

Sweet Secrets
of *Parenting*



by **Helen Reimer**

Sweet Secrets
of
Parenting

BY
HELEN STARK REIMER

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Other books by the author:

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Nazarene Publishing House
c/o Betty Fuhrman
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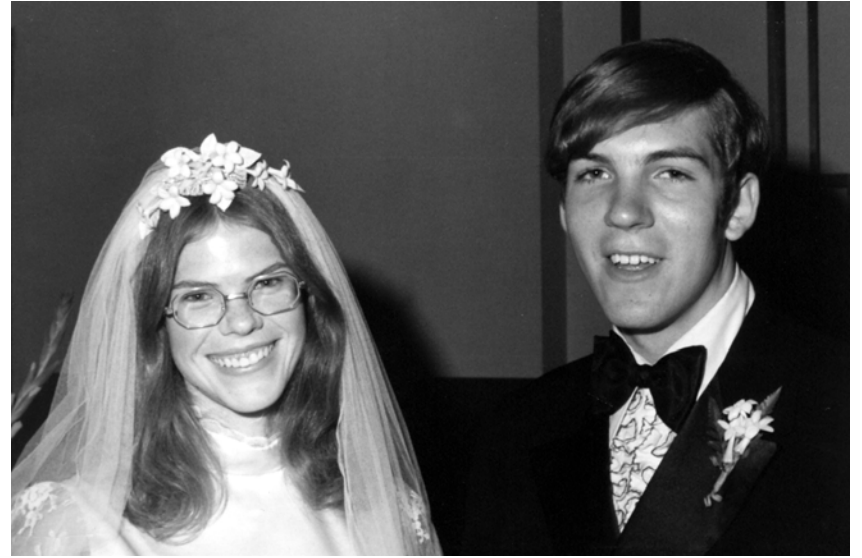
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DEDICATION

Dedicated to my five wonderful children: Sara, Nathan, Seth, Rachel, and Sharon Joy and all those we've 'adopted' along the way especially Silveria. Also to my wonderful parents who are now with the Lord Jesus, who left behind a blazing trail around the world and who invested into the publishing of this book.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My deepest gratitude to the Lord Jesus without whom my creative expression is only a fantasy. With thankfulness to my encouraging husband Jim who dared to love “because Jesus is Love” and whose love for children lights our way in parenting. I would also like to thank my many dear friends who asked me to write this, especially Kay Walkingstick. Great appreciation also to my mother and father for their example in loving each other. For the best way to love your children is to love each other most. With God's grace and with all this love this book is now a reality. Specific acknowledgment and thanks to Mary Knapp, Tim and Caprice Becker, and our son, Nathan. God bless all those visionaries who contributed and encouraged!



The Wedding – September 16th, 1972
Helen (19) and Jim (21)

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

Please note that every other chapter emphasizes an age group. These groupings are general, of course, but in each the specific topics are dealt with that are typical to their phase of growth.

I write to you as a mother with my five children within each of these phases. I begin with the most recently born and end with our eldest who is now 24 years old. During these 25 years of marriage we have cared for many more children than just our own. We have also fostered and often seriously considered legal adoption. Especially in teenagers, there is a great need to belong to someone's family. Legal or not, we hold these young people in our hearts as a family and they are adopted by us forever. For this experience, we feel privileged and thank the Heavenly Father.

Within any culture of the world, I pray that these secrets will be an encouragement and help to you precious parents as you shape your golden arrows to hit their mark for God's Kingdom. I share the tenderest of my moments of mothering with you. I pray that you will hear the Heavenly Father whispering His secrets of parenting to your heart. He, as the Father of fathers, will guide you specifically for He loves your child more than you could. He is the *perfect* love! We totally trust Him and thank Him for all the blessings He has brought to us, His children. Any shadows come from the enemy and are to be resisted in Jesus' holy name. "Luck" isn't in our vocabulary, just blessings!

At the end of the book, you will find a list of verses used in my book. The special truth and encouragement of these and the Bible as a whole, are like the stepping-stones we needed to cross the river of life safely. Please read these! Without comparison, the Bible is the best tool for wise parenting. Sit down with your children and peacefully explain it and enjoy it together. It will have its own supernatural effects with the Divine Holy Spirit teaching them. My love and prayers will be with each one of you who reads this book. God's blessings upon you always.

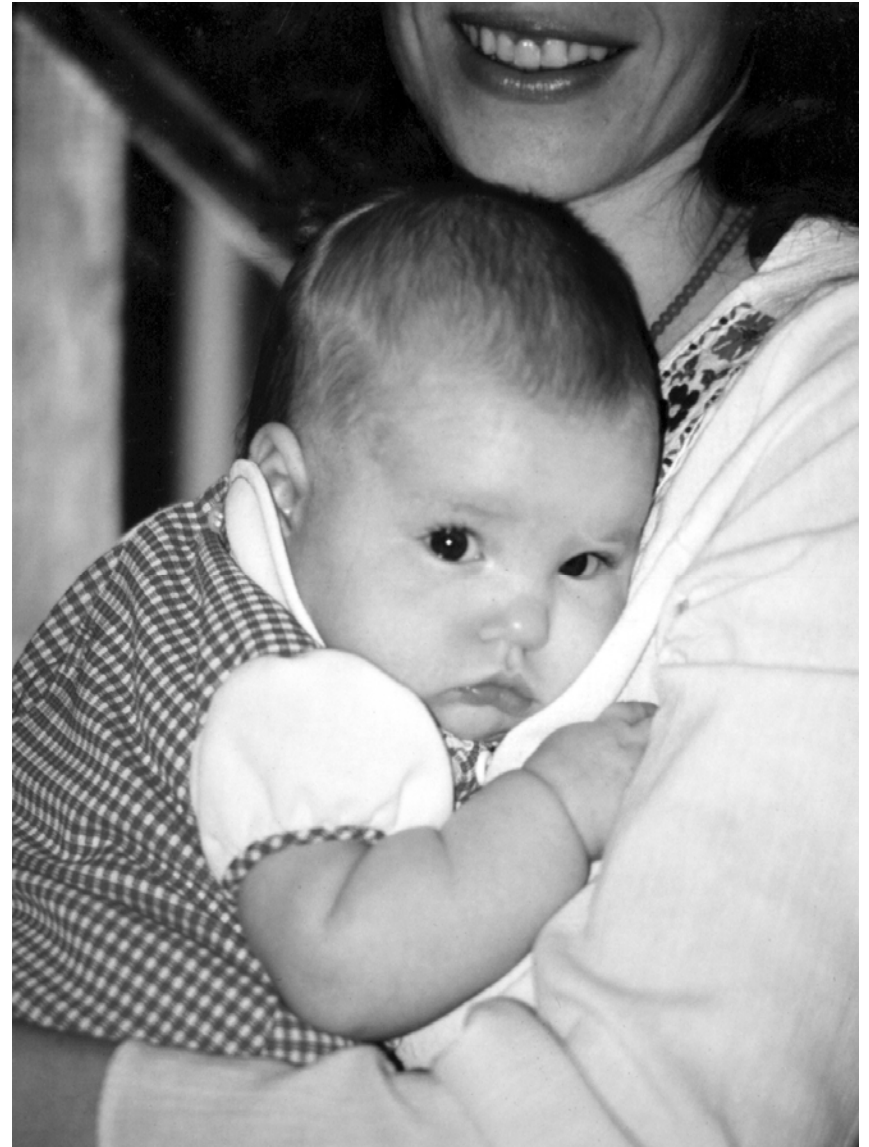
- Helen

P.S. Please feel free to direct any comments or questions to me at this address: Helen Reimer

Apartado 122

2671-921 Loures, Portugal.

P.P.S. This book was first published in 2005 in Portuguese. I'm excited to release the English version after married over 35 years, still in love, all our children married, 11 grandchildren, and all following Jesus.



The First Baby – Sara at 3 Months

Chapter One

Want a Baby? Well, What Now?

Topics:

Love and Marriage
Goals and Realities
Family Planning
Baby Blues in the Shadows
Love and Marriage

Why does it take two to make a baby?

Is it because the little one will need two to live it, maybe?

Why does it take a public ceremony to be married?

Is it because the babe, like a seed, a secure place will need?

With an atmosphere of loving, warmth, and watering of approval?

With roots that go down into the eternal?

A covenant and a promise of love from God the Father

To help shelter it forever?

One of the first lines of handwriting I saw of my husband's was, "Aren't you glad that God is love so that we may love?" It was on the back of the photograph he gave me in the early stages of our love. What a pivotal statement it turned out to be! For truly as we walked towards God's love we began loving each other more and more. It did not take long even at the ages of nineteen and twenty-two to see our lives growing closer and closer, with God the focal point of the triangle. We needed each other to be the effective people we were meant to be - as humbling as this was at first.

Children were to be a natural consequence of our marriage, with Jim wanting ten and me agreeing to five. The rest we would adopt, formally or informally. What "mother" meant to me ranged from my own mother, skilled at teaching eager youngsters, to Mother Theresa of Calcutta pouring her life into deprived babies. Never did it enter my mind that it meant dirty diapers, lost sleep, and communication difficulties!

I had heard that to best love a child one must love one's spouse! This was my foundation; the

unity in vision, purpose, and heart that Jim and I shared. When the bewilderment of mothering threatened to swamp me, I would find in him a loving, encouraging father who knew what to do. I know this was wisdom from above, for he obediently served the Heavenly Father, from whom all families on earth may find their roots.¹ This love of God as Father of all humankind brought our family to Him in unity.

In the first days of mothering, Jim had my mother, baby, and me sit in the living room with him and we prayed for the home and all within, taking authority in the name of Jesus Christ to drive out the fear and nervousness that were there. After that the fretful baby, the worried grandma, and the determined mother changed, receiving relaxation that only God could give. It was at the announcement of the baby Jesus' birth that the angels told all humankind that peace had come for all time.² This joy and love drives out all fear. It arrives as one allows the Christ-child to be Lord, to have occupancy in one's heart, with all sin, anger, and doubt washed away by the blood that He shed in our place.³ This absolute forgiveness to the humble, repenting heart is the first miracle of love and life!⁴

Living and abiding in this supernatural love gave root to fruitfulness in all areas. As love for God Himself, for others, and for babies grew thin, it took nothing more than simply asking for more to find renewed joy and fulfillment.

Now as I write these words our family is complete with five children two years apart - our quiver is full. Each week our lives touch many other children, for as always children are like magnets drawing others. Sometimes they are lonely children and sometimes they are bored. Sometimes they are from single-parent homes and the parent becomes involved with our lives along with the children.

I grew up on a large mission station in Swaziland, Africa, and my parents often had visitors in our home. Jim's family was the same, even though he grew up in Alaska, USA. This made for an excellent balance in our family. So much was opposite in us, and yet in these more important areas much was the same. In Alaska, a great many cultures coexist with a large native one. The beauty and vastness of the land reminded me a lot of Africa. His family's appreciation for people, nature, travel, survival, God, and strong convictions was very similar to that of my own family. As I looked through his childhood collections, scrapbooks, Boy Scout awards, and photograph albums, it was as if I could have been best friends with him even then.

Many times, I have been made aware of the blessings and the securities that have been

handed down to us from a stable, rich family lineage. Jim's grandparents were Mennonite farmers known for their strong family ties and strict Biblical standards. They left a good inheritance for their children and their children's children. Jim's father has made a big impact in the schools, politics and in the local church where he serves in integrity. My grandparents were preachers and teachers from Scottish descent. My father, a missionary doctor, teacher, gardener, and preacher, showed me the large range of practical areas of a godly life. In the High Priestly prayer of Jesus before His temporary separation from His disciples, He prayed that He might sanctify Himself in order to pass on that saintliness to them and for them to pass on again.⁵ All this was so that we may be perfected in unity and love for all time. This joyful existence was in the plan of God the Father from the beginning of time.⁶

Even if the heritage of generations is unknown, or best not known, we as parents can set the tone for the song our children may sing! Is it ringing true? With no false sounds, not even a few? Is the seed that we give them to plant good seed and ample? Enough for them to use as examples?

Let us start with good speaking - positive verbal expressions. Jesus was also called the Word, and Life, and the words He spoke were always creating life and changes.⁷ Ours can, too. After reading this book please make your own goals. For in writing down those words and placing them around your place of work you'll see the vision of a happy and healthy home begin.⁸ Take time to think over what is in this book, chew on it for a while, and swallow what you ought. For Jesus' view of the family, that whoever does the will of His Father is His brother or sister, will open doors for you in loving others.

Earth is for the work of giving to others the Good News; heaven is for the rewards of that work, eternal fellowship.

Our Love

July 1985

*Lord, may our love be flexible
Yet not inconsistent with Your purpose
Daily, let it be a light glowing
Showing simply, sweetly, without our knowing
Gentle touches, sweet smiles and quiet reassurance
Resting in the Love from above.*

*Lord, may our love be oh, so giving
Wanting only to bless Your heart
Sowing, letting go...
Understanding what a seed may know.
That the harvest is coming, rain or shine,
In its good place and in the right time!*

*Lord, Giver of Life and that First Love
Who comes as on the wings of a dove
Descend upon Our Love this day
Breathe in us and by Your Spirit sway
Our wills, our hearts to be one
In the way in which it had begun.*

*Lord, may our love be new
But yet maturing, ripening through each season
Bearing fruit to give to others.
Individually, make us whole
Drinking deeply, yet always knowing
The Source from whom our love is flowing.
Amen.*

So I pray that you, the reader, may be strengthened, bearing fruit, also partaking in creativity, filled with spiritual wisdom and understanding.⁹

A journal entry from May 1980:

*Another May
Praise the Lord, our Lord, for the miracles of it
Of Spring!
Mothering is increasing with teenagers coming for counsel and
Sharing my thoughts with those He shows to me
Who need them*

At times spring feels so busy that all the life reserved is gone
Given for the sake of growing.
Births happen continuously
In nature outside and in our hearts
So we with awesome wonder
Cannot but rejoice!
Rejoice we will; we must!
It is the command to all things and persons
That want to grow, "Rejoice!"
Faith is easier to understand in springtime,
I think, don't you?
Why is this?
Well, seeds unseen all winter, growing now
Were almost pulled up as weeds!
But, no! The general consensus reveals that these
Tiny green leaves are potential flowers.
They truly do belong in my flower bed!
Waiting continues and each day more of the plant is seen
A goal is seen as Point B.
Here and now is Point A.
God challenges us to be actively involved in
Removing obstacles and moving through the earth
To Point B.
Arriving is achieving!
Seeing another horizon to enjoy,
Spring has sprung in me!
Rusty, stiff coils of life are moving and gold
Becomes the fiber of it.
Small as it may be.
Pressing towards the high calling
I reach up and grow

All is working for good, I know!
God has told me so!
And I believe Him, for in Him there is all
Truth and love.
Love enough to die for me;
To live, now for me!
Interceding in my behalf
So one day we may be reunited in holy joy
Forever.
May the praise I raise provide the power
To cut through the enemy that keeps me back
I know it will... He said so!¹⁰

Therefore, the life-journal goes on. Of course, to some it may not be. The desire for a family takes a courage that only God can give. To raise it takes a daily diet in His teachings from the Word of God. Supernatural empowering with wisdom and patience breeds excellence. How and when to have children must be agreed upon in an oneness of mission of both husband and wife. All is a preparation of friendship and permanence.

More than just the belly is stretched! When water turns to steam it is invaluable in producing power for it increases in volume 16,000 times. In the same way the pressures and boiling in our lives and emotions through the birthing of a new life is a tremendous positive force. The labor pains so feared by first-time mothers are nothing more than surges of pressure that last only one minute at a time, giving time not to pace the floor, but to rest in between. If given no sedatives, the natural urges to push the baby out are easily felt and premature pushing which could tear the skin may be avoided. In the busy schedule of hospitals, the mother in labor is treated many times as a fearful patient waiting for an operation, and in many ways, the staff wants to control the process of childbirth. This is done by injections, sedatives, and episiotomies, which are cuts in the skin to allow easier birth. These are unnecessary for the relaxed, informed mother-to-be. As explained before, skin stretches slowly so the cutting is not needed unless the doctors plan to rush the procedure or if the mother is in difficulty and needs a sedative. All your desires can be written down and signed by your doctor to show to the staff attending you.

Keeping self-control may be learned in the classroom of life if one is willing. In the labor

room, keeping count during the labor pressure is essential. To breathe slowly out for four counts, take a breath and repeat this eight times with a big breath in and out before and after helps relaxing. Why? Because you concentrate on relaxing instead of on the pressure. Eight slow breaths in about one minute and the pressure eases away. If the pressure gets harder, the breathing gets faster and louder to compensate.

At this point, I must say that God the Father and the Creator is very present, for this is a new spirit-being that is come from His hand.¹¹ He is more than willing to answer any woman's plea for help in the name of Jesus, God's Son, for the love of life fills the room.

Once in the middle of labor, with the bag of water broken, my labor ceased and in frustration, I watched the hours go by. In no way could I return home. Only God could make my body bring the baby to birth. My ability to relax and trust was reaching its end. God promises to show us the way so we will never reach the limit or lose control. What way is the way? As many times before in the desperation of life when I faced God with no other way to go, He reminded me to read His letter, the Bible, "dated" at the 23rd of Proverbs. It reads something like this, "Mother and Father, rejoice and be glad! Let her rejoice who gave birth! Surely there is a good future for you fulfilling all your hopes!"¹² When reading this out loud to Jim the words went into my ears and down the special spirit channel into the uptight heart, pouring ointment all over it. The springs began to relax and I slept. The baby came on the 23rd! She has turned out to be strong-willed, but in those hours before her birth God showed me how His love can change stubbornness into something positive, and He has!

