is a blessing not to have more than enough money?** When I, or those of my parents' generation, asked for some new craze, it was easier for our parents to say, "NO!" The money wasn't there for it. They were struggling just to have enough food to feed all the mouths around the table. Today, we know many times that we can afford it if we really want to, or at least we can charge it on the credit card. Being tender, loving parents, we hate to disappoint our children so we end up saying, "YES," when we should be saying, "NO."

A neighbor lady told me that when she was growing up, she wanted money for something special at school. Her mother carried a coin purse for the Lord and a coin purse for the family. When she asked for the money, her mother told her to go see which coin purse had money in it. The Lord's coin purse had a little in it, but the other was empty. Even if her mother had wanted to give it to her, she couldn't. The mother may have cried on the inside because she couldn't give her daughter what she wanted, but it was not hard for her to say no; she didn't have it.

I read a devotional based on Jeremiah 16:20 "Shall a man make gods unto himself, and they are no gods?" It stated, "Israel had the besetting sin of ancient idolatry; spiritual Israel can be plagued with the same folly. Remphan's star no longer shines (Acts 7:43;) women no longer weep for Tammuz

(Ezekiel 8:14;) but we still build the golden calf of Mammon (Luke 16:13) and pride still erects its shrines for us to bow down to. Self wants to erect altars to the flesh wherever it can.

Favorite children are often the cause of much failure in believers. The Lord is grieved when He sees us spoiling them excessively. Children can live to be a curse to us as great as Absalom was to David, or they can be taken from us to leave our homes desolate. *If Christians want to grow thorns to stuff their sleepless pillows, let them indulge their children.*"—Charles Spurgeon.

Because we do live in an age of prosperity, it is going to take more resolve and grace from the Lord for us not to indulge our children. It is hard to purposely tell our children, "No, I am not going to buy that for you," when in the back of our mind we know that we could somehow budget it into our finances, if they really want it. Here is the real damage done to our children—when they have always had whatever they wanted—they will not know what it means to deny themselves.

What does the Bible teach us about our wants and desires? "And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it." (Mark 8:34-35.) When the Lord begins to deal with our children's hearts about salvation, they come to an altar of prayer. At the altar, they are instructed to take up their cross and deny themselves and follow the Lord. But they have always had their way. What does deny mean? Whenever they wanted something, they got it, and now you are asking them to deny themselves? They don't know how to!

This does not always have to be material things. It can be allowing them to join in with activities that their neighbor friends are doing. I have felt the pressure with my boys being in the public school. You hate to make your child stand out. You hate to withhold from them when everybody else thinks it is so harmless. And yet, if I do not teach my child how to say no to small indulgences that can lead them away, how will they ever say "NO!" to drugs or premarital sex? We are teaching our children an important lesson in strength of purpose and conviction when we can look them in the eye and say, "Not this time." or "No, I do not feel comfortable with that." May the Lord help us all to have the strength to deny our children anything that would hinder them from following the Lord.

Let's look back at Luke 12:22, 29-30: "Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things." There will be times when circumstances out of your control may put you into deep debt. At those times, remember "your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things." This is a promise you can stand on when temporal circumstances are discouraging.

I remember times, when I was still at home, that the Lord supplied our needs at just the right time. One time in particular stands out. My mother was operating a wood stove store. To get better pricing on the stoves, she would have to order in February or March, though she did not pay for them until September or October. This year, it had been an exceptionally warm September, and she had not sold very many

stoves. I believe that she also got an additional discount if she paid by the 10th of the month. Anyway, the bill was coming due and she lacked the money to pay it. We girls knew about it and were praying with her that the money would be supplied. Every day we would come in from school or work and ask, "Have you sold anything today?" The answer was mostly, "Not much girls. Just some plumbing parts, etc." As the due date got closer, my mother felt that she had to get something from the Lord. We had a trampoline, and that night she went out and laid on the trampoline, looked up at the stars and prayed. The Lord dropped song #56 from *Evening Light Songs* into her mind. It says:

"Oh, look at the faithfulness of Christ, our Lord,
How He saves and keeps the soul,
Who trusts in His majesty and standeth on His word,
Shall be safe while the billows roll.

Oh, look at the universe that He has made;

See the twinkling worlds on high;

Alone on His fiat are these mighty planets stayed,

Then we know He can never lie.

She shared with us girls that the Lord had assured her that He would be faithful and provide for the bill. It came down to the day before she needed to put the check into the mail and still she had only sold a few dollars in plumbing or electrical parts. The bill was several thousands of dollars. At closing time, she locked up without the amount needed. After she came home, the phone rang and a man on the other end apologized for calling her after hours. He asked if she would please open up and sell him a wood stove. He had just

gotten a call that his brother in Texas was very sick. He didn't want to leave his wife without heat, as he didn't know how long he would be gone. Of course she willingly opened back up and sold him the stove and accessories. When he left, she had the remaining amount to pay the bill. How our hearts did thank the Lord!

There were years that her taxable income was below poverty level. Yet, I don't ever remember being without food or proper clothes. I really don't remember feeling overly deprived. Sure, we couldn't get everything the world has to offer, but God always supplied our needs; "all things that pertain unto life and Godliness." The Lord helped us to manage our money; our bills were always paid on time. Never do I remember the phone or the electricity being cut off because of late payments. That is very important for a clear testimony in this world. If you don't pay your bills, how can you be a witness spiritually? We found things on sale, at garage sales, or did without until we could afford them.

I remember one time that Mother wanted a dishwasher to help out with the house cleaning. She would start dishes, get a customer and maybe not be able to finish them, so we girls would come home from school with breakfast dishes still waiting to be done. The Lord provided a used dishwasher at a very reasonable price and it worked well for years. I believe she liked it better than the newer one in her house now. God is so good to provide our needs and sometimes our wants; but our needs are all that are promised.

I truly believe that sometimes the reason we struggle with faith in God for the healing of our physical body is because we haven't had to trust the Lord to provide our temporal needs. Some time ago I read Sis. Ruby Stover's book, "Life's Golden Gleanings." They had to pray down water in

the desert and a job, so they could have food to eat. The Lord kept the wagon wheels from creaking so they could escape robbers and healed their only cow so they could have milk to drink; the list goes on and on. Did they have faith in God when sickness came? Yes, the Lord had blessed them in all these temporal needs, why wouldn't He heal their body? May the Lord bless us with more faith!

When Rodney was born prematurely and remained in the hospital for 16 days, we saw our debt climb overnight. The Lord blessed and enabled us to pay everything off by the time he was 2 years old. One song says,

"Consider the lilies, they don't toil or spin,

Yet there's not a King with more splendor than them;

Consider the sparrow, they don't plant or sow,

Yet they're fed by the Master who watches them grow;

We have a heavenly Father above;

With eyes full of mercy and a heart full of love;

He really cares when your head is bowed low;

Consider the lilies and then you will know."

I believe Rodney's hospital bill alone was \$38,000.00. That did not include my doctor bill, his doctor bill, radiologist, etc. Danny told the congregation, after we paid it off, that had you handed him the national debt, he wouldn't have felt any more overwhelmed. But praise God, the Father that takes care of the lilies and sees the sparrows fall was our Father and worked for us in everything. He paid that bill in several ways. He burdened His people to send us love offerings. There was one family that sent us a check every month for several months. When we paid it off, we told them that

they didn't need to feel obligated any more.

It was humbling to receive money from our fellow Christians, but what a blessing that was! I would encourage you to follow the leadings of the Lord and commit to supporting His work on a monthly basis. The missionaries, Faith Publishing House, pastors, evangelists, etc. have bills just like you do, and they come due every month. An offering once a year, while it is good, does not take care of the monthly bills that come due after that yearly offering is made. If the Lord should burden you to commit to Him to send a monthly offering, do so until He lifts the burden.

Danny's work load increased at his job. Danny is paid on a commission, and the more work he turns out the more his paycheck will be. The Lord blessed his job and supplied more work for him, gave him knowledge and wisdom to complete the work quickly and supplied part of the funds for the bill that way. I believe that during this time my husband also received a pay raise.