Prepared pregnancy is eating good food and taking multi-vitamins. Rest when needed. Read medical facts about childbirth and pregnancy. Check with the doctor. Find out your blood type. Keep in harmony and unity with your husband. Guard against superstitious tales. Keep activities healthy. Too much of anything is harmful. Slowly toughen up your nipples for breast-feeding is the best for baby. (If more milk is needed let him suck more often and longer.) Exercise the birthing muscles. Practice breathing slowly and holding your breath. In actual delivery, you fill up your lungs by breathing in and out twice in big breaths and then as the pushes come you hold your breath and push as long as possible. In between the urges to push, to keep from pushing prematurely keep blowing air out with quick breaths.

You will need about 10 disposable diapers a day. If you use cloth diapers, you will need a bottle of diluted bleach to pour on the stains after they are rinsed. You only need to use the

bleach on stained diapers. Just let them soak in a bucket of water, being careful to rinse urine out in clean water before using detergent. However, if you can afford it, disposables are great, especially when traveling.

Use a baby cream with powder or cornstarch, on top of it to protect baby's skin from rash and rubbing if needed. Wash baby with clean water. I keep a jar of water and a roll of toilet paper on a padded plastic covered table for changing dirty diapers. The baby gets used to the cold water and doesn't seem to mind it.

Be ready to enjoy your baby. No newborn baby can be spoiled by being loved and held. In fact, if you do not attend to his whimpers he will soon learn to scream for your attention. Most crying is due to hunger or a burning bottom.

When the first teeth appear (at 3 or 4 months), solid foods can start. Try mixing a little mashed and sieved cooked fruit, cold meat, and vegetables. Carrots are a good starter too, with mashed egg yolk. Begin with it very runny and smooth, as it is very different from milk. Cereals are a "must."

Dress baby warmly and keep him on the floor. As he learns to pull up on things he'll be older and then able to understand your commands. For every "no", there must be a "yes." By the time baby is six months old, he is usually out exploring and sometimes his "discovery" may be a sleeping dog.

Whether you breast feed your baby or not, take him with you when you go places. Now more than ever take advantage of opportunities to go out with your husband or out with your baby. You and baby need a change and fellowship with others.

If a couple has a job to do, the children can help them in that job if they are trained. On the other hand, if the child is too young, he can learn to be quiet and play with some special items of interest that mother has brought. Never let your life revolve around your child.

Goals and Realities

In the first few weeks, maybe years, of being a new mother, I was very astonished at how much of a full-time job it was. As beautiful as it was to watch my baby develop and show his love to me, I began to feel frustrated. Everywhere I looked I would see an unfinished job because of the many interruptions the baby brought! "Wait a minute, please!" was one of the first sentences they learned because they heard it so much. By the time they were talking, mommy was often

asked to wait a minute! So we all learn patience!

This feeling of frustration must not be ignored, but taken care of as soon as possible for if it is left to poison our heart and mind the atmosphere of the home and family will soon be injured. Talking to a wise older person together with your husband is one thing you could do. What goal is being frustrated? What are the realities of the situation?

In my situation, God helped me to see that the reality was that it would not last for a lifetime. It is only the first five years or so that a child takes your full time. If in my selfishness to achieve my lifetime goals I neglected to teach and enjoy my children, I could literally ruin their lives permanently! Consequently, I could enjoy my hobbies to a degree as I included the children or taught them to appreciate mother's achievements or their own if I shared with them. This is a way to broaden their own awareness and to show them that mother has her own life to enjoy apart from just serving the children. It keeps them from being egotistical or proud, which could ultimately ruin them. These things are not forced upon a child but we must gently entreat them and encourage them, to flow along with the parent's life.

In the midst of all the interruptions and unfinished tasks, I asked God what to do and I heard Him say, "Finish what you start!" Even if it is just one little job like a letter to be written. Set a realistic goal for one day and finish it! This gives you a sense of accomplishment. Save the bigger jobs for when the baby is sleeping or with daddy, or perhaps ask a friend to help you so that finishing can become a reality.

My house had begun to look like a pigpen, hardly where the King could take a tour if He decided to pay a surprise visit. Because I serve the King of all Creation and I believe He sees everywhere, it is my duty to keep all I own in order or to give it to those who have more time and can take care of it! I began with what I felt God showed me first, those things that reflect my personality or my character the most. That part of the house was to be put in order daily. Begin with your own spirit. Give yourself, your day to God's control and be filled with His power. As you get dressed and then put your room in order, you can be teaching the same principle to your son or daughter. Throughout the day as you do something, finish what you begin. Going back to it after each interruption until it is completed. Shut the light off, close the drawer, put the clothes away, etc. In this way, your thinking is not confused. Many times, I use paper and pencil to write down the list of things that are to be done or not forgotten. Even with five small children, it is not hard now to feel fulfilled and happy.

Go ahead and write a schedule for your baby, when you would like him to eat, for example. Begin organizing yourself and him, fitting into your husband's schedule first, but being flexible enough to change it if necessary. I wrote a schedule down and put it up by my bed, and slowly as the months went by it worked. Do not forfeit the enjoyment it is sometimes when the schedule is forgotten for a while! Dare to make a happy memory happen!

For example, when baby awakens during the night, hungry, as they do, awake with the words, "Oh, you sweet little angel!" or something similar. Sleepily enjoy the quiet comfort of hugging each other, as he gets older. If he demands too much at night give him more during the day and gently refuse at night. If all is cared for and you have sung to him and prayed for him, and he still does not sleep, it does not matter if he cries a little while. Speak to him, but don't open the door and go to him... He'll soon learn that you will not be manipulated and he will feel secure in your strong authority. In an unconscious way, children know their own lack of self-control and weaknesses and deeply appreciate discipline! You may laugh at this, but if discipline is lovingly and consistently applied, they soon show this to you. More is said of this in chapter two.

Fear is a big problem to babies, so a parent must learn to be very calm and to be able to sing no matter what. It's crazy you think, but the louder they are the more you whisper or sing. The fear that hunger brings is the worst to babies because it is their survival instinct. Hunger increases much more rapidly when the baby is awake and crying, thus using energy. Many times, I have had to dance a waltz with the baby, getting his mind off himself so he could relax and eat because he had become so frightened.

Family Planning

We have a God-given responsibility to replenish the earth with godly offspring.¹³ My father, a medical doctor who worked in India, where the population is very dense, still encouraged us to have a large family. Why is this? It is because children who are brought up to love God and in God's way can spread His love and blessing! They are lights in the world. God is the same forever and He doesn't change according to circumstances.¹⁴ As we look at many principles in God's word, we can see the nature of God, our Father.

Man and woman were made by God in the very beginning to be a delight to each other, and to enjoy each other in every way.¹⁵ Also, in bringing them together as one, God planned for their love and life to be given to future generations as a vehicle of Heavenly joy. No one was

meant to be alone, but to extend their homes to include others.¹⁶

God's confirmation in your spirit, the Bible, and each other's feelings will all line up to reveal to you the perfect timing for additions to the family unit. The best is what the King has in mind for His children, and all humankind was destined to be in the King's family. According to our free choice, we have the right to choose the blessing of receiving the adoption of the King of Love, God Himself. In this freedom comes the true essence of love. Man doesn't force his way upon his wife or vice versa, for their bodies belong to each other. He gently soothes her and pleases her and her, him. They are a team and their offspring their dual responsibility.¹⁷ Sexual enjoyment is pleasing to our Heavenly Father and meant to be, no matter our age. Before the first baby was ever conceived, Adam unashamedly said of Eve in Genesis 2:23, that their flesh belonged to each other.

Obviously, at certain stages in a child's life it is easier for a woman or a man to care for the child, so we share the responsibility. The father, however, will be directly answerable to God as the head or leader of the home. When to stop having your own children is not due to circumstances only but out of obedience to what God is calling you to do in your lifetime. He alone knows the future and will give you wisdom.

Lifestyles may have to be altered and goals and plans rearranged to a different timing. Selfishness and materialism will be put aside for the joy of training a family. The rewards in the molding of your character and the joy of seeing the fruit in their lives are worth it. Children and single people need to be involved in giving to other people in some way. Without this outflowing, God knew that our lives would stagnate and be unfulfilled. We are dependent on each other and on God for our own good to be a balance to each other. As perfect as one person may become in him self, he will always have a deep inner longing for communion with the supernatural, spiritual God.¹⁸ He is the One who gave His only Son, Jesus, to identify with us and show the way to relate together regardless of differences.¹⁹ Often a depression originates if this outflow to God and to others is forgotten. Therefore, in Psalm 1 we see humankind as a tree with its roots in the life of God, drinking daily from the Word of God, and resulting in good fruit!

The following family planning methods have been found by us to be *morally wrong*.

1. *Abortion*. It is not even a valid family planning method, although accepted as such by many

people. It is murder in every sense of the word, for in the first union of the male and female cells a unique person is formed. Whether in the womb of a woman or in a test tube, it is man with all the potential of man. This has been scientifically verified. The only difference is in its age and vulnerability. The aged man falls into this category also. With his vast wealth of experiential knowledge, he becomes vulnerable once again, to be destroyed or valued at the will of others.

Man is much more than a physical entity.²⁰ His life span is meant to be long.²¹ Life is not meant to be terminated by another man.²² In God's original plan for man, he is not meant to die, but because man foolishly chose to know evil, death entered into his life. Because we have the sinful nature of our ancestor Adam, we have death in us as well. However, we may now choose to be cleansed of sin by the blood of Jesus, God's only Son, who was sent to restore the broken communion with God.²³ We again may have eternal life as we ask Him to forgive us and by faith accept His salvation. Death then, becomes only a changing of location for us.²⁴ For this reason every living person in every stage of development may have a holy hope of divine life, giving creativity to earth and giving joy to his Creator, God our Father.

2. *IUD, copper-coil, or other objects placed by a doctor into the uterus cause abortions monthly if the egg is fertilized.* The same psychological and spiritual oppression occurs after these are used as in abortions, although women often cannot discern the cause of these feelings of oppression.

3. *Some chemical pills (birth-control pills)* are abortive; however, most of them don't have that effect but only prevent the egg from being fertilized.

4. *Magical potions, ritualistic good-luck methods.* This form of family planning to ensure fertility brings curses and is deceptive.²⁵

Workable ways to know your fertility:

1. If you find that you are very regular in your menstruation period (every 28 days or so) you can determine the *week* of your time of fertility. It usually begins the 12th day *before* the usual beginning date of your period.

2. If the fluid in the opening of the vagina takes on these characteristics, you are fertile and may become pregnant:

- a. The fluid is more than usual.
- b. The fluid is clear instead of white and pasty.
- c. It is elastic when stretched between thumb and forefinger.

3. Fertility also sometimes depends on the happy harmony in the home with husband and wife speaking of their joyful expectations of a baby.

4. Getting in touch with your Creator by the Biblical means of prayer.²⁶ You may wonder why I am writing so dogmatically. It is because we have seen God do many miracles over and over again. This has confirmed these things to be true to God's Word. God is the Creator in conception.²⁷

God is a baby's hope.²⁸ Over and over again we see God's joy in children, as in Psalm 127 and 128. We are warned against materialism and thinking of the baby as just a play-toy for an adult ego.²⁹ Jesus took time out to enjoy children, making even His disciples wait and look to them as an example. Moses, the great leader of the young nation of Israel, made very clear commands in regarding children in his last recorded words before he died. We read of this in Deuteronomy 31:12, 13 and 32:4, 6. How valuable are these gifts from God and we should take care of them as if they are His, for indeed they are.

Baby Blues in the Shadows

I was asked to mention the emotional pain of disappointments, ideals being smashed, changes, infertility etc. Throughout all are the shadows, the backdrop to the brilliant light of creation. It's difficult for me to look into that deep outer space darkness without seeing God and His heaven.

For some though this is a reality and they cry out in despair. The cry in itself has the power to render the inky black curtains of hopelessness. So my advice is to write, to express, to cry out to your Heavenly Father and to let Him be! The tiniest seed of creativity is in you to see Him. This is our inheritance as a human being. It's your porthole to an eternity of satisfaction. "What *good* will come out of this crucible experience?" You moan silently to yourself. Someday you'll know. We must eventually look up. Sinking to our knees with others holding up our arms we can still look up! What a blessing comes to those who have to help us in our weakest, most fragile state of being. The sacrificial love of Jesus and the unrewarded goodness are being noted by Heaven's angels and our Father. They will be rewarded! Let us appreciate and refuse to grow bitter or cold. Let forgiveness flow and grow! One of my closest, dearest friends said this about the years of the pain of disappointment she experienced.

"I was previously married and had a little girl. She is truly a gift from our Lord. Yet as a teenage mother things were quite difficult and that marriage ended in divorce. I began dating a family friend who was a close friend with my brothers. He had also gone through a rough divorce. Together we found Jesus and gave our lives to His service and were married.

Because of a history of insanity in his previous wife's family, he had decided not to have children and he had surgery. Now with a new family I so much wanted to have another child as a Christian. By that time our daughter was ready for a little brother or sister. He did not feel comfortable with a "reversal" because of the difficulty due to many years since the surgery. So there I was with strong "I want a baby" feelings, and there was nothing I could do. I realised that I really needed to yield that desire to the Lord. Did He want us to adopt? Was He going to perform the miraculous? Instead of having any specific answers to these questions, I merely received His peace. There was no more striving or mental bombardment, just God's peace. Now I rejoice with my sisters when they have the pregnant glow and look forward to meeting my new little friends."

With the sweet secrets there were the bittersweet times through which we were taught many precious lessons. God can bring good out of any situation if we let Him! The whole course of our family history would have been destroyed if these lessons would have gone ignored. It was as if the enemy, the familiar demonic spirit, familiar with our entire family lineage, gathered his strength to destroy the embryonic family. Curses uttered by witch doctors against my parent's children and their future grandchildren were yet to be broken by the power of Jesus' name in prayer. This spiritual warfare had not been waged. So in faith it was revealed, waged, won and permanent victory prevails proclaiming God's glory.

I would like to briefly share one of these experiences: During emotional outbursts, our two year old was fainting and having epileptic type fits almost daily so we were preparing to take her to a specialist. Before doing this we asked our closest friends and Christian leaders to pray for her and us. Having just moved we did not yet belong to a local church but these leaders had come to our city for special meetings. God's grace covers us, but when He wants to handle a problem He first moves in the team to help, lifts His grace for the problem to be revealed and then urges us to receive the help with a new grace! We must obey at these times. It is not a grace to maintain, but a new grace to change and be healed! So we acted in faith and asked for a time with them. I was pregnant at the time and later it was revealed

that even that baby had a congenital defect that without proper care would have been fatal. Physical problems also may be in connection with a demon of death, which must be told to leave in the authority of Jesus' name. It has been interesting to me to see how each part of the armour described in Ephesians 6 also is part of the key to healing the part of the body it covers!

I'll never forget, while reading my Bible at 11:00 at night, my husband came into the bedroom and told me of their spiritual diagnosis from the Lord. They wanted to pray with us. I immediately started to faint! Inwardly, I asked the Lord what I should do and He urged me to just do the normal thing. "Put your head down and breathe deeply!" Soon the weird sensation passed. It was like the demon wanted me not to be able to participate. I talked briefly about how a curse of death had been manifesting throughout my whole life, and how the first baby born to my parents in Africa had died without breath, but with no other malady at all. Now it wanted to destroy *our* offspring! Simply we broke the curse by repeating a prayer ending it with "in the name and authority of Jesus". We declared LIFE! They also asked me to be sure that objects of spiritual meaning from Africa be destroyed. Any music, books, objects from other religions, of occult nature or from negative relationships had to be gotten rid of too. Even some of my own poetry and artwork that did not bring glory to God I got rid of at a later time. We were warned that the demon would try to attack again or make us doubt. We would just stand firm and proclaim the truth. We can "bind" the enemy by dying to our flesh and be free from all the daily evil, but it is not permanent until the end of time when God Himself commands Satan to be bound for all eternity. Sure enough the next day a fainting seizure started. I reminded the demon that his power had been broken, that this deception was a lie and he had to stop trying to manifest, IN THE NAME OF JESUS. She became a normal child. The limping in my personality disappeared too. I had done a lot to compensate for the many near-death experiences I had endured. Now as I see her as a fulfilled, married woman of God, influencing people around the world I cry in humble gratitude to my Heavenly Father.

The story of the baby in my womb who also had been affected during this time is interesting. I will not go into the details, but once again God's team was in place. We obeyed the urgings in our spirit, people were saved, extra blessings came, answers to prayers and the baby is now a blessing as a successful young man, 100% serving God.



Sharon Joy - Age 12

Chapter Two

Wide-eyed and Wonder-full

Topics:

Sharon Joy (Sharon Joy Rose)

Terrific Twos

Discipline's Payoff

Sharon Joy (Sharon Joy Rose)

The journal continues on December 16th, 1982:

“Today I found out through a scan, that my baby is a girl... at least it seemed clear to the nurse (who told me only after I told her that we had no desires either way since we have two of each sex already). I chose to believe it. Why?

1. My symptoms are all the same as when I carried the other girls (higher and in front).
2. We already have a name chosen for a girl... Sharon Joy!
3. I'm so *glad* to see her. I feel so much joy!

On the screen, I could watch her kick and move. How I love her and I long to have her in my arms. She's our joy whom we will share. “Sharin' Joy.” It's Jesus' joy. I love You Lord and thank You for this gift of life—this product of our love in You, our #5. I praise You, Jesus! Help me to keep praising You, no matter what, so Your Joy may always make a way. Thank You, Jesus.”

She was born the 23rd of March in 1983. It was a very easy, 2-week-before-due-date delivery. She weighed 7 lb. 10 oz. and was really ready. While enduring labor I received these words from my Father God:

“Just as the times and seasons were arranged for the birth of My Son, so it is for your baby's birth. If you only knew how many preparations were made for that timing; in the galaxies and among men, you would be filled with wonder. All was set just as it was revealed by the teaching of your husband concerning this; just as a drama is set and the timing is perfect. So know that times and seasons of life are all in my

hands...transitions and phases of life. The righteous are not touched by death for death is not of me, just life. Because of sin, death remains but not for long for it will be abolished along with all evil. So my child I need to admonish you about these things. Your future? I will bring you into deeper places of my love and care than ever before...to your delight and for my glory.”

Therefore, this encouraging word continued deep in my spirit and I kept writing. He spoke about our children, our life's work, and His precise timing for all. What has this to do with babies? The practical side to everyone, or where the “rubber hits the road” so to speak, is deeply motivated from within. The rubber tire feels the rough surface of the road, the heat, and yet the power driving those wheels, the elasticity with which they are made, make all the difference.

With each child, I experienced different situations, as each was so unique. Biblically, for the first three years, the little ones were with their mothers, and then the fathers began to have influence in their lives. How did I survive these first three years? Was it really a “survival course”? Just as the words came to me from God as I quieted myself to hear them, they were also guiding me step by step in each situation.³⁰ They brought peace and were heard in a Voice of Patient Love. I learned to shut out the condemning, nagging voice of fear and failure.³¹ Actually, I would become angry at those “thoughts” and would loudly proclaim the positive goals and aspirations based on what God had said in the Bible and in my heart.³² These enemies are as real to a new mother as a hunter is to a mother bear defending her cubs.

It was long after my first child was two that I heard the words “Terrible-two's.” I couldn't understand it at all! Why would they say this? My baby had begun to respond, understand, and be quite a friend to me at the age of two. What she couldn't control or say at the age of one she could now, for we had consistently and lovingly taught her.³³ This is an example of a negative, defeating thought that does nothing to help in the joys of mothering. There is an abundant joy in mothering as we keep it in perspective along with our other roles. This is a time of life to sometimes let the “creative” messes happen and the house become dirtier for the sake of lying on your back in the grass enjoying the clouds with your little one. If we begin the discipline in love early in the first year of their life we can truly expect the two-year old stage to be *terrific!*

Sharon Joy is our sweet Joy-girl and as the name Sharon signifies, it is like a place of roses. She even has the coloring and round face that looks like a pink rosebud, bringing sweetness and smiles from everyone. Her face is framed by a long mop of bright yellow curls and her eyes are a

true royal blue. Here she comes now squealing for me to come see a “lithard” (lizard) which she found on her favorite tour to say “Hi” to Cindy, the neighbor's collie dog. I knew it would be gone by the time I came to see it but in her typical way, beckoning, with her hands, her body and sweet smile, I went. She showed me where it had been. This brings me to one of my favorite topics in regarding our children.

Wide-eyed and Wonder-full!

Our lives are involved so much in giving to our children. First, we learned to give to another person and the baby being the consequence. Then we learned to give to him. Our eleven year-old, in an anniversary note to us, put a P.S. “I wish I could give more!” She baby-sat for us so we could have a night out and little did she know what a gift her note of love was to us. Every dot or exclamation point she had made into a heart and it said:

Dear Mom and Dad,

I love you both very much! I hope you had a wonderful night. The kids were O.K...
Jesus loves you both so very much! Happy Anniversary!! Wow! I can't believe it's the 13th (anniversary) already. Pretty soon it will be the 20th. With millions and billions of kisses and hugs. You guys mean so much to me.

I LOVE YOU! (BOTH)!

P.S. I wish I could give more.

Love, Sara

What teaches a child to give from their heart?³⁴ It really is an art; something very desirable which brings a lot of blessing in return.³⁵ When we began to detect a “spoil” attitude in our children, we began a 'Thank You' game. Each tried to say the most “thank yous” without being reminded - receiving a point for each one. At the end of the day, the winner of the most points was rewarded. Giving causes thankfulness and thankful hearts receive joy in return. I believe the 'thank you' points are still being noted by their angel.³⁶

In America, there is a twenty-four hour quick-stop store, called 'Seven Eleven.' It has a little advertisement that says, “Oh, thank heaven for Seven Eleven!” Similarly, I often say, “Oh thank Heaven for Matthew 7:11.” In this book the disciple of Jesus, who had been previously known to be selfish, he quotes Jesus, “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how *much more* shall your Father which is in Heaven give good things to them that ask Him?” He has given us our children and loves to make us, as His children, happy too.

As we abide in Him and His words abide in us, we shall ask according to the best for our child. Please never substitute your loving attention and time with your child by material gifts, T.V., baby-sitter, etc... These are not true gifts for they are not motivated by selfless love that helps them achieve their best. These substitutes are pacifiers starving him. Your child is only truly fed by your selfless love.³⁷

Now these are a few gifts that our children, our babies, give to us!

Quiet Listening

Heavenly Father, curled up here on Your lap

I rest and listen to Your heartbeat.

It seems like the beating of the waves of the sea,

Or the wind swishing through the branches of the trees,

I breathe deep of that fresh, sweet air of Your Spirit.

You cleanse me in Your beauty and I sparkle inside!

King David, one of the greatest men in history, close to the heart of God, wrote in Psalms 131, “Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty; neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me. Surely, I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child.”

1. *Children teach us humility.* We can even laugh at ourselves. We are so wonderful to them that we have no need to defend ourselves. When we fail we can say, “Sorry!” and they willingly forgive us realizing with love, we are learning too.³⁸ What great heights can be climbed in the shoes of being teachable!

2. *The gift of humor!* One of the most *spiritual* things we can do is to laugh! Our little ankle-biters make us limp around our kitchens as they cling to our legs! A cheerful heart does as good as a medicine, the old proverb goes. It is really better to laugh than to cry. I need this humor medicine in my soul so desperately at times. As I show mercy and compassion to them, I must do it cheerfully!³⁹

So often as women we accept our role, our destiny, with self-pity, not taking time even to determine if it is really so! We believe lies about ourselves, our future. Many times, we can save a lot of energy by really enjoying the present moment. We see humor and creative ideas at hand as we keep out the clutter; the weeds of negative worries. The curses in Deuteronomy chapter 28 for the nation who does not follow God's ways, are not for us, for Jesus became a curse in our

place instead of us. Even in childbearing, we can be spared injury.⁴⁰

The simple joys of make-believe games or 'tickle-buttons' can cause a lot of humor on rainy days. What a good laugh we had with Sharon Joy the other evening. During prayers she said, "Jesus told me that He'll give me *candy* (sweets)!" Her little face was so thrilled at that - it was really cute. Each of them enjoys humorous stories about when they were babies or about us. These I would remember by writing them down on a scrap of paper and transferring them to their own Baby Books from time to time. Always be sure you share the fun, and that the other is laughing too, not crying or angry! It may do us good also to write down cheerful, encouraging, and funny things for us to read when we need to!

It's fun to try to see things from their perspective sometimes! Perhaps like this:

Does the snow make the earth more delicious like powdered sugar on my cake?

It surely does make it more beautiful!

Is it all the mountain peaks and steeples poking holes in the sky,

That make the snow sprinkle on us here?

Father God, Your land is lovely,

Your provisions sweet!

I give You all my Love

And kneel thankfully at Your feet.

3. *The gift of true values.* Do they worry about money, business, houses, or clothes? When their stomachs are hungry, they know it will be fed!⁴¹ Dirt doesn't bother them. Matching and coordinating colors have to be taught as they learn to dress themselves. Things like love, joy, peace, forgiveness, and Heaven are understood by them however. A tiny newborn baby cleansed, fed, and clothed will still die if it does not have the loving touches and sounds. Babies in the womb respond to sounds and types of music as well. The atmosphere in the home in which they live is very important to them!

We must stop our busy schedules to look, smell, and listen! Cooking was stressful for me and I had asked Jesus for a solution. Once my kitchen was the usual obstacle course with several chairs moving around me wherever I went as little ones tried to "help" me. At times toes and feelings were hurt. Miracles still do happen and the dinner was prepared. Suddenly, we all left the kitchen leaving the food to cook longer. I sighed in relief, wiping the perspiration from my sticky face. I had tried unsuccessfully for many years to keep them out of the kitchen or otherwise

occupied, when I worked preparing food. Slowly, I realized there was something comforting and warm in a kitchen where their food is being made and I let them be! This particular day, I walked back in the kitchen and suddenly holy Light and Presence met me at the door! I knelt and let myself understand. Even though that kitchen was full of jostling noise a few moments before a holy atmosphere of love and joy was in my kitchen! The Holy Spirit lives with us! Another time I walked into my front door to hear an orchestra playing as if in the far distance. I heard the high golden sound of trumpets in my dining room! I looked around for any music left on in the house or out the windows. No, nothing. No one in the streets. It was angelic music. It was heard on other occasions too. One fearful night I saw the angel guarding our home and the peace came! We worship the Prince of Peace. Fantasy? Or is it? Sometimes, but to children the reality of some of these special times and the resulting love or joy they experience are not to be denied. They are real! At times, their vision is bigger and clearer. Simplistic, yes, but it is reality.⁴² Once four of our children saw the guardian angel at the same time.

4. *In giving and serving we reap the rewards.* In the book of Galatians, in chapter 6 verse 8 we read of the principle of sowing what we want to reap. Once, when we took into our home a young mother and her one-year-old twins this is what I wrote in my journal:

Rachel is 13 months old today. Today was an exciting day. The time dragged by as I took care of the two one-year old twins along with caring for my own four. At one point of the day; at 11:15am five, ten, twenty years seemed to zoom by. How? It was a dream fulfilled sooner, much sooner, than I had thought. It had been a dream to study, specifically portrait painting, under a master artist. I had not found the teaching I'd wanted in the universities I'd attended. It was through the father of my friend, the mother of the twins, that I met this artist. He was retired and had done paintings in the time and style of Norman Rockwell. He had won numerous awards for his artwork in leading magazines and for portraits of the presidents. I was accepted into his crowded classes. Even though he was booked up through the fall. "God, my Lord Jesus, I sincerely thank You and accept this opportunity for glorifying Your name as I become skilled in this work. Thank You for loving me and giving me Jim who led me through this open door."

How did the door open? It was through the giving to children. Many opportunities for making new friends can come to you through your children: schoolteachers, families with

children in the same class, strangers along the way, and neighbors. These contacts and the resulting changes they bring are a great gift to us. My artwork benefited greatly as well as my confidence as a mother. As missionaries, our children draw people in an undeniable trusting way! Their love and behavior verified our message!

5. *The gift of character*: whether we like it or not, selflessness, and patience are being built into our lives with which we'll profit in all areas of life.

6. *Their work, their help*: The responsibilities that we reward them with, as they grow older are a great help in a daily and practical way. More often than I like, the children are invited to spend time at a friend's home. When this happens, their chores may not be done and I'm amazed at how much all the "little" things they do to help me really do add up! The family can function as a new, oiled machine with each one doing his part and profiting from what the machine produces. Along with the maturing in each individual there is the joy, peace, and centering of our experiences in the happy home. The principle of sowing and of reaping that, which we sow, is evident. If one child cannot do their part, they ask another person to do it for them, being prepared to pay for the work done for them. These are only a few of many gifts that children give and this brings us to the last topic of this chapter on the two-year old.

Discipline Pays Off

Therefore, we find that even though the will power and individuality of the child is being seen more and more, it is still possible for the self-discipline to have increased in equal proportion.⁴³ When this is the case, the child-raising experience continues to be a very positive and fulfilling time. Let us deal with a few every day questions.

Question 1: *Why inflict pain in disciplining my baby?*⁴⁴

Consequences of their actions may have incredible pain or even death, linked to it. I would rather send a little pain to the brain by route of the padded rear-end, or by a little quick flick of the fingertip, than for them to learn by the experience of painful consequences! Always it is a tool of teaching and training. In the well-known Psalm 23, we read of the rod and staff comforting us. The rod is seen in Proverbs as the tool of discipline for children. The parallel is drawn that as a good shepherd guards his sheep so does a parent, by using the rod, guards his child. In the stormy, dark days the sheep could not see their shepherd but he would lead them by tapping them with the rod and speaking to them kindly.⁴⁵ A child should always understand

what is wrong and why. We must always have time to listen to their viewpoint and to back our own up with several scriptures if need be. Kindness and compassion defuses anger or rejection. You can't fight with a pillow; it doesn't fight back! Amazing peace can reign in the case of two children, if both are disciplined when they are not getting along together!⁴⁶ Afterwards always express your confirming love.

Question 2: *Now what? They did it again! Are they deaf, stupid, stubborn or what?*

So who's the boss? Mr. or Mrs. Know-it-all? No! Maybe they didn't hear me since I yelled from one room to the other! Had they left the room? Maybe the words I chose were not the words I meant. Was it a suggestion or a command? Was I interrupting something really important to them? These are some of the questions I check myself on. Sergeant Majors who major on minor points need to put away their magnifying glasses. As we received grace unconditionally from God, let's try to give it! Any failures to achieve perfection must be seen as *minor* if there is any serious attempt on the part of the child to reach it! In one word, we give them our *patience*. For example, younger brother is learning to do older brothers' daily chore of collecting trash and dumping it. He forgets some, drops some, or leaves the door open, etc. Mother encourages him and gently reminds him. She does it with him, sometimes, or reworks the chore so it is more achievable. It has worked this way in our home, as they grow older. Soon the reward of responsibilities-fulfilled take over and the praise is there whether from neighbors, father or brother!

Determine what the strong area in the child's personality is: emotions, intellect, or will? If it is intellect, a small child can literally get so involved in thinking about what he is doing that he does forget everything around him or what he's been told! Acting just like the "absent-minded professor." However the same child, a few years older, may do exceedingly well in school as he applies his mind in one area at a time. If emotions are what the child is strong in, it seems that if the home is happy he can play for hours with his toys imagining all kinds of conquests. He must be taught to strengthen his will and reasoning and to control his emotions. Bible memorization is wonderful for this and music too. The strong-willed child also must learn to control the will with the emotion of sympathy and compassion for others. Reasoning with the strong-willed child is also beneficial in helping the child to use his or her intelligence in a situation.

All three of these strengths, if yielded to God, can be powerful in their lives or if not yielded could be their downfall. As parents, our job is to gently entreat our children to yield their lives

in trust and love to Jesus. In each of our five children's lives, after they willingly gave their life, love, and obedience to the Lordship of Jesus and asked His forgiveness for their sins and His help in their failures, they became very easy to discipline. However, each new day we remind them to live out that decision. As early as two or three years old this decision can be made and a dramatic change may be seen in their lives as a result of their love for Jesus. He is Love. The reality of love causes a sensitivity in them that you as a parent cannot bring about. God is the ultimate Father and fathers them. We “baby-sit” for God. Patiently, with no manipulation, we appeal to their consciences.

In the life of Sharon Joy, she became deeply upset over a little drama that her older sister and she were performing. It was Easter time and they were dramatizing the crucifixion. I was in the kitchen. Sharon, three years old, became almost hysterical, sobbing that Jesus was dead. Rushing into the living room where they were, I asked Rachel to explain this to me. After she told me, I realized that in some deep, spiritual way Sharon was realizing the sin in her heart and the love she had for Jesus. With great joy, I shared with her that Jesus did not stay dead but came back alive and forgives us of all the bad things that we do against Him. We prayed together and after asking God to forgive her, she was so happy. We looked at some pictures of the risen Jesus and she sang, “God's not dead! God is alive” all day long. That evening God put out a beautiful banner of His Love, just for her. She had never really noticed a rainbow before. There was the biggest one I've ever seen brilliantly gleaming across the dark mountain range. She threw up her little hands and shouted, “Thank you Jesus!” A little later, during prayers, she was giggling and I asked her why. She said that the Holy Spirit language tickled her inside when she spoke it. We were walking in the woods one day and she said, “Shhh, Mamma! Jesus is talking to me!” All I could hear was the wind. At age eight, she was baptized in water, also. She will be “sharin' joy” to the nations!

Question 3: *But, Mom, why do they stay up late? They don't go to church?*

If there is rivalry in the home, it must be isolated to the two involved. Teach them to kiss, forgive the *offender* because he/she is so sorry that she/he did what was wrong.⁴⁷ Talk about the reasons for the decisions you come to. Clearly show that God will bless *each* one because He loves them but sometimes we must wait, just as we have to wait for birthdays. They must see that God's ways are best and we enjoy our time together. All aspects of our lives must be enjoyed as if in the presence of God. Going to church is obeying God's Word and blessings follow

obedient children. It is merely an extension of our worship and a time to celebrate with others and to learn more about Him.⁴⁸ Acquaint your children with the fact that they will be different from other children because they are Christians.⁴⁹ They are foreigners with a permanent home in Heaven waiting for them. It is a very special kind of difference. It is a choice to have only *one* very best friend for life: Jesus. I'm so grateful to my parents for helping me realize this when I was young. That friendship has never faltered. Many friends may be 'special', but only Jesus is 'the best'!

Question 4: *Why?*

Any healthy two-year old is inquisitive and exploring...exploding with delight and reactions. So often it's easy to enter into their world and react with them; but, if it's a negative reaction, that is a danger. When the question, “why?” comes up at an inappropriate time, we must be very careful not to just react but to act. Tell them you'll answer them later and do not be manipulated to answer quickly. Never cut them off without hope. Recently, I wrote this little merciful poem:⁵⁰

Perseverance

*Love does not disappoint
Those eyes of bright hope
After tears, that ask one more time
In sweetness politely pleading.
Must I say, “No,” once again?
To this light of hope and patience
I will say, “Yes.”*

Of course, if our decision to say “no” is not hastily made under the pressure of the moment, but in a conviction of God's will then come Hell or high-water we must stand firm and we can! Don't say “No” unless you have a good reason to. Rather say, “Please, wait a minute. I'll give you my answer later.” If you tend to forget, then write a reminder to yourself. Treat your child with respect and dignity. They then will be able to respond to you and you can hold them to be response-able!

Question 5: *Help! I'm losing control! I'm getting violent!*

When this happened to me, my Lord Jesus showed me a verse that greatly helped me.⁵¹ After confirming my love and my respect to my child, I am free to express my feelings about their

behavior. This is done in private, out of earshot of others. Breathe calmly and receive God's control.⁵² Sometimes, I've sent the offender to a quiet place to think about it. I've gone to the bathroom to be alone, to discern the situation, and to regain control. Never speak in instant reaction but take a second to pray first.