Another way that the Lord paid off the bill was to cause some of the doctors and the hospital to accept a reduced amount if we would pay them off. A vice president of the bank in town told Danny that the hospitals sold the bills to creditors for \$.50 on the dollar. We called the hospital every month before we wrote out our monthly payment and asked if we could settle without them selling it to a creditor. We told them that we would borrow the money elsewhere and pay them what the creditor would buy the bill for. After Rodney was a year old, they agreed to settle with us for \$15,000.00. When we added up what we had already paid in monthly payments and the \$15,000.00, we found that they had cut the bill almost in half. Praise our God! We borrowed the money from family members and one year later the Lord had helped us pay it all off.

There are two things I would like you to notice right here. First, when we have a large debt and are not able to pay it, often, rather than talking to the person we owe the money to, we ignore it because we are embarrassed. In the end we ruin a relationship or our credit because we have not kept in touch with our creditors. We rented our first two little houses to others after we moved out of them, so have had dealings with debtors. We worked with people and felt so much better about the situation if they would call and tell us, "I don't have the money right now. I'll give you \$100.00 now and the rest when I get paid next Friday." Of course, you must make your word good, or your creditors will lose faith in you. However, I feel that communication is a very important factor in keeping a good relationship with your creditors. A debt doesn't go away by ignoring it.

The second thing I want to deal with is borrowing money from family members or friends. This is a very easy way to cause hurt feelings within the family. If you borrow money from a family member or friend, you should treat it just like you would a loan from the bank. Budget your money so you can always have the payment there on time. Set a time of the month when they can expect their payment. We even filled out a promissory note for the family member stating the amount we owed, the amount of interest that both parties had agreed upon and when the payment was due each month. We always agreed upon an interest percentage that was cheaper than we could get at the bank but higher than what the person could get from a savings account, so it was a blessing to both parties. In our situation, both parties were saved and earnestly living for the Lord, so no one was trying to take advantage of the situation. There is a scripture that says "Be ve not unequally voked together with unbelievers." We have heard this applied to marriage, but it can also be applied to your financial dealings. We always paid by check so that we had a paper trail to show exactly what we had paid if there ever were any questions.

A word of warning: If you know the person wanting to borrow money from you has bad credit and doesn't pay their bills at the bank, then don't loan them any money unless you can handle never getting your money paid back—and still love that person. Money is probably the number one reason for hurt feelings between people. If you know that the person borrowing the money has some sort of substance abuse, don't loan the money. You could be enabling them to continue in their sin. We have known people who lost thousands of dollars either by loaning the money directly or by co-signing a note at the bank (saying that if that person defaults, they would pick up the bill.) Sometimes it's very hard to keep a good attitude toward the person owing you the money when they are not paying it back. Better to not get into the position of being cheated than to lose your soul because you can't forgive the person who cheated you.

A husband and wife *must* be in agreement about loaning or borrowing. If the wife wants to loan money to one of her family members, but the husband doesn't feel comfortable with it, then she must submit. If the wife would insist on loaning the money, and the person fails to pay it back, she could be placing a temptation in her husband's life that he may not be able to overcome. It may always be a struggle for him to see that family member and show the love that he should.

It would also be wise for the husband to listen to the wife's concerns about loaning or borrowing. If, through prayer, you still can't come to an agreement, then perhaps the Lord is allowing her fears to keep you from overextending yourself and getting into a financial bind.

I want to encourage sisters to stay in the place the Heavenly Father has put them in the home. The word tells us to be "keepers at home..." Titus 2:4-5. During the time of our hospital debt, I wondered if I needed to help supplement the income. I asked Danny what was the difference between me being away from the family some of the time and him working overtime and away from the family all the time. The devil can place those arguments in your mind and make you reason away the plan God has laid out for the family. But I never did work outside the home and the Lord graciously supplied all of our needs.

During this time, I was invited to join a pyramid marketing scheme. Here again, I am thankful for the guidance of my husband. Wives, listen to them. It will spare you! A lady where Danny worked invited me to a meeting about selling prepaid phone cards. They were the craze right then as everybody was trying to lower their phone bills. It was a plan where I had to get so many people under me to sign up, and they had to sign up so many under them. It all sounded so good. Some people had even quit their high paying jobs because they were making more money with these phone cards. You would end up getting free phone cards yourself, plus a check once a month. I took it home to my husband, and he listened to all I had learned and then said that he wasn't interested. He even took the paper work back to the lady at work and questioned her as to whether she really wanted to get mixed up with it. Do you know that before the year was out, the company had dissolved? How thankful I was that we had not invested money and had no phone cards on hand that we were trying to sell. It pays to be keepers at home.