The fear of losing complete control is common to parents. We must realize the source of this fear. It comes from the enemy of all love and families. Against this, and not the child, we must fight! So alone, we use the name of Jesus to bind the careening "car" of our situation. If we are children of God, He has promised us this power for there is no greater authority. Each day, as we find in the prayer the Lord Jesus gave us, in Matthew 6:13, we ask for the Father's protection. We remember also to dress ourselves in the armor He has given us as listed in Ephesians 6:10-18. Sometimes forgiveness both ways is the key: they and me.

Unrealistic expectations, confusion, pressure, and tensions cause discipline to be a negative downward spiral. It is like your boat caught in a dark, stormy whirlpool. Picture with me the following scenes. At each spiral, the scene may be changed if the person involved chooses to take a different direction.

1. The boss steaming from personal problems and business pressures, yells at his employee to work overtime or else!
2. The employee, being a daddy, comes home after badly driving the car, slams the door, and yells at his wife for dinner.
3. The wife looking forward to a kiss from him, and receiving none, stays in the kitchen and screams at the child to be quiet and do his homework.
4. The child kicks the table and scribbles the homework. He flees the tension in the home and goes outside to lecture his dog.

Jesus, the Good Shepherd in the dark waves and valleys of life said in Matthew 11:28-30:

Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.

Soon the words of "Peace! Be still!" will calm the temper of the storm. In quietness, and returning to Him, you will find strength and confidence. Joy comes like the light of dawn after waiting in patience through the dark night.

Question 6: *The baby is wearing me out. Throw out the schedule or the baby?*

The cure for child abuse is leaving the child with a friend for a little while and changing your scenery. Take a break! It's unrealistic to think of the child as being someone who can meet your needs. If we look to our child to nurture our egos or make us happy, this is a true form of child abuse. The emotional stress in the home will begin to be intolerable. We are to be their pattern so that they may reflect us to the outside world. They are your fruit and will reproduce the same fruit as is on your tree.⁵³ The fruit is love. Without that love, fears spring up out of every shadowy corner.

Look your little one in the eye and say, "We love you and will be back in a little while." If, as you leave and plant an encouraging kiss on his forehead, he begins to throw a temper tantrum, then what? Don't let the baby-sitter get kicked or bitten. Firmly tell him that if he doesn't stop you will have to discipline him and repeat the goodbye. If he doesn't stop, go to the bathroom and spank him following through with your words. While you're gone, if the baby-sitter has a problem with the child, she/he must make it clear to the child that she will report it to the parents. This is a retreat from constant, parental responsibility. A greater realization of our love for our child and his for us is achieved. We miss each other! We've also had a rest. Schedules are to be a help, a goal to aim at, but not as an end in themselves. Some children sense the confinement and break the schedule for the fun of it.

Question 7: *I feel embarrassed at her shyness. Even Grandma doesn't get a kiss!*

An old proverb from my great grandma reads:

Do it when you're told,

Do it right away

Don't stop to talk about it

Hurry to obey!

So we tell her to give a kiss and she doesn't, isn't that disobedience? Sure it is! So change your tone and ask her if she'd like to, explain that is how we show love and make happiness. Even her brothers and sisters need her words of love and kisses or hugs.⁵⁴ Don't force love. For every, "No! No!" we should say a "Yes! Yes!" The choice may be a second choice to her but it still is an open window helping her to fly. Show her the joys of loving others by enjoying it yourself and leave her temporarily ignored. This little space in time gives her breathing room to take stock of her new circumstances, surroundings, and people. If you put yourself in her shoes, you would probably be shy too, for usually the child is a minority in the group and "looked

down” at! Perhaps given a few years you’ll look back on the two-year old stage as the most sensitive and sweetest of all! His gift is himself, a seed housing innumerable precious fruits of love.

If your child is appreciated, he will respect himself and be happy. Jesus is love and all our happiness comes from Him, not each other. Do you hear Him speaking to you in the forest of life? Does the rainbow remind me of His love-promise? Can you, as a parent say, “Thank You Jesus?” My confession: *I will diligently discipline my children early in their life and I will delight in them forever. Disciplining myself, I will do my best. God will do the rest!*



Chapter Three

Threes and Fours. Watch Those Doors!

Topics:

Organize? (Now that's a miracle!)

Traveling with Baby

In the first two chapters, we have looked at the multi-faceted aspect of our first baby. As he or she grows up and approaches age four perhaps another baby brother or sister is in the hatching-jacket. Now there are three to be excited about baby: Daddy, mommy, and big brother or sister. As this time approaches, we wonder how we will cope, and what it will be like to be a family of four. It really helped our eldest accept baby brother when I showed her how *much* she was a help to us. She would entertain baby brother so well and run numerous errands for me. She was a really important person to baby, and even more to her daddy and mommy. Being a helper was a big girl's job. Only happy, careful, older children get to help with precious babies!

Peace and harmony reigned. With no real thought, diaper bags and baby things were prepared. It came back to my memory so clearly like a dream. I could not believe the difference. It was amazing how one-time through the birth and caring for baby number one made baby number two so relaxed and easy to handle. I realized how much I had changed and it had only been two years! Breast-feeding seemed complicated to me at first, but now I was willing to do it again. Many techniques and mothering secrets really had helped. And oh, the joy in Big Sister's life!

As baby grows up and begins his *long* road in learning to communicate in his world, we watch and see an incredibly different personality emerge. He is exactly opposite of big sister, but not in negative ways. We have to handle him very differently. Daddy often has a sense of what should be done and when. His instinct of fathering is beautifully intact and I thank God for him. I lean very heavily on him at times.

One day a funny little jingle came to mind. It was a catchy tune and the words I made up, rather pointedly, told me something I very desperately needed to remember. It went like this:

I've got a hot line to Heaven and a home full of love,

But I've forgotten to eat the Bread from above.

Here we go up

Here we go down.

Life gets a kind of shaky without this Heavenly Sup.

Read your Bible; pray every day.

If you want to keep the devil away.

Very quickly, life had become more complicated. I had begun substitute teaching at a local high school. We were in our first community church pastorate. Expectations had seemed to pile high over me and I was smothering. I felt unprepared at 23 years of age to be constantly caring for babies - other people's and my own. In many miraculous ways, our merciful Father God intervened and helped me. It took many forms. Sometimes it was a telephone call from a far-off friend. Other times, friends came to visit and gave us their wisdom, love, and gifts of the spiritual kind. I had a personality overhaul and goals realigned. No longer did I want to charge into the vast unknown releasing prisoners, but wanted to settle and submit. I learned to let God, the Holy Spirit, lead through my spirit. He was in charge with my mind, emotions, and body second in command. It was a little frightening at first, but somewhere from that misty realm of me, came the spiritual reality I had missed. He led me step by step. My steps became stronger and stronger. I trusted blindly at times. I found God's mind far wiser and far more humorous than my own thinking. I had never before sensed the separation of soul and spirit so clearly, in an every day way. Slowly, my own mind became sharper, too, and used with more wisdom. I was maturing. Parents must grow with their children.

Organize? Now, that's a Miracle!

An open door is the best invitation to explore that a baby needs. Not long after moving to a new community, a neighbor from down the street brought my two-year old home. She had wandered, explored, wondered, and wandered some more. It is easy for children to get lost in their daydream world. I had to get a handle on this door. My nerves were being frayed in the hinges. A bell was put on the handle of the door and the other one was locked. By discipline, the foolishness from my child was being removed. I trusted the angels to work overtime! At times, our children have been lost but never have they come to harm or had it been a long time

before we found them again. What a time of suffering it is though! I was so glad that I had learned not to panic and let the Holy Spirit lead and guide. He sees and knows all. He is all-powerful. No evil intention can succeed as our children are given to His care daily. Humbly, tearfully we asked the Lord to forgive us and to help us love and care for each other more. Tattling (telling about another) can be so very helpful to us if it is a loving concern that motivates it.

A few helps in not getting lost.

1. Don't turn a corner or go into a store without notifying the one you're with.
2. Don't expect others to care for your children indefinitely. For example, the car that brought them may not take them back, unless you make it clear to the driver.
3. Check up on their activities every 5-10 minutes until they get older. Then it may stretch to 20, but not more.
4. Teach them to stay still until help comes, to pray, and not to try to find their "lost daddy" alone.
5. Memorize the home phone number. Keep other identifying information in purse or written on the inside of jackets, shoes, etc. Make some identifying object on your car antenna etc. so they can find the car.
6. Feel free to call or ask for help. Only do what feels comfortable or peaceful to you.
7. Know your limits. You're not the Messiah.

Only as you let go and let God take control will your self-control be useful to Him. God knows how to organize the universe and all ecological systems. He can help you create order and harmony out of a chaotic existence. Personally, He will help you like yourself and take care of yourself and things like cleaning your bathroom and doing your hair will be purposeful. Even children really appreciate a nicely dressed, pretty-smelling Mommy. When you dress them well and fix their hair, it's easier to treat them as King's Kids. For instance, in the area of cooking, I had to write down a whole week of menu suggestions. It did not come easily to me. I had to organize. I had to learn to budget with beans and with the amount of visitors we could afford monthly. We began with the list of people that we would like to invite leaving no guest as an afterthought. All family members needed to be asked making sure those times, which we chose, would not conflict with other scheduled events. Having an organized plan, any surprise arrival

does not shake you up. You may feel as flexible as a rubber band but your feet are on the Rock. Again, it was Jim, my husband, who helped me to see how cooking can be a joy and a blessing to others! He likes to cook. Many creative masterpieces have been gracing our table. Even the children enjoy joining in at preparing a fancy meal for ourselves or for others!

Then, I had to learn to organize the clothes. For a family of seven who need to be on the road early, laying out their choice of clothes and shoes the night before helped a lot. However, then there are the two-year olds who are fascinated with clothes and change outfits five times a day. The only way I could handle my four-year old when she would do this, is by having her put away her clothes again after she wore them. She soon appreciated the work of caring for clothes. She even thanks me for doing her laundry! Any tear or button coming off is carefully reported. I keep a constant supply of threaded needles of different colors to do the quick mending jobs. I do this by always trying to take twice as much thread than I will need and knotting it as I return the needle. Usually, every month I have clothes to give to others or to use as rags. Clothes that are still good for younger brother or sister are stored away. Now, my four-year old is into the clothes our teenager used to wear! It has really been a help. Only every other month or so would I have mending to do that would require a machine. If you are blessed with the ability to make clothes with a machine and have the time, praise God! Finding time was the problem for me. However, before you freely give away your bags of used clothes always ask the people if they want them. Unless you are very close friends with them, I would suggest letting a charitable organization or church handle it. Some people's children only wear brand-new clothes. Let the teenagers help with mending. "A stitch in time saves nine!" (Mend the one stitch loose before nine gets loose!)

One other area of organization is essential. Have a calendar handy, by the phone preferably, and keep track of your husband's engagements. Fill in the children's schedules and then yours. Family time together is top of the list in priority. Plan it and excuse it as the most important engagement there is! For example, if the phone rings during dinner have it agreed upon that one child, usually the oldest, will answer it. This will avoid the "Grand Exit." If the call comes during family time, ask them to call back and hang up! The telephone is for *our* use and we rule over it. Our home has also been the office for my husband so to get a little quietness at specific family times; we disconnected our phone or used an answering machine.

Ask the family members what they would like to do in the month. Keep hopes and dreams communicated. In a godly, organized home, the greatest achievements are birthed. Also, have a

tablet of paper close by the calendar to write out the daily appointments and extra things that you would like to accomplish. Perseverance will take you up and over any mountain. If the children make many demands on you and you feel that they are unreasonable ones, stop and explain what it is that you would like to do that day. Talk about your feelings to them in a non-manipulating way. After all, if it is selfish on your part and causing problems, it won't be enjoyed anyway. Exceptions with little ones will always occur. Don't give in to their manipulations either. Be patient and willing to wait. It will reap peace.

Traveling with Baby

So, now that you're organized you can put it to the test. However, suddenly your travel clothes don't fit anymore. Your baby attracts so much attention! It's breast-feeding time and there's no privacy. Your clothes are milk-soaked and the baby is leaking from both ends. The diaper bag was left in the car. These are only a few hurdles that I had to jump I rediscovered that necessity is the mother of invention.

When your baby only drinks milk, traveling is easier because his demands and needs are very few. A plastic bag cut into squares and put at the back of folded strips of thin, white material serves as a very efficient breast pad. A lightweight blanket could be used over your shoulder for a privacy tent as you breast feed. I would hang them to dry and even re-use them only if it was within the same day. I was an abundant milk fountain. Clothes that are easy to clean are essential for this time of your life. For the mother who wants to breast-feed her baby, I must say, "Hooray for you!" God has provided no better food for your newborn. To avoid the pain of milk ducts that are too full, make sure that as you nurse your baby you relax completely and massage the base of your breast all around. As you do this, it brings the milk down. Do it only gently and for just a little while until you feel all the milk is emptied from one breast. Then perhaps next time begin on the other side. If baby is still hungry after one is emptied you may give him number two, but start with number two the next time. Keep track by putting a safety pin on the side of your brassiere to start with next. Increase his amount of food and milk intake and allow his sleep-time to lessen during the days. Soon he'll be sleeping through the night hours as you do. For travel, we gave healthy snacks including cold, cooked green beans, and frozen peas. They really enjoyed these.

So what about if he is really a mess and you're out of supplies? The extra toilet paper is gone

and you're far from home. This happened a few times to me but usually in a nearby public bathroom (or even a private one, if need be) I could find paper towels or toilet paper to get me by. Sometimes I even used his blanket or a dishtowel! Learn to enjoy the attention baby attracts and use it to exhibit a positive attitude towards your baby. Let everyone see you enjoying him in an unconditional way; that is, no matter what happens, love him! If you must discipline him, take him to a private place or the bathroom. The best way to enjoy your outing is to take into consideration his enjoyment too.

Quite often, a child will behave badly in public if a parent is in the habit of being lenient with him in public. Always be consistent in your demands of obedience. The answer lies in keeping your demands only to the most essential for example; "Get in the car, please." He may need to be reminded that you can find a bathroom in which to discipline him if he doesn't obey. One follow-through will usually be enough to convince him you mean business. If our children began behaving badly in restaurants, we would be careful to explain the expectations to them again. If this behavior continued, we would not be able to bring them or go as a family for a while. We must not cause a problem for other diners desiring to have a quiet or romantic meal. It took a lot of practice, but we now enjoy eating in a restaurant as a family. The children thank the waiters for everything and care is taken in leaving the floor and table without extra work for them.

Last, but not least, speaking of eating, how is the weight? Have the children been an excuse for any extra weight on your once-upon-a-time trim waistline? Pregnancy is no excuse, and you do not have to eat all their leftovers, Mom! Wrap it up. Save it. Freeze it. Give it to an animal! For the post delivery exercises bring the waist back to size. Breast-feeding may delay it. Patiently wait until the nine months or so of breast-feeding are over to regain total muscle tone. For a few minutes a day a woman can kneel with her head flat on the floor looking to the side. Her rear-end is up in the air and knees apart. She can feel all her inside organs pull upward and her tummy flatten. This is a very simple exercise or position that I have used. Don't over do it; it does work, however.

So, after all your carefulness and trying you still are over weight. One time in desperation for myself and for my friends, I asked God for help and He said, "Wait upon the Lord, as a waitress serving, and He will take care of the weight." I forgot the problem and continued doing my best in serving Him, my family, and friends. In a very interesting way, He did take care of it! A friend

asked me to go on a long trip with her. My baby was small and it worked out that we could go. Somehow, after returning from the long trip, I had lost all the weight I had needed to.

Another time I had felt the need to cut out sugar from my diet. The craving and temptation for something sweet had become unbearable and a bag of marshmallows was just staring at me! I said, "Help! Lord, I resist temptation. Show me the way of escape!" He said, "Prunes!" I stuffed down some prunes and headed out the door. Whether it was the Lord's voice I heard or thought I heard, I praise Him, because it worked and I had peace. His voice is always loving and gentle. He never is condemning nor does He repeat Himself in a harsh way. No matter how silly you may feel, listen to His way of escape He promises to give!⁵⁵ Over the next weeks, I had eaten quite a few prunes! In later pregnancies, I found the need for iron and laxatives in my body and God reminded me of the prune diet. (Don't eat too many on an empty stomach.) For bad acid indigestion, I used alfalfa tablets. They were good for me and worked as nothing else had. Sugar and white-flour products also produce acidity in the stomach, not to mention the calories. Reduce your amounts.

The diets that I established and helped keep me healthy too.

Breakfast: 1 Protein (nuts, cheese, meat, yogurt)
1 Carbohydrate (bread or cereal)
1 Fruit
2 Large drinks (hot or cold)
1 Multi-Vitamin

Lunch: 1 Protein
1 Fruit
2 Whole-wheat, or rye crackers (not bread)
1 Large Drink
Try using 2 leaves of lettuce as a substitute for bread

Dinner: 1 Protein
2 Vegetables (1 green)
1 Dessert (Jell-O is a good dessert)

Before bed: Milk product

Add: Soup, carrot sticks, and popcorn often

In between: Drink extra water (filtered, if possible)

Eat fruit before meals

Easy daily exercises: a few sit-ups in bed; knees bent with hands behind your head. Run on the spot until your lungs and heart are working hard. Play or wrestle with you kids, tickling etc. Praise exercise; dance to some happy music.

Think of yourself as strong, healthy, creative, happy, and contented. Be thankful for all the blessings of these years; for your Bible, for your husband, etc. See a vision of yourself as beautiful in your inside “you” and how it, slowly, with God's help, will show on the outside too. In the country of my childhood, Swaziland, Africa, it was the fattest women who were the most desired and the most beautiful. They looked as if their husbands were rich and they would outlive any famine. Isn't it interesting how cultures differ? If all else fails, move to Swaziland! One dinner a week, our family does not eat the regular large meal. We feed the children yogurt, soup, bread, eggnog, or something very simple and plain. We explain that we will take extra time to read and pray together. We remember those people in the lands of starvation or families without food or those with a father in jail, and we are thankful for our blessings. Money is saved and sent for these people and mom has a rest from cooking. After the years went by, it was amazing to see how their appetites were much less on those “fasting” days. The very little children maybe two or under, who may not have understood, were fed earlier with scrambled eggs for example.

One day my little three and a half year old was begging for food. We were driving down the road and I had none. I explained to her how the Bible is like bread to us so since we could not eat now; perhaps we should learn a Bible verse. She had not begun to memorize the scriptures. So as we drove we began to learn John 3:16: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son that whosoever believeth on him, should not perish but have everlasting life.” (KJV) I explained this verse to her. Very soon, she smiled and exclaimed, “Mommy! I'm not hungry anymore!” That began her memory work and we contribute her A grade-average to the sharpening of her mind on those memory verses. My once very chubby little girl is a slim young lady and still memorizing easily.

Ssh! Now, please don't tell anyone I told you, OK? These are very special secrets! I'm not proud of them, I'm proud of Jesus who gave them. If they work for making you successful too, just thank Jesus. He loves you and so do I.⁵⁶



Rachel Leanne - Lovely Lamb



Chapter Four

What? A Chore?

Topics:

Rachel Leanne (Lovely Lamb)

Socializing Privilege

What? A Chore?

While discussing the first-born and the subsequent children, I'm actually writing about the lives of my children from the youngest to the oldest. It is juxtaposition. In this chapter, we will examine how the delicate balance in the home maintains itself. We'll do this by an overview of their roles and their chores. By "chores", I mean the work done as on a farm; to feed and care for livestock and plants on a daily basis. In a family, there is the privilege of sharing with one another!⁵⁷

On a farm, the animals announce the beginning of the day. "Rejoice!" Mr. Rooster cock-a-doodle-does! "A day has begun! Here comes the sun!" call the larks. Flower petals open and the majestic sunflower slowly turns never losing sight of the sun from whom it was named. In the sparkling grass the spiders hang their strings of pearls and the breeze rustles through the tree limb, whispering, "Shh! Be still and know that He is God!" Spring has sprung. The milk pails clink and the kitty-cats meow. This is how I imagine the morning begins on a farm. Does it on yours? This pretty picture would fade if Mr. Farmer cares little for the farm and lets the fences fall. The chickens would find another barn, the lambs and calves would find some other farm.

However, on my imaginary farm, I hear the loud voice of the Mrs. Farmer bossing up her crew. Reviewing the chores and gathering up her team for "Full steam ahead! The day has begun! Children run!" Deep in her heart, she wants to listen to the bleating of those new little lambs and the fleeting "buzz" of the shy hummingbird by the window. How can she slow herself down to hear the trees say, "Shh"? "To have the energy", she says, "is where it's at! To have love, health, and a home to look at." Soon a little life begins to tickle inside her womb and a little

heartbeat begins to whisper. "Barefoot and pregnant!" The neighbors chuckle.

"Another baby is coming. If it's a girl I would name her Rachel Leanne," she ponders. "I need gentleness and she, as all my children, must reflect me in some ways." She prays for a gentle and quiet spirit.⁵⁸

Rachel Leanne (Lovely Lamb)

"What's your name?" I heard my four-year-old answer, "Rachel Lovely Lamb!" Indeed, she was serious! This, our fourth, was a serious little one. Studying everything and everyone with a little concentrated frown instead of a smile. Her eyes a steel gray, intensely looking at the person she often would make people feel uncomfortable. Then she would put her little nose, which really looked just like a lamb's nose, in the air and frisk away behind her two older brothers. As a baby she was called, "Frisky Lamb." Standing in her high chair, scrambling up the stairs, undaunted in her zeal, she seldom ever fell. Sure-footed and sure willed, she is a delight to us and when she isn't; my husband reminds me that I was probably much like her as a child.

If ever a lamb would love a green pasture, she would! The Anne part of her name means grace and was named after her Grandma Anne Stark who has the same zealous, inquisitive personality. The Lea joined with it I was delighted to find out later, meant green pasture. We do see God's grace on her life as she finds her green pastures with Him! Once I was tired of the arguing between Rachel and Sharon and the Lord led me to see how one day they would be close friends. He did this with a verse about how Rachel pastured her sheep in the valley of Sharon.⁵⁹ The two girls are opposites in personality as are my two boys of whom I will write about later. This is a God given blessing for they do not compete, hardly being able to guess what the other is even thinking! As the years have gone by there is a sweet companionship and entertainment between them. I praise Jesus for it was only by His grace.⁶⁰ We rely on it!

In our weakness, He is strong; at least it becomes very obvious to us. And this was and is very true for me for I had never set out to be a mother or even to be married. When it happened, I was isolated from mothers who could have taught me. Only as Jim and I sought the Lord for wisdom as parents could we hear the Holy Spirit's guidance. Rachel in her uniqueness and tender spirit needed wise parents! Successful parenting is only by God's grace as we allow Him to show us how! Every child and every situation is unique and calls for us to label them "Handle with Care!" If you dare and better still, "Handle with Prayer!"

With Rachel almost one month old and me, just celebrating my twenty-eighth birthday, my

lover, Jim, decided to take me to a tropical-like place for a treat. After leaving Swaziland, Africa, eleven years ago at that time, this was the first time to see Hibiscus flowers blooming, and graceful palm trees again in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. What a lovely refreshing place this was! Not only the place but also our friends deeply encouraged us and I enjoyed being alone with Jim and my tiny Rachel Leanne. Our Father in heaven likes for us to experience heaven on earth and He doused me with His “spring fever”, joy, and romance! In a deep way, we must trust that if we truly need something our Lord will provide it. He has never failed me.⁶¹ I wrote this at that time about Rachel:

It took courage thinking of having this baby.⁶² We were newly moved to the inner city and my parents on their way to India. I felt I needed family to be near us and was encouraged by Lois, Jim's sister, spending two weeks with us at Christmas. It especially was great for the kids and filled the longing to be with family. Then Eric and Becky Hendrix moved in when Rachel was born and as they had no family near, we easily “adopted” each other. What a service and blessing they are! What's more, God is allowing them to move right next door. Hallelujah! The fellowship in the home has been so sweet. With the prayer to be more quiet and gentle, He gave me Rachel Leanne baby. Our petite blonde soon to be our frisky-lamb! He is working this into my life. Surely, this has been a time of grace in God's green pastures with His little lamb!⁶³

For many days, Rachel wanted the bedtime story of the Little Lost Lamb. She was two. Then she said she didn't want to hear it again and I realized that it was because she didn't want to be like that lamb. After this, we told her of Another Lamb, Jesus. During this time her daddy, who was on a trip, sent her a postcard with Jesus holding the lamb. Training and discipline were very hard for her, as she was a very intelligent and strong-willed baby. I would cry at times to see my little lamb taken over by rebellious spirits and fight against me with all her strength. In the middle of one of these fits, she saw me cry and it touched her conscience. “Why are you crying, Mommy?” I told her that Jesus wanted her to open the door of her heart and let Him help her to be good...to be His lamb. We prayed together and she gave her heart and will to Jesus. No adult has had a greater conversion experience than that little two-year-old! It was an incredible change He brought about. No more rebellious fits, ever!

From then until now she can hear the Holy Spirit and obeys. Her will is submitted, the rest follows. We see the fruit and enjoy the responsibility we can entrust to her in the home and in the church. It's incredible to see a ten-year-old going through growing pains spiritually of the same type mature believers are required to go through. In her case, it was to be able to lay down a job in the nursery work and as a singer at church, even though she knew Jesus had called her to do it in the first place. It was to be submitted to His will even though it meant to wait or “die to the vision” she had from Him. Once her sensitivity to the Lord awakened her to a fire in the home where our family and another family were sleeping and we were able to get out in the nick of time. She said, “Jesus woke me up and we must get out *now!*” In a family, every member is vitally important that is if we really hear each other.

During this time of learning more about the character of *The Lamb*, Jesus, I had a strange dream:

The Dream

A message had to be given!

Carefully thought out word by word

To tell the world how to be saved

From destruction!

But it had to be engraved on the side of a lamb.

A lamb was found, perfect, and pure.

But, oh! No! It was our pet lamb; our beloved lamb!

Laying him on his side, we held him secure

The message was written; each letter in agony prescribed

Blood ran down as we cried

My children and I.

We tried to raise him up to stand

To show the message to the land

But he fell faint from pain

And could not try again.

His head fell down in death,

The message so deep he bore.

While we looked upon our lamb in horror

Limp was he as someone cut the wool off his head...

What ugliness and pain I dreamt upon my bed!

I awoke with a jolt and weeping.

Our beloved lamb was like Jesus

He had learned obedience through the things He suffered.

My children who had looked upon

Cried for their precious one.

Kneeling they saw it all

They held Him so He would not fall

The message had to be given

To point the lost to Heaven.

New life the lamb would have.

Rejoice! "It is finished!" He had cried.

And the angels sang,

"You are worthy because You were slain

To purchase with Your blood

Men of every name

You have made them to be a priestly kingdom

To serve our God; to reign.

To the Father and to the Lamb

Be praise, honor, glory and power

Forever and ever! Amen!"⁶⁴

Socializing Privilege

Part of the growing up process is fitting into a social structure. For unique individuals this may be hard, if not impossible. Some of these 'misfits' never settle but wander the globe flaunting their independence. One-child families need to work harder to teach their child the need for sharing and giving.

Everyone has an emotional tank that needs to be filled, but not to overflowing. Children like Rachel who are filled with abilities and interests can "burn-out" or just spill over with

frustration. Their emotions need extra time to be quiet, to rest, to sleep, and to play. However, their inquisitive minds make it difficult for them. She is now realizing this and doesn't get so hurt when her brothers ask her to leave them alone too! She sees that is what we need sometimes and I admire her patience as she waits for her brothers' time alone to be over!

In the bustle of society, it's a real art to know how to relate and keep in balance. For a five through ten-year-old, this is a major adjustment. "Home Alone" becomes an overcrowded kitchen table. Why don't we use our spacious dining room more? If we have this choice, we need to spend a little extra time to have a family dinner in a more peaceful setting. How about candles and soft music? Some of my children have needed this so much they jump to help with the extra preparation. Especially the more sensitive, artistic ones have expressed this need and don't we all need beauty and peace? So whether it's a family dinner only once a week, do it! Make it special and let love be the motive.

No matter how large the family or how many visitors, peace must rule. Jesus is the Prince of Peace. Once I was desperately praying for a happy home and my four-year-old said to me, "Mommy my second daddy spoke to me." That got my attention! "My second daddy in Heaven", he said. "What did He say?" I asked of course. "Peace makes joy", he continued. "What's peace, Seth?" I asked amazed. "I dunno." he answered. With this answer, I realized an incredible thing. Praying for happiness, God had sent me the answer. Look for it in peace! He had used the sweet spirit of my son. Do we need each other? Yes, yes!

So it is a privilege from God to socialize with His highest creation; people! If we explode, hurting innocent bystanders, we inflict pain to our Father's heart. If we allow our children to continue arguing, hitting, or calling each other names, it is as if we allow them to do it to Jesus. Besides this fact, in our family with five children two years apart in age, it was imperative for survival! So if the privilege to be together was violated by selfish insensitivities the offender was warned. If unheeded he or she would be removed or sent to be alone and think. Where? The room where the cleaning up takes place was the likeliest: the bathroom. This, however, was an inner cleaning and meditation on the situation needing a solution. Soon thereafter, the one in authority would go and see if any help was needed and restore the child to the group. We have had good discussions in this private time of cleansing.

Separation is a valid tool of discipline and training. It has its own pain. Jesus also went through separation on the cross when He called out, "Father! Father! Why have you forsaken

me?" So we don't need it as a part of our lives. He took it so we do not have to have it. The separation I'm referring to is not that which breeds isolation or resentful attitudes, it is a separation of the child unto us. To bring him or her into their own quiet peace once again and we are to be with them. Just as we know that no matter what our behavior is, the Holy Spirit has promised *never* to leave us. We also must show the same unconditional love to our children.

The anti-social behavior stops and the privilege is restored but the acceptance is always there. Your child may wish to play and be alone, etc. but he must stay with you. Sometimes when it's hard to see what's wrong or right think of what's the most loving. Sometimes our Rachel can easily see the wrong from the right. Sometimes it's even unclear to us. With her strong will, she is fearless to follow what she believes is right. We thank God for this, but learning the most loving way will take us all a lifetime!

So the chores we have in our home are just a part in building the structure called family. The love is that fabric that God is weaving on the structure. It's His loom. Little jobs done without reminding or complaining show our love for the beauty He is creating on this loom. Family life weaves together smoothly. We see the backside of the pattern, but sometimes He may let us see the beauty of the front side of the tapestry. It comes only through the eyes of others. Someone once said, "The brook would lose its song if you took the stones away." Sometimes it's the separations in life, the gray or muddy colors that help us appreciate each other and their color of Joy.

With young ones it helps to have them care for a small inexpensive pet or plant. It helps them learn the vital importance our lives can have in the life of another. If the goldfish isn't fed or his water not changed, he'll die. Sure, we risked his glass bowl being broken, which it did, but it's *her* goldfish! Sharon has the goldfish and Rachel has helped "mother" several cats. Presently she has four tomcats in her responsibility. When they die, get lost, or have kittens, the emotions are handled. They are learning in turn to "Handle with Care." They handle it with prayer, too. God created the animals for us to enjoy. Sometimes even dying houseplants can be a worry! So if they don't respond to the tender loving care (TLC), prayer, or experts advice get rid of them. Don't lose or bruise the joy of your family memories over animals, plants, or any other material thing. *People* are whom Jesus died to save, for they have an eternal soul. I'm not saying there are no animals in Heaven, I believe there are, but let's keep our priorities straight. It's possible to save an animal but lose a friend or a marriage! If you are someone who has love to give and

extra time, try doing some volunteer work with the elderly in hospitals, with churches, orphanages, etc. Pray for the sacrificial godlike love. This kind of love suffers most when it cannot serve. Jesus' love hungers only to love with no recognition or reward. Love has its own reward; the smile of the Father. After spending a lot of time during the years visiting women prisoners, I have come to see the power of this love. It's addictive and births new life. The most creative thing one can do is train a child in the ways of God.

Let's get down to the practical now. God's creativity is still at your disposal. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you the how, what, when, where, and why! He is your teacher and He understands your child more than you ever will. He loves your child more than you ever can. He doesn't *have* love for him or her, He *is* love. Always return to Him for the refilling of love.

When the child cannot do the work for some reason, they need to tell you and make a backup plan. If they don't report their failure, they don't take it seriously enough. Warn them and explain the importance of *their* part. *Appreciate* them! If it continues to be neglected or requires reminding, don't nag, but just decrease their rewards or privileges. Responsibilities bring rewards, or should. So the older the child is the more exciting the responsibilities become and the rewards greater. This can be in the form of weekly allowance (money), baking, their own room, pets, machines, etc. The chores are passed down the line as they assume ones that are more exciting. This sharing-of-the-work plan is not hard for our children to understand if we always try to be fair explaining it all in a patient loving way. The key to this is hearing each other. This also begins to teach them how to tithe the money to the Lord, to save and enjoy giving their own gifts.

Since cooking was always a weaker area in my life, I planned carefully to have my children *love* cooking as their dad did. Is it possible? Yes! Easily, because to like to cook is God given and not to, is abnormal. Strange as it may seem this has worked. Cooking is as old as time, almost, and a way in which we express our care and love providing nutrition to others and ourselves. Eating should be enjoyable and relaxing. We sanctify our food by prayer but we also receive God's peace as we stop to acknowledge Him. Our digestive system needs peace.⁶⁵ Cooking can be creative even in the simplest ways. Ask your children for advice on this and see how 'creative' eating can be!

Working in the kitchen around knives, boiling water, electrical appliances, and sugar can be health hazards! Only the most responsible six-year-old should be allowed to help. It is a

privilege, another social privilege! When they are ready and taught, let them present a family *favorite* and get their *own* reward. I usually begin with a fruit salad and cream or yogurt. Reading instructions takes patience as well, so one by one the cooks are acclaimed! The younger ones may watch 'carefully' with permission. However, they can help in the clean up. The privileged cooks perhaps could be rewarded by the parents cleaning up. Only the *very* mature and responsible cooks, and clean up after themselves!

How wonderful it is not to wonder if the children are making good lunches or eating well while we're away. Often we have used their expertise to feed large banquets or get us out of a "hungry 5000" situation. They have the perspective of cooking Jesus did.⁶⁶ May He lead you in the Joy of Cooking, keeping the character of the Lamb in all you do!⁶⁷



Chapter Five

First Day of School

Topics:

Sunday School Too?

The Unusual Child

The Inherited Weakness

As 'school' looms on the horizon of the child, he begins to look towards growing up. Until now, he has grown in leaps and bounds, perhaps jerks, but it has never really entered his consciousness. Beginning the upward stairway called 'SCHOOL' needs to be approached as carefully as any stairway. It was indeed a long stairway that Jacob saw in his dream.⁶⁸ Angels were using it and we thank God that angels accompany each one of our children too!⁶⁹

Plato stated sometime before 347 BC, "The punishment which the wise suffer, who refuses to take part in the government, is, to live under the government of worse men." We choose, as parents to take part in our children's educational process, to take part of the government of their lives and their schools or we suffer the consequences of our apathy. Jean-Paul Sartre stated that the poor don't know their function in life which is, "to exercise their generosity," so we too must not be blind parents refusing to exercise our loving watchfulness over our children.

This is their first leap of faith out of the nest. This is our first act of generosity and trust. Giving trust to others as their teachers and giving our tender chick to the wind is our step of faith too. However, we are free to trust and free to hope, having faith in the Master of all education, the Holy Spirit.

I never knew my father or mother while they were teachers. They had evolved to the realms of surgery and road-side-under-tree evangelism. However, my father left with me a poem that had greatly affected him as he began his time as a teacher.

*I took a piece of living clay
And gently formed it day by day
And with kind and tender hand*

Led it up through childhood's land

I came again when the years were gone

It was a man I looked upon

He still that early imprint bore

And I could change it never more.