"And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing." I Thessalonians 4:11-12.

"But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." I Timothy 5:8.

"Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." Ephesians 4:28.

This is God's economy, that we work with our own hands so that we may have adequate provisions and be able to support His work or those in need. This does not mean that we have our every whim supplied, but it means that we will be able to provide all that pertains to life and Godliness (II Peter 1:3.) After Adam and Eve sinned God told Adam, "... Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Genesis 3:17-19. From that time on mankind has had to work for the necessities of life.

We need to train our children in this manner. Many in our society believe that if they just show up for work they should get a paycheck. Sometimes they feel that they are entitled to food and clothing just because they are alive even even though they are doing nothing to provide for themselves. This mind set wants to creep into our thinking also. God commanded Adam

to work in the sweat of his face. Our children need to know that it takes effort to provide things in this life, and it won't be handed to them on a silver platter. They MUST get out and hustle.

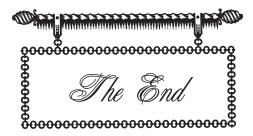
My husband and I both had parents who instilled in our hearts, "They that do not work should not eat" (unless physically unable to work); and, "If you will be willing to work you will hardly ever be without a job." There are times due to downsizing, etc., that we may find ourselves without a job, but if we are willing to do physical labor, we will be able to find a job eventually. People today want an easy desk job, but we have found that manual labor can be just as rewarding materially. It doesn't have nearly the competition in the job market, because fewer people want it.

I have already seen the saying, "If you are willing to work, you will always have a job," prove true for my oldest sons. When we first moved to our area, nobody knew us. Our neighbors saw our boys helping us clean the place up and offered them odd jobs. So far our oldest son, Trenton, has not had to apply for a job anywhere (year 2006). The neighbors saw him help build fence, and they know he isn't afraid of physical labor. Too many teenagers don't want to get their hands dirty or get hot and sweaty. We all have to do things that we don't like and the sooner they learn that in childhood, the more responsible they will be as adults.

Another mindset that we contend with is the idea of getting rich quick, especially through the lottery or gambling. God's economy is by the sweat of your brow. People feel if they could just win a million dollars, then they could be happy. They will use money to buy lottery tickets instead of clothes and food. Do you know that many times the people who win lots of money spend it just as foolishly as they spent their meager income; in the end they are no better off financially.

My English teacher in high school used to tell us that you could take all the money in the world, distribute it equally among everybody, and before long the ones who were rich before the distribution would be rich again, and the ones who were poor before the distribution would be poor again. The older I get, the more I believe him, because they either know how to manage money or they don't. Better to learn how to manage the money you do have rather than live in the endless dream of lots of money, while wasting what you have!

A note to us wives: Appreciate the effort it costs your husband to provide the finances for the home. It is an endless grind out there. If they don't feel that you appreciate what they do, then the work is that much more unpleasant. If you will tell them, "Thank you, honey, for working so hard to provide food and clothes for us," it gives them the encouragement they need. I have sometimes gotten the impression from wives that they wanted their husband to have a prestigious job. That is fine if the Lord has equipped your husband to do a white collar job, but never despise your husband if he is the type to do manual labor. I don't hang my head when people ask me what my husband does for a living. He is the best mechanic he can be, and there is nothing to be ashamed of. In fact, it may have provided even better than other jobs he could have had.





There are few joys in life that surpass the excitement of wedding bells and precious newborn children. Yet with each of these joys come a new level of responsibility—to your family and to God. "Biblical Nuggets for Godly Women" reveals many secrets of God's plan for wives and mothers that if fol-

lowed will bring Divinely ordained blessings on their lives and cause the fruit of their labors to be sweet and rewarding. This book will likely be rejected by many women who are striving

to fit into the pattern of modern society. However, for the wise few who are seeking the wisdom from above and would like the value of their character to be declared—by God and their families—to be worth far more than rubies, this book is for you. Contained within these covers are gems of truth and wisdom that have the ability to transform your heart and home into a sacred haven that

radiates the glory of the

Lord.