There is an amazing power to learn in a loving atmosphere. When we love, we know. However, when do we know to love? Let us love and find out! There is a school of the conscience that is our responsibility. The Handbook of Human Education is the Bible. Do we have a concordance available? Have we shown our children how to use this “dictionary” of the Bible? If little Rachel needs the vitamin C of caring or kindness, or vitamin H for healthy living, can she look up that topic she needs for her spiritual health?

Earlier than school and reading began, our children enjoyed their own Bible “reading” time. It is now a well-worn book full of beautiful pictures of Bible stories. Looking at these pictures, they remember the story or bring one to Mom or Dad that they can't remember. They did this in their own beds after the wake-up call. This “Good-Morning Holy Spirit” time could stretch to half an hour. It is amazing how this type of breakfast and schooling really set their energy and joy level for their day. It was a sharpening of their minds with the best flint available. Our father Abraham commanded this education of our children in Genesis 18:19. As we ask God for wisdom, He promises to give it to us.⁷⁰ As we respect God more and more, we'll have this wisdom for which we ask. Not as long ago, like Abraham, my grandmother passed this on as the century turned its page,

Faith Mighty Faith

It interests that power on the behalf of the believer by which the sea is dried up, the mountains removed, the dead raised to life, sin forgiven, the heart purified, Satan vanquished, death conquered, and God Himself delighted and glorified..

This is an education of a spiritual kind, an example that reaches generations, reminding us that we are learners first spiritually, second mentally. A top scientist, specializing in the study of the galaxies, said that there are over 100 billion galaxies and there is not one too many! The Milky Way is just on of them. How great our Father God is!

When we give gifts to our children, or someday our grandchildren, we try to think of their educational needs. A telescope, a pet, art-set, a musical instrument, or books about their interest are a few suggestions. Our children have always enjoyed these gifts the best, for God made them to be learners.

We have also benefited greatly by the teaching tools given by such as Youth with a Mission that has a wonderful King's Kids Ministry and can be found on every continent.

As parents, we must do this work even in all the inadequacy that we may feel, so we will not be ashamed when our children take their test before our Lord Jesus.⁷¹ Mark 10:14 states, “suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.” Even babies can begin memorizing the Word of God.⁷² By the way, the TV is the worst teacher you can leave your baby with. The words can eventually lodge in his subconscious or dislodge his conscience! Be with them while they watch to explain and to censor, teaching all the while. Children's programs on the Christian station are the only “safe” entertainment without your presence. In countries where this is not available, I urge you parents to pray and intercede for this. Many will benefit from Christian media and not just your children! Always before you intercede for anything, ask yourself the questions, “Am I willing to be a part of the solution to this? Am I available to help in this?”

In no way can we leave our children to educate themselves. The all-wise Solomon has a proverb that says that a child left to himself will bring shame to his mother.⁷³ However, during our times of learning together as a family, God taught us all. Let me explain. The children were encouraged to speak to God as their Heavenly Father thanking Him and asking Him in the Name of Jesus. Then afterwards we had a time of silence listening to Him answer. If they wished, they could share these messages with the rest of us. These were vitally important to them. Their little faces glowed as they, without a doubt knew that God had really spoken to them. We explained that not every time would God choose to speak to them in this way for He also speaks through His Word, the Bible.

Here are some excerpts from the words they heard from Jesus. Rachel at age five shared this after our quiet time, “He'll take care of us like a Shepherd, and He loves us and all the people.” At the same time:

Seth (age 7): “Jesus said He will make people not kill animals and people will be friends”,

Nathan (age 9): "The end will be soon",

Sara (age 12): "Jesus said not to judge others and that He will judge them."

Later the same year of 1986, we were in a time of financial and emotional strain. However, the children were not aware of this. I had a pen and paper on hand. Jesus said through:

Sara (12): "I am Your Light. In Me you'll have success."

Nathan (10): "Follow Me. Be My disciples to all the nations."

Seth (7): "You will not want or need anything. I love all people even people like

Matthew a tax collector."

Rachel (5): "He loves us and He'll bless the whole family."

Sharon (3): "I'll give you candy!"

She burst our laughing. What a joy-girl! What a relief as we all laughed and thanked God together. This was Sharon's first time and this was what she had needed to hear! I suppose her Heavenly Father knows her best anyway. As parents, too, we were encouraged.

In 1987, I wrote a few little excerpts from the Lord through:

Nathan (11): "Have confidence in Him. He'll be with you always. Don't fear."

Seth (9): "You shall do good in everything you do and do good to other people."

Rachel (7): "Every Christian will go to Heaven and every bad person goes to Hell. Obey and love Him the most; more than anybody. Love one another. Don't love yourself more than others. Don't hit back. Let them hit twice. God loves you and He doesn't want anyone to get hurt. Don't let the devil come into your heart. Be in His hands and not in the devils hand because He loves everybody. The Spirit is in our heart and listen to Him. Obey Mommy and Daddy like we obey God. Have a good time with each other."

Another time Nathan (10) heard: "I am the Light. I am the Living Light that lives in you. I am the Truth. I will speak out of you. No one can come to the Father but by me. I want the Light to shine out of you. And the Truth to speak out of you.

Seth (8): "You will do your tests well, nicely, and quickly."

During this year, I had home-schooled Seth and Rachel. Seth was facing the stress of taking tests in a classroom setting again. He wasn't used to it and would get so nervous he would forget what he'd learned the day before. So this, I'm sure gave him the promise he needed as he began to be in a school classroom again. His grades began to rise. Jesus said through them another time

in 1985:

Nathan (9): "I love you and I want to love you more and I want to care for you more, as you let me."

Seth (6): "I love you!"

Rachel (4): "I love you! I'll give you a white, white, white cape to go to Heaven with."

Mother: "In quietness and in confidence will be your strength."

Beth: (a friend's daughter staying with us. I think 10 years old) "Arise my child and take a step into the presence of the Lord. And I will make a way for thee in the heavens. I'm preparing a place for thee in Heaven."

If this shocks you to think that children could prophecy, it may help to remember that this was foretold of prophets long ago.⁷⁴ As the children grew, we continued to enjoy the words of encouragement that the Lord would transmit through them or through us. Not only at home but also in the church. Once as a meeting progressed, my husband Jim encouraged anyone who felt they wanted to share something from the Lord to go to the microphone or just share it with him. I noticed Rachel went out of the meeting but quickly returned. Jim had begun to preach and she went up to him. The children would never do this usually. She whispered to him awhile. She said that when he had first encouraged anyone to share from the Lord she had seen something but had to go to the restroom. She went to the restroom and now she was sharing the message. I'm so glad our Heavenly Father knows our weaknesses and as His children, He will wait until we're ready too. How flexible He wants us to be!

She had seen an angel flying across our heads with a banner. On the long banner was written this message, "Those who pray will be blessed! Those who don't won't!" In the school of the Holy Spirit, He will guide, teach, and comfort. He is a silent teacher until we begin to ask Him to teach us. He responds to all our questions and uses others to teach us too. Never condemning or harsh, He speaks the truth gently and lovingly sometimes with conviction resulting in our conscience. A child can be raised with a tender conscience towards certain things. There is the influence of his environment or culture. Some things are so permissible in some places that they never have the opportunity to know those things as sin. So this is the School of the Holy Spirit and sometimes He has a lot of work to do! If you are angry with your child for accidentally breaking something, it is totally different from being angry over a sin he has done. God give us

wisdom and discernment in their training! In our home we have the four D's (don'ts): Dishonesty, Disrespect, Destructiveness, and Disobedience. For in these we use the rod training their conscience, for if they die with a habit of these sins unforgiven and unrepented for they would feel the anger of Hell's fire. Now is the time for choosing the holy way. Heaven begins in our homes when His will is done on earth as it is in heaven.

Sunday School Too?

Sunday School is an extension of the biblical training of our children in our homes. Gifted teachers bring the Bible principles to the level of the child's comprehension. The Bible stories are enjoyed with other children their own age. Visual aids are used to help them understand. Offer your help as a parent. Learn and be a better parent as you learn how these teachers communicate so well with your children. Even as a back-seat visitor to their Sunday School class you can gain a great appreciation for their teacher and pray more effectively for this vital ministry. Many times over, I have nursery care and children's ministries in churches. I love it more and more. To be an equipped worker with children and a sweet server, you must know about spiritual warfare. These are precious people strong in their spirit but weak in their flesh. Maturity spiritually depends on how much we put of God's word into practice,⁷⁵ and not on our age. Many times children can put our faith to the test and pass us up! May the grain of faith that God gave each of us as we accepted Him as our Lord grow and grow!

As we all know, however, children are vulnerable because of this simple trust. Without making them distrustful or suspicious as I have seen sometimes, we must teach them to discern between good and bad by listening to the voice of their Best Friend. No matter what, He will never leave them. He is the Holy Spirit and His love is unconditional; perfect! They may make Him sad, full of grief or silent, but He will always be there. They invite Him and He stays. Only if they continue to ignore their conscience, which is His voice, will their hearts get hard. In apathy and speaking against the Holy Spirit will they force Him to leave them. For this reason as parents we must teach them carefully to enjoy, to respect, to love, to obey, and to need God's Holy Spirit.

Never, repeatedly, force your baby or child to stay in the nursery or Sunday school classroom. Stay with him until he sees something he could enjoy there. Tell him it's part of growing up, but he can stay with you also if he is quiet. Explain that church is a place where God's children get together to enjoy learning about Him. Secondly, it's a place to be with our friends. God doesn't

force us to love Him and to want to make Him happy. Explain the Sunday school teacher's function to your child (e.g., that they aren't paid but love to teach and help). Your child could be the Sunday School teacher's helper or bring something to class, etc. The character of Christ is allowing our child to develop a corporate consciousness. That is, we are part of the worldwide family of Jesus Christ.

From our experience it works better if a new child stays with his caretakers or parents the first few times. Also it is good to include the children in the church meeting so that they can see the adults worshipping or learning. Children learn best by seeing and experiencing. Give them plenty of time for this. Patiently, happily encourage but most of all; ENJOY CHURCH YOURSELF!⁷⁶ What ever that takes! It could mean that you would have to volunteer in a Sunday school class to begin enjoying it; by giving more of yourself. If the Bible is not being taught in a total and balanced way or if there is a cut-and-paste doctrine being given, leave. Leave for your children's sake. They will be influenced. Cutting out some of the New Testament or pasting in traditions, etc. will not help their developing discernment. If God directs you to stay in a church like this, explain your differences to the children but do not be divisive. This is almost impossible if not hypocritical. This is why you may need to leave. Joining with other parents in a home for Bible study and worship is a valid alternative. God has begun many wonderful churches this way.

Growing up in a Christian home, I was surrounded by Christians. I praise God today for parents who led me into a relationship with Jesus before I can even remember. It must have been before age five for the earliest memories I have are of about four or five. I remember being sick while we were visiting in Canada. My parents asked the pastor and church elders to come to my Aunt's home and anoint me with oil for healing. I grew up with no desire to rebel and do not remember times of willfully rebelling. At an early age I also remember "hearing" the Holy Spirit speak to my heart. Leaving home at age twelve for a boarding school, I had no apprehension, as by that time He really was my Best Friend. The Bible that was given to me at age eleven with my name on it and its zippered cover was my most valuable possession and textbook. I remember kissing it every day and thinking that if there was any emergency I would save it above all else. As other Christian friends became rebellious or fell away from loving Jesus I remember feeling very sad and praying for them, but not enticed myself. The warfare for the soul still raged but on other levels.

The enemy of our children is three-fold. It is very important for them to understand these as they grow, for they are their relentless pursuers and have the power to destroy whatever Godly heritage they may have. Satan has come to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10), but Jesus has sent us to undo his work.⁷⁷ The three enemies are the devil, the flesh, and the world.⁷⁸ The children seemed to understand these in that order.

The devil speaks to them to tempt them and as they resist he flees.⁷⁹ The power of this RESISTANCE in the Name of Jesus is incredible! Then they need to be taught how to look for the escape Jesus will provide, want it, and take it!⁸⁰ Some escapes may make us look foolish but we'll never be sorry if we take them! And we all can BIND him. Two together praying is better - encourage this.⁸¹

The devil is understood as their basic enemy. However, he instigates and fuels the other two deadly weapons aimed against them. The flesh; their flesh and our flesh; theirs and ours fighting together reaping a whirlwind of corruption and hurt. How well does the child see his selfish ego, his "bully" instinct, his pride? It's up to you to point these attitudes out to him in a way that will so convince him he will survive the combat. Dying daily to his flesh is a decision he must have time to make each day. Even the godly Paul, apostle of the Lord, said he had to do this.⁸² One mistake I made was forgetting to 'resurrect' in Christ. His spirit must be allowed to flow or live through me! In other words, "Rejoice!" Put on the music! Praise-exercise with or without your child! They'll love it! Most of all they will realize Christ is alive in you! Celebrate! What? Celebrate that you have two legs, two eyes, two hands, two ears if nothing else! Breathe deeply of His fresh Holy Spirit daily. It's the best weapon - joy praise, and worship!

The 'world' means all those influences and ways of thinking, philosophies that are not biblical. As our child grows, we equip him as best as we can to confront and conquer life's defeats. We teach them that in God's grace even their weakest times can turn out great!⁸³ It's an indomitable faith! It's the belief that God will meet *every real* need of their life if they continually give Him their 100%.⁸⁴ In this world there are so many 'angels of light' deceiving and enticing. Do you know the five great fundamental doctrines of our Christian faith? All true Christian churches hold to these. The church was founded upon these:

1. The infallible word of God
2. The Deity of Jesus Christ
3. His blood atonement for sin

4. His physical, bodily resurrection.

5. His personal, bodily return.

With your children, major on majors! Don't major on minors. The appearance of evil may not be evil in them, but it still is dangerous. Without fear, we must help them keep far from the danger zone of sin; far from temptation by digging deeper and deeper into God's word. This becomes their 'dugout' protection. Ephesians 6 is essential for this warfare. It's a daily thing because anything "bound" can come loose in time. Satan bound and gagged is not necessarily Satan cast out. By their own free will, they can cast him out of their own lives. As they grow older, and in this chapter we pass age five, they can begin to realize that all the words they interpret being from Jesus in their hearts need to be open to the light of other Christians. They learn to see the worldly influences subtly coloring their perception of that word and thus they need the covering of godly authority. "The mind of Christ" is a collective thing. We cannot play "Holy Spirit" to people but merely offer our own interpretation humbly, faithfully, and boldly.

BOLDLY? How, with so much to discern, and with so much against us? Ha! Here comes the glory of seeing the enemy run! Hearing the victory shout echoing in the heavenlies. Deeply feeling the stirring of life under the earth, the seed drops its shell! Yes, there's darkness. Yes, there's lightening and storm. But we walk with Jesus.

'School' never seems to end does it? Nor should we want to stop learning. To be hungry in spirit is to be wanting and needing His Light. In one country that we lived, the educational system was sadly lacking. Even the principal questioned us sending our children to his own school. Some good came of the time there. They did learn to speak the language of the country and understand its sport. But slowly the attitudes began to creep in. The attitude was that education was only for the few elite and wealthy enough to pay for tutors. Tutors were needed because most of the public teachers had not appeared until three to four months of the school year had already passed. They did not provide substitutes and seemed more preoccupied with their second jobs. What was sad was that this was not an exception in the schools. Over one third of our son's class failed the year! Many of his classmates were several years older than he was because of this. Many children suffered nervous depression and rebellion.

The attitude, which crept into the children, was that school is not serious. At times, I have kept the children out of school for serious reasons. They need to know that sickness is not the only serious reason to skip class. Other 'sicknesses' need this treatment too. Their life

relationship with Jesus and their parents are more important than even school. It can really get their attention if you have them miss school once to prove it to them. However, in this case after the year was up and ourselves tutoring intensely during that year, we were able to transfer our son back to the Christian school. How happy he was! What he had not liked about the public school he had said, was that it made him sad the way the kids treated each other and the words they said.

Following the Holy Spirit's guidance through the education of our five children and moving to another culture was not easy. When I felt too weak in my faith to make a decision or follow through with the decision, I would step back. It was beautiful how the Lord had given my husband the strength of faith in these changes. More than any other area, we were a real team. Not once did any one child fail a class nor have to repeat a year of schooling because of failure. Our Heavenly Father loves them more than we can. He *is* Love and created them.

The Unusual Child

Steve Ramsanker, an immigrant to Canada from Trinidad, is from a family of nine children. He is one of the most influential men for his contribution to education. For many years, he's been the principal of a special inner-city school in Edmonton, Alberta. Alex Taylor Community School supplies showers, food, washing machines, and dryers, but, mostly respect and love. Here, hugs welcome the babies for the free daycare, the schoolchildren, the elderly, and the adults coming for free classes. Many volunteer police officers also help teach and make friendships with the students.

Principal Ramsanker sees this as his life's mission, refusing promotion and government appointments. Food, clean clothing, respect, and love are principle to this principal's idea of education.

Many unusual children fill his school. Many unusual children are reaching out for help, recognition, and acceptance. They may be ours. They may be mentally retarded, or have a learning disability of some kind. Unusually gifted children, foreign children, all children are a blessing if we allow them to perfect our living skills.

In 1991 statistics quoted in the book "God's Lost Children" by Sr. Mary Rose McGeady states that in the USA everyday 135,000 children carry guns with them to school. One million sleep on the streets. Every sixty-seven seconds a teenager has a baby. Every eight seconds of every school day, a child drops out of school. Since 1970, teen suicide has doubled and the teen

dropout rate is as high as sixty percent in many of the major cities.

The author has lived and worked with homeless kids for forty years and is president of The Covenant House, New York. She encourages us to be realistic about our child's capabilities. Know your child's reasoning and motivations and be a friend. Have him tested for any learning disability if there's a problem.

In all the unusual or special situations of life, there are people who will not be able to give to us all we want them to. This is so good for our love! Love's reward is to love for loving in itself, even if it is that quiet place of prayer for someone else. If perfection were always required to feel happy or loved, where would *we* be? Thank God for His periods of grace. Let's not let the devil steal our blessing through self-pity, complaining or morose wishing! We have a sign on our wall in the kitchen:

NO SMOKING
NO COMPLAINING
NO CRITICIZING

One sure way of running out of steam even before you begin is to eat the seed you need to sow. Sow seeds of courage, love, and joy and your harvest will come!

Have *you* done your homework, Mom or Dad? Have you done spiritual warfare to bind the enemy in their schools? Do integrity and a good self-esteem begin at home?⁸⁵ Have you, their first and most precious teacher, asked for wisdom; the wisdom from above?⁸⁶ Being involved as much as possible is extremely important to them.

Wanting to understand first hand what the teens at church were going through at school, I volunteered to substitute three months for a teacher leaving to have a baby. We had been interceding for the youth. They had been so depressed. After a few days I repeatedly came home very drained hardly able to give to my own children what they needed of me. Asking God for help, He showed me in all my concern for them I had forgotten to cover *myself*. I had not bound the enemy over my life and myself. Once I began doing this first, the change was amazing. I came home exhilarated and not drained anymore. In all this, we must keep to the priorities God has given to us. Our own spiritual health is crucial for the effectiveness of our 'fishing' or helping anyone else.

May God bless you as you prepare your child for school. Brief visits to relatives or friends where he stays by himself can help him get accustomed to separation times. Really encourage

him and read to him. Show him learning and reading is important to you too. With the competition of television, reading a simple book can be a discipline. But you won't be sorry! Patiently listen to him as he answers your questions about things he did at school. Limit television to weekends.

One last point or “sweet-secret” I discovered with our first in school was when she came home moody or sad, was that it left her after she had done something for someone else. She usually didn't feel like it but just some little job helping someone else lifted her spirit. Why? All day long, she was focusing her attention on herself. It was her education. Free playtime is essential, too. Times completely alone are invaluable to the children after a day full of teachers, kids, noise, and hurriedness. Never criticize the staff to your children. They are serving you so have the maturity to go to them as adults. Enjoy these school years; they go by quickly.

The Inherited Weaknesses

Sometimes as our children grow up immovable rocks or mountains that block, which hinder the flow of their lives are discovered. We weep and they may cry but nothing seems to help. Discipline works but only temporarily. Deep within us we know that if a miracle doesn't happen the bad tendency will end in disaster.

Three times I can remember distinctly confronting these in the process of raising our children. These were easily seen as inherited problems in their genes passed on from us as their parents. In the Bible they are called “iniquities of the forefathers”. See: Jeremiah 32:18, Exodus 20:5, 34:7, Zechariah 8:14, Isaiah 53:5 and Psalm 51:9

These are different than the random sins that are committed. Some problems can even be traced back many generations. God not only reveals the root and explains these problems in the Bible, but will also in His faithful love give the solution as we seek Him.

The devil is in the supernatural too. John 10:10 says he comes to kill, steal and destroy. In false religions he may deceive in an apparent “healing” by taking one of his “toys” (e.g. pain) away so as to deceive even more. But God's ways are always permanent. Love, peace and joy continue in a unity with biblical principals and with His people, the Church. At times God has brought us the solution through the inspired words of other Christians or more specifically the gifts of the Holy Spirit. As we've prayed and acted upon them we have seen great deliverance, healing and even miracles. All these have contributed to the success of our family. I shudder to think what would have happened without it!

When our children were old enough to realise, about 10 years old, that the problem was not changing, they were upset by the persistence of it. Gently we explained that we realised that the problem was not their fault nor even the devil's, but had been passed down the blood-line to them. Now with God's power it had to be stopped. They were relieved that this time they were not just getting disciplined or blamed for it. Easily they opened their hearts to listen. So thanking God for His forgiveness and authority given to us in Jesus' name we asked them to repeat a short prayer after us. We renounced the iniquity in the name of Jesus and broke its power. We were in unity of will and voice. The prayers were heard. In our lives there had been persistent lying, stealing, accidents and other physical problems. A permanent change had taken place. The thanksgiving was great for those miracles! By God's grace we could see a lovely new generation begin, free from inherited weaknesses and continuing in the inherited blessings in Christ. If the occasional problem would reoccur we stood firm in our faith against it. A new power to break habits and an ability to resist temptations came.

Now many years later the victory still stands firm in these areas of our lives. What had seemed hopeless and insurmountable by God's gracious gifts had been conquered.

I believe and have said often; “The blood of Jesus is more powerful than human blood!” By this I mean that as we accept by faith what Jesus did for us by shedding His blood in death on the cross we cross over into an Eternal Bloodline! It is also a boundary line between two kingdoms. Light dawns in us. A new birth is celebrated... Each in our family with our own free will has accepted this and made Jesus our Lord receiving His forgiveness for our sins. Jesus rose from the dead. He is alive forever and ever. By His Holy Spirit He reveals to us the way to be totally free.

Chapter Six

Five, Six, Pick Up Sticks

Topics:

Seth David (Joy Boy)

“My Special Day”

Seth David (Joy Boy)

Sitting quietly drawing pictures of his daddy's message, Seth comes up with this: (See picture). The soldier's sword is an extension of the Bible.

Seth is our “Joy Boy.” The only one with a dimple, he has always had an encouragingly happy disposition. Just as Eve needed it after the horrifying death of her son Abel, our baby Seth brought us joy. His birth marked a turning point and filled the aching places of my heart with joy. This is what I wrote of that time:

December 1978

Fragments of fragile moments of time given to seeing as I am seen by Jesus are worth the whole of every day. In the blessed boundaries of love I can be and grow creating, pro-creating all that love in its energy gives.

Words tied together are the webs that hold our hearts and can weave a tapestry of joy and hope for all.

One life, one dream, one day at a time should not be analyzed or compared, but enjoyed.

Seeing the truth and daring to have faith in the unseen is more real than the seen.

Faith is a tangible substance ever reaching for those unseen horizons knowing that in love's own time we will also see.

So in experiences that change and rearrange my inside person, are slowly reflected throughout the whole and I want to share. Why?

Lord God helping me to put it into words right now that I may find a growth and freshness in faith.



Kisses – Seth (16) and our dog, Belle

What a reader may do with this reading about an individual life, I do not know, nor do I really care; for love gives with no desire for anything in return nor with ulterior motives. Love's whole meaning and joy is in the giving as an end in itself. So right now, I want to say to you, "I love you!"

This first day of December trying to write on a jiggly waterbed; seesawing around on an eight-month-old pregnant tummy. In four or more weeks, we will have another child in our home, making a lovely number of three children! Sara, four years old, Nathan, two years old, and Seth David, or ... we don't know a girl's name for sure yet.

February 2nd

"Lord, our God, to Thee I give my praise.

I love Thee, my Lord and God

To Thee my hands I raise.

It shall always be

That my love I give to Thee."

Writing on my lap, or trying to on this waterbed, I want the time to stand still for many hours! Lack of sleep is here and yet the need to write is more pressingly present! Not just write but to praise my God and Savior with pen and paper, time, and energy, emotion, and yes, all of me!

So blessed I am! Blessed by the gifts I have to love and those that love me! Jim, my darling husband; so rugged, yet so gentle and sweet; so handsome and fine, yet so meek.

My Sara girlie...growing up to be a lady, oh, so fast! Gentle and sensitive, serving, and full of beauty to be expressed without knowing how to just yet.

Nathan! A boy with a manly bravery and a soft heart of love expressing itself constantly in many ways with much touching, kisses, and hugs.

Then SETH, now SETH! Yes, it was a boy. He's so newly ours, born January 8th, 1979. Nathan was a prophet, bold in the Bible old! Now Seth the third, a babe with a mission and one to take the place of joys foregone. As we die to self and live to Jesus, the joy of having Seth David will know no bounds...my heart sings...Yes! Adam's third also took a place, to bless and please the heart of his parents; the heart of God.

In this snowy winter cold

Glinting rays of splintering sun

Slivers and slides in my window smoothly and purely

Off the icicles hanging low,

Off the diamonds in the snow,

Off the stars' crystal glow,

And the streetlight's circling light.

Lights, lights in the day

And in the night

Sequined lights of a town

Sewn to the black velvet gown of night

Lights along the road as we go.

Day and night, night or day.

Does it matter which?

With this new babe I'm living moment by moment

In His gracious mercy and loving care, I love.

I love him...my new baby Seth.

He's so strong and contented.

I love Him...my Lord God.

The giver of the love that made Seth!

Thank You my Lord, God! He came so sweetly, quickly, and easily! Happily this new day, the seventh day of the New Year, was a Sabbath rest, then he came on the eighth and I labored! Without a need for even one of the doctor's stitches, I went home the very next day to my lovely, restful home! Thank you, thank You God again! And for the help of my lover and friends. It was so sweet, so complete...my Jim. Through him also, the Lord all my needs doth meet! Praise Him! Praise Him!

May

The little head so downy, curly, fair

And dimpled cheek and more when bare

Twinkling eyes reflecting your smile

To smile again getting more excited all the while

Arching his back and reaching out with chubby hands

To clasp so tightly and chew as we meet his demands

For love and comfort as his first teeth come through

This little angel made of yellow and blue

Mixed together making mother's favorite hue

This happiness fulfilling her heart

Is from this warm, responsive little fella

...So continues the journal about a little JOY BOY. Accepting Jesus at a very tender young age, he never needed much discipline. Our emotions, our words seemed to be enough. After discipline or tears, as soon as he possibly could, he would laugh or even make himself laugh! Now the years leap on ahead and we see him struggling in school. The fire of testing is on. Home-schooled, a Portuguese school, and then now in an American Christian school, the gold is being refined. The gold of his character. It was humbling for him to get the low grades but in some ways they were inevitable because all of the transferring. However, he never needed to repeat a year. God is faithful, for even as he was scraping by, struggling test by test, he didn't give up nor rebel.

I went through some of the same when he was in my womb. Did I unknowingly pass on endurance to my son? Are character qualities passed on genetically? Personality traits do, but character? Are character and personality the same thing? As a child goes to grade school and then on to high school, what do we see developing in him? Some of these questions I'll try to deal with in our next chapter! But this is what I wrote during my pregnancy with him. It would not be a true picture to paint only the joy colors but also the contrast. What beauty comes forth from contrast!

Oh, Lord help me live! Help me work and suffer with Thee! I am almost crushed beneath a weight, dear God, and surely there have been times so recently, when I've been the wounded soldier hiding beneath your great shield of faith yet feeling unable to neither fight nor advance.⁸⁷ Fear and pain grip me making me powerless to wield your sword, the Bible, unable to use the Holy Spirit's power to do so. It was ONLY until I heard the sound of cheering from my fellow soldiers that I dared to peek out from under my shield and pulling down my Salvation helmet tightly over my ears I tried to stand and felt Your power lifting me up. My vision cleared as the pain and fears melted away. I saw the foe far ahead and our army fast advancing. No longer was the danger all around me ready to devour. With weapon at hand, I

joined our advancing line. I felt a boundless joy as I saw the victory...

Our Joy-Boy Seth! As the years go by the power of joy has been the power of the Holy Spirit providing the fresh oxygen in which to endure. I could speak forever on joy, but focusing on Seth I'll always remember how he once came to me saying, "Peace makes JOY!" Blessed are the peacemakers! At this time of asking and quiet listening, I wrote: "Father, what is the greatest thing I can do for you? I hear, "Laugh!"

This is what Seth added to our home, laughter, and joy. These are the things that the enemy desires to steal most of all. He steals joy or could we say he's the dream-thief. Then goes faith, peace, love, etc... Grace is the doorkeeper of Joy's House. Keep in grace, which is the strength and power to do God's will, and your joy will be safe. Grace = Peace = Joy = Strength!

"My Special Day"

Seth needed some special attention. It was the beginning of a long hot inner Kansas City summer. And there were four kids by now, soon to be five, how could I give special things to them (like time!)? Another sweet secret came down: "give him a special day!" "Like how, Lord?" This is how it worked. Monday - Seth's special day, Tuesday - Nathan's, Wednesday - Sharon's, Thursday - Rachel's, Friday - Sara's, Saturday - Dad's and Sunday - Mom's. The two youngest grew up knowing who's special day it was *before* they learned the names of the days of the week! It worked liked greased lightening! Monday, Seth was invited to a pool party. Tuesday, Nathan received a card from Grandma and Grandpa. Wednesday, Sharon had her favorite dessert (bananas). Thursday, Rachel prayed for the meals. Friday, Sara was honored "Best student of the week" at school. Saturday, Dad got some of Mom's free time. Last but not least, Sunday Mom got family dinner served by a restaurant. Was it ever a joy to share "my" day with my Lord that first Sunday of our plan! The Heavenly Father must have been smiling down on us as we laughed Seth's blues away. It really was God participating to make each child know they were special. On the special day the child was often given treats in his lunch (a candy bar), the choice of what's for dinner, or the honor of praying for the meal. It was economical too, because instead of five treats each time we learned to be glad to bless each one. The more they gave to each other it seemed, the more the blessings stacked up for their turn.⁸⁸ One day Nathan brought me breakfast in bed and his reply to my, "What's this!?" was, smiling broadly, "It's my special day!" As the years have ticked by, we don't adhere to this so strictly. Not because we don't want to but

because as life marches us on in its strict observance we are separated at times. But guess who I think of and bless in my prayers on Monday's? That's right: Seth David.

Seth became our dreamy, artistic boy. Twice we lost him and had to radio "Earth to Seth! Earth to Seth! Where are you? Come in please!" Each time the Holy Spirit guided him home as we sat in earnest prayer and sometimes repentance for losing him. He, however, always thought we were the lost ones. He was pretty fearless and I know once again his angel worked overtime!

Seth took up the drums and loved them. Asking his Second Daddy, Jesus, for a set, it wasn't long until we were hearing them AT HOME! Hard working and dedicated in all he did, he learned rhythm. Something he *didn't* have was a lot of coordination. Growth spurts caused him to be quite awkward and as he towered and blushed into his teen years. In his good-natured way, he laughed at himself.

Now he wants a dog. He took care of a friend's black Cocker called Poika for a year. With Seth, my artistic, sentimental side is encouraged and I think of a special poem passed along in our families...

*I wonder if Christ had a little black dog,
All curly and woolly like mine?*

And another which was one of his Grandpa Stark's favorites:

*I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high over vales and hills
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host of golden daffodils.
Beside the lake, beneath the trees
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze
Far off, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills
And dances with the daffodils.*

By William Wordsworth

This is often the Seth I see. In some happy reverie, hardly ever complaining about anything. He needs beauty and order around him. As a mother sometimes it was my duty to keep that for him. I remember once when we were having to camp for three months as we waited to move into a new home. We had boxes and stuff towering all around us. Life was a mess. The ironing board and washing machine were our "kitchen" counters next to the little gas stove. School was starting with supplies somewhere in the mess of boxes. The weather was getting colder but where oh, where, were the warm things packed? We weren't supposed to have to wait this long! And Seth? Well to keep his joy, he was begging for restaurant dinners! Using a pretty vase with flowers and new candlestick holders, we made a decoration. It seemed to help us both. May God continue to bless my boy! May he continue to be a blessing, reaching out in joy. And at this precious phase of his life, like all 12 year olds, follow in the footsteps of the HERO of HEROES! I want to end this chapter with a letter to Jesus by my nine and a half year old, Sharon:

Dear Lord Jesus,

Thank You for sending Your Son to die on the cross for my sins. I love you will all my heart. Bless all the people that I love and save all of the people. Amen!

Oh, for a child's simple love and faith!



Chapter Seven

Seven, Eight - Lay Them Straight!

Topics:

Teens

Neighbors in Our Home

Discipline of Teens

Faithful in Little, Faithful in Much

Babysitter's Guide

Tender Topics

Teens

Continuing to follow the upward climb of our children, we study the two boys in their teens. Before meeting Nathan in chapter eight, who at the time of writing this was an eighteen-year-old ADULT, we will discuss the issues facing teenagers. My goodness, that sounds serious! If I were a teen, how would it sound to me? All the stuff people and ADULTS say about “teens” - thirteen and older. But my so-called adult son is still only a teenager! It was like the saying about “terrible-tuos”! I wished I would have never had heard those negative rumors or at least until I was a grandma and could say smugly like the others, “If I could have had grandchildren first I would have!” Let's lay these fiddle-sticks straight! The children grow as straight as the architect expects his skyscraper to grow on the foundation he built. As deep as it is tall so they say of good buildings.

A song echoes in my mind. It's not surprising considering how loud the music is around here these days...”it pays to remember what you've learned at home all of your days...” Lord, help us parents make beautiful memories for our children. Pivotal truths, principles of life, and most of all, Christ-like character; all these as childhood zips and zooms by. Doesn't it seem like they are made of either pure rubber energy or pure cold molasses? They should be starting to experience the real rewards of the responsibilities that they had drilled into them all the years.

One mother of teenagers warned me not to talk to her about raising kids until I had had

teens! Well, now for a few months I have four! Rachel turned 13 in January and Sara turns 20 in July. So perhaps if I would meet this mother again, we could continue our conversation? However, as many times as the case is, she had quite a negative aspect against teens. Granted it is the time of a child's life of trying their adult skills; but, if a parent allows freedom to try without condemnation they won't fight for it, would they? My feeling about this is that if they are still in your home they still need you in a very definite way! Now do they show that they need you? Maybe once in a blue moon when they're feeling blue, happy, or confused. But that's not what we hold our breath for, now is it? Our lives as adults should be developing along with theirs into a more and more fulfilling maturity! Don't give up in exhaustion trying to have the energy they have but keep up with them in your *UNCONDITIONAL LOVE*! Be their cheering section as they play their sports. Have the cold water, cookies, and compliments ready. Do their friends feel comfortable in your home? If they don't after you've really tried to befriend them perhaps they are not the friends your child should have. Have you ever thought, “Now was that my kid speaking or his friend?” Early in our children's lives, we had to make some guidelines to govern the neighborhood play. After all it's our God given right to keep the integrity of our family unit. That is to say, the harmony of understanding love and unity is the music to live by. Our easiest and biggest rule was “If you can't get along with family, you can't get along with outsiders either.”

Rephrase: You can't go play with so-and-so if you can't play nicely with us at home!

Rephrase: Export what is worth it!

Rephrase: The family door has a lock for a reason; to keep us home sometimes.

Rephrase: To serve homemade bread, you must mix it, knead it, and bake it first! And please pass the butter and jam!

Rephrase: We don't offer to our friends what we wouldn't accept for ourselves.

Well, I could go on and on. It was and is an important rule. There may be “MENU SUGGESTIONS” but these are rules not suggestions.

These are a few rules we left with a teen baby-sitter once for our little precious babes while we lived in Kansas City:

Neighbors in Our Home

1. May play at friend's home Friday and Tuesday between 10:00 - 12:00am and/or 3:00-5:00pm. Included phone numbers.

2. Sidewalk along side road is O.K. for play.
3. Do not go out by front steps but use side steps to go to backyard.
4. No crossing street without permission.
5. One person in wagon at a time or two *small* ones.
6. Put away toys after lunch and supper.
7. Use books and indoor quiet games for after lunch and evening rest times.

I guess we had had no rules for how much the neighborhood friends were in OUR home. I remember in fact that we always had our home FULL of them. We still have numerous overnight parties. The extended family is normal family life for us and I believe it should be for every healthy family unit.⁸⁹ There are just too many lonely people out there! And where are the grandpas and grandmas in our family economy? Sure, we had to leave them in every way to make our own new family identity but does their time of reward come via our appreciation? These are some more sticks to lay straight! “Sticks and stones may break your bones, but words will never hurt you.” Ha! That’s one stick that could be laid straight. How about, “sticks and stones may break your bones but words can break your heart!” And who is the Heart-Mender, the Dream-Catcher, *the* Best Friend, and Hero of *all* times? JESUS CHRIST, Son of God, Lord, and King! We often remind our weeping child that they may have many *good special* friends, but there is only *ONE* BEST Friend! Perfect love and friendship may be found in Him. But we must give Him our most valuable possession: our time and our broken heart. Life is not fair; responsibilities aren’t always rewarded. Parents don’t read minds or fulfill expectations. So then we must remember and remind them that on some eternal day all will be judged when our beloved God and Father who sees all things, will reward us. If He finds unforgiveness in our hearts, we must reap that ugly seed with eternal punishment. Justice is in His hands. He loves us!

In the School of Conscience, are they tender or hardened? By their early teens, can you tell?⁹⁰ In the last words of Moses, he *commanded* the people to teach the following generations.⁹¹ In all the Daily Rules of Life (we even made some for hygiene), habits are hopefully formed, but we must be aware not to form legalistic, self-conscious teens. If all they hear is, “Set the table, help cook the meals, wash the dishes...please”, who wouldn’t rebel? It could be child labor - for free at that or perhaps you pay them for EXTRA chores and pay them well? But, please remember words are what break hearts! We must not over react but *act* as the Holy Spirit guides us. If we

can't hear ourselves think and we don't know who is the teen or who is the adult we must withdraw to that prayer closet or is it the bathroom? “Wait,” must be an acceptable answer for our children in these cases. It usually is, especially if we give them how long their wait will probably be. To temporarily sit alone and gain self-control is definitely a good idea. Ask for wisdom daily.⁹²

Something we found that helped in decision-making is for them to ask us as parents first. This would mean informing us of their desires and ideas before speaking to their peers. Then when they ask us, ask us in advance and not expect a decision in front of all their friends. This, they would understand, would give us all time to pray about it and listen to the Lord's plan, etc. With a family of seven and often added members, it was amazing how often we were able to pull off wonderful parties and who doesn't like parties?

If one stops to think, it is incredible how many different angles there are in seeing something. Think of how many different sides there are to a mountain, a problem, or a plan. How many different ways to reach the same goal, to achieve the same end? Look at the number three. To reach the number you could add two plus one, or one and one and one, or three and zero. This is just a little example to hopefully, give us the patience to work through all the angles to see God's best in each situation with our young man or lady! God's *best* is not just being permissible. One hint - one “sweet secret” - is that God usually opts for the most loving and unifying instead of what we think of as the 100% *right* way. Love maintains an atmosphere of JOY! The hurts of dogmatic legalism, being falsely accused, pre-judged, criticized, negative expectations, self-pity, and last but definitely not least BOSSINESS. All melt when the offended believes the offender is so sorry and goes to hug the offender. A offends B. B goes to A forgiving immediately.

Baby-sitting is not a time for child training. So we had the baby-sitter write down the offense so we could deal with it later. The first time our young teenager did this, we received one also from the “baby.” Completely spelled wrong, but clearly understood, she was complaining that the baby-sitter was too BOSSY. I will deal more with baby-sitting later.

Sometimes, we have to hold our overly responsible child back reminding them even though they have the capability, they need time to play, to dream, etc. Believe me, this can be a problem for some high achievers. Of course, the opposite occurs too.

At this early teen age, the adolescent wants to feel grown-up, to face a challenge, to test their ability, and to be highly challenged spiritually. This desire to enter into adulthood is GOOD.

Let them! As our children learn early on to handle the full weight of responsibility and to resist stress, they can be prepared for a rich future of leadership. Let me share the following example. Sometimes, life hands us a situation that we don't want. We don't want the full weight of the responsibility and so we don't open our hearts to receive the full weight of *God's provision* of grace and faith. For many reasons we do not open up His gift of faith for the occasion. We may be refusing or rebelling, but feeling very justified for doing so. Maybe we're guarding some ideal or fantasy. But God wants to give us something that would enable us to do the job (mothering?) successfully; to help us shoulder the load without getting something dislocated! But, the bottom line is that we don't want it or we are afraid because perhaps as a young person we didn't face things too big for us nor did we prove God's grace!

So in many ways we limp along accepting any pity, help, or mercy from others when all along *God* wants to enable us. Is He really the Rock of our salvation and the Everlasting Arms. Do we show this example to our teens or do we hide it all? How about being saved *in* the situation instead of *from* it. Is He really the grace in weakness or are we in the mumble, grumble sin?

So in all this time of character building for the future of our children we must teach them to ask humbly, to speak openly not fearing reactions or rejections. Discipline moves upwards towards the altitude of their attitude. The attitude determines the altitude! Many times my adolescents have talked privately with me to express concern or *confront* me on an issue. This is healthy and we must determine not to let anything come between our children and us. *Love* never fails.

Discipline of Teens

In facing the discipline of teens, one can be quite intimidated because our methods must change along with our children. Sometimes, however, to our surprise, we may sense God asking us to spank them as we did when they were young. Again, we must not be legalistic in our thinking. Once feeling quite discouraged with Rachel and Sharon's "sibling rivalry", I went to the Lord with it and in my Bible reading for the day there was the fantastic verse which included both girl's names! It said, basically, that Rachel would pasture her sheep in the Valley of Sharon! Wow! Jesus knows and He cares, but He does not want us to give up hope. Sure enough, their friendship is blossoming like the roses in the Valley of Sharon. Thank you Jesus!

Jesus was twelve when He had to be about His father's business. Expect the same feelings to

emerge in your children. Rejoice in them. If some of the iniquities of the ancestors begin to emerge instead, realize that the humanness in them is to be dealt with even as they reach upward to their Heavenly Father's hand.

As mentioned earlier, by 'iniquity of the forefathers', I mean those habitual weaknesses they inherit from their dad, mom, and grandparents, physically and spiritually! We had incredible breakthroughs with our teens when we explained that we had come to realize over the years that with all our discipline and all their trying to change was not working and that the problem originated outside of themselves. So we explained the origins in a spirit of compassion and forgiveness, saying "Daddy or mommy had this problem before they gave their heart to Jesus so you have had this weakness too, just like the color of your eyes, you get good things from us too. Jesus can help us break this away from you because God is your Father now that you are born again." Then we pray and proclaim over each area, that iniquity is broken and replaced by God's grace. Incredible results were seen and we all breathed a huge sigh of relief! Each one had different areas of course, but it is true that *all* our needs can be met in Jesus. There is an answer to every problem in Him.

In the Bible, we are told to expel demons. At times, we can help our children to identify the source and expel them in the mighty, precious name of JESUS. Habits are easily broken when the root cause is eliminated. This shouldn't be a scary thing, but a normal part of their Christian growth. Often in the simple faith of a child, miracles are released from a happy Father - God seeing His child obey the word. Little things like pains or fears can totally disappear as they speak to them in faith commanding them to go away in the Name of Jesus. After all, don't we want our kids to go to the heights, to succeed, following their Master more perfectly than we have? To be blessed is to be able to bless. They must be so full of courage, love, vision, and compassion that they are giving people and overflowing. And where is their source? You, father? You, mother? Money? High scores? Strong bodies? Beauty? Popularity? Of course not! All these may change! It is in JESUS, our All in All. It is in their love and unity with His body, the functioning church. As we do our best in prayer for them, God will take care of the rest. Keep involved with them even if it may be painful and keep forgiving daily, just as you want them to be forgiving to you. After the wonderful pattern for prayer in Matthew 6:9, the Lord reemphasized our need to walk in forgiveness daily. Little offenses forgotten but not forgiven build up a forgetfulness of our love. Little offenses forgiven but not forgotten build up a

forgetfulness of our love even more.

Faithful in Little, Faithful in Much

“Teenager” could be interchanged with the word adolescent. The English-speaking world calls them “teens”, but it is not a concept understood in other cultures. What is understood, however, is the oncoming time of puberty and sexuality. Personally, I believe this time begins at different times for each child. Of course, this is true physically, but also much more so in a child's psyche.

As parents, we have to desire the discernment of the Holy Spirit. Why? Because the enemy will furnish fantasies and unholy mixtures to the minds of our precious children at this stage of their lives. This world's philosophies and psychologies along with their own fleshly imaginations may make such strong mental fortresses that soon the manifestations will be seen and the lie believed. How ignorant of us all to believe so strongly in God the Father and His ministering angels, but not be aware of the source of all negative attack and his helpers? As soon as a teen takes marijuana or any other drug, dabbles in horoscopes, occult or immorality, he opens up himself to the coming of these nightmarish forces. These have no entry unless the person is ignorant and otherwise opens himself. People with superstitions and needing “good luck” objects or with pagan culture ancestries need to face the fact that as adulthood approaches dark forces will try to shape their destinies.

Where is fear in perfect love? There is none. Where is perfect love? Only in God the Father, who gave His Son Jesus to be our suffering substitute, do we find perfect love. No fear! No fear! Why? Because, if we are willing, while we seek God, He will lead us to those gifts He has given to equip His people. Jesus would never have given us the command to go into *all* the world if He hadn't made His ability available to us. As a family, we have faced witchcraft curses that had threatened our lives. In all areas, we have seen the overwhelming power of love prevail, love releasing faith, and the wonderful name of Jesus is delivering us from all evil.

God's power is not only to be used for ourselves but as a service to others who God brings to us. This is the love that will lead us to pray, to intercede for others, and to bind the forces of evil over them. As a parent, you have *all* authority to bind *all* evil forces against your family in the precious name of Jesus, provided that Jesus is your own Lord too. The area of casting out demons belongs to every believer as they look to Jesus to deliver them. We can prohibit and hinder their

activity in the binding of them. This is not a prayer directed to God, but a command given in Jesus' name. Daily we thank the Father for His protection from *all* evil. We have so many wonderful personal stories of this that this book couldn't contain them all. Grateful praise is the best of all “weapons.”

When our young people face taking care of other children for payment or for free, are they realizing their responsibility? They have now grown to be responsible over PEOPLE. Are they built on The Rock: Jesus?⁹³ Are they biblically mature?⁹⁴ Can they rule their own flesh by the Holy Spirit's power in them?⁹⁵ Can they do their work for God and even without pay or the presence of the boss?⁹⁶ Have we trained them as being responsible in the little things when they were little so that they can now be faithful over bigger things?⁹⁷ Isn't baby-sitting, caring for other children, 'bigger things'? I believe so! Animals, plants, pets, or other live things are dependent on us for survival, but they will *never* compare with an eternal *soul*, a person! Now that's responsibility.

It was expected of Ancients to pass on the fear, the respect of God to the next generations. It was their God-given duty and responsibility! Read in Deuteronomy about this!⁹⁸ Even Jesus knew to obey His parents.⁹⁹

Respect is a topic on its own. I hope that a teen has learned the desire for it and the need to give it! Ephesians 6:1 was one of the first verses learned by our children. Parents, second only to God, are to be respected above teachers or other adults. If our children do not respect us, ask them if you have lost their respect out of any action or attitude on your part. Do you deserve it? What has our example been? In humility, take your part in the solution. A family is not an organization of roles but an organism of life systems functioning in harmony. Learn how to confront biblically and the Lord promises His presence there. His presence is promised in this context not in a church setting but in a confrontation setting; a confrontation with the goal of reconciliation!¹⁰⁰

Baby-Sitters Guide

As harmony and respect is established, a young person will develop a confidence that will help them to care for younger children. I would like to give you my tips here. Each of the children in their turn has cared for other children successfully. Once my 11-year-old Rachel took in a neighbor woman and her daughter while baby-sitting her younger sister too. They were

being harassed by a drunken father. She locked all the doors and called us to ask us if they could spend the night. Of course they could! Did we feel like we had to rush home in fear? No. Many times, we came home to find lovely letters written to us of all the events that had happened while we were away. Our children have found the value in writing and that “absence makes the heart grow fonder.” Life habits and patterns are forming.

Twelve Tips for Tending Tots to Teens

1. They learn by *imitating*: a) Your actions - so be calm and gentle, b) Your voice - so keep it sweet (try whispering!) c) Your love for others and God.
2. *Enjoy* them just as you yourself desire to be enjoyed.
3. *Give* of yourself in joy as giving to God. The time is short.
4. *Cleaned, fed, and rested* children feel loved and taken care of.
5. *Happy* children are reasonable and obey easier. Beware of sugar and caffeine. Too much leads to hyper-activity and then to depression.
6. Times of discipline are to be short, clear, and in a spirit of compassion. *Reconfirm* your love afterwards always.
7. Meet every situation in faith that *God is with you* and He *will* bless them through you.
8. When fear comes *resist* it in the name of Jesus. Pray before you even think.
9. *Be clear* and simple in your words being ready to rephrase if needed.
10. Patiently encourage a response to you. Whether they agree or disagree, they *need to speak*.
11. Commands disobeyed must be disciplined without harsh words so if possible give them *suggestions*. This frees the child to see the blessings of wise *choices*.
12. See them as *investments* for the world's future. Teach them during their open times e.g. before discipline, sleep, at table, in the car etc. May their godliness be as yours with Jesus and His Word as our eternal standard and greatest joy!

Our Family Routine

These suggestions are exciting to break at times but also helpful to follow. Our family's routine may be helpful as a guide for your family or for caring for others' children.

6:00am

1. Theirs and our alarms ring
2. Check that they are awake. If you have trouble awaking with the alarm, ask the

Lord to help you and place the alarm where you have to get up to turn it off, near a glass of water, etc.

6:00am - 7:30am

Personal devotional time of praise, prayer, and Bible study. You could take the little ones in bed with you and read to them.

7:30am

1. Dress in clothes agreed upon the day before.
2. Continue giving the day to Jesus in praise with each other. Put on praise music.
3. Admire tidy room and made bed.
4. Check hair.
5. Check on breakfast progress and nutritious lunch preparations. Children already are taught what to make.
6. Rinse up and clean up dishes and kitchen. Each person does their own. Wash faces and brush teeth.
7. Each one does their extra home chores. They need to report progress and if unable to finish etc. Rewards of raisins etc. may be given. “Special Day” person receives a treat for their day e.g. sugarless gum, etc.

8:30am

1. Children go to school.
2. Children who stay home finish in their rooms. Take extra time to appreciate their work.
3. Have things you need to do listed and they can help you if they like or can. (Plastic aprons are available for them in broom closet.)
4. If you go to the store together, they may not beg for treats. Remind them that they will receive on their own “Special Day.” (P.S. “Special Day” treats also include extra time and attention, prayer, and mealtime blessings, tickles, etc.)

Special Day List:

Monday - Seth David

Tuesday - Nathan James

Wednesday - Sharon Joy

Thursday - Rachel Leanne

Friday - Sara Lynette

Saturday - Dad (makes breakfast)

Sunday - Mom (eats out)

5. Water plants weekly or as they get dry.

6. Their play areas do *not* include parent's room, bathroom, formal living room, or sibling rooms, so keep these doors shut.

7. Permission must be given to play outside or to leave the yard. Check on them occasionally while they play (2-year to 5-year old, check every 10 minutes). Or plan to have them play near where you can watch them as you work.

11:30am

1. Begin lunch preparations with their help. (Keep lunch simple please, e.g. soup and sandwich.)

2. Teach them to always wash hands before helping in kitchen and after using the toilet.

12:30pm

1. *Immediately* after lunch put them down for a nap. (Before sleeping or going outside take them to the toilet.)

2. They can help clean up the kitchen but NO play.

3. Rest with them if they need to be more controlled. They can look at books for a while.

4. Even if they don't sleep, a bed rest of at least one hour is good. (p.s. For smaller ones diapers may be required before putting to sleep.)

5. This is an excellent time for you to “regroup”, to pray, to read, to make *un*interrupted telephone calls, etc...

2:00pm

1. Wake up the sleepers gently. Too long of naps hinders nighttime sleeping.

2. Take them to get a drink or to the toilet. (P.S. Encourage the toilet training with little raisin rewards.)

3. Plan dinner. Kids can help prepare table.

4. Go over checklist if needed:

- a. Parents locations and phone numbers.

b. Special instructions for cooking, cleaning, laundry, heating, cooling, and security systems.

c. List of people for us to thank for what they did to help.

d. List memorable things that were said or happened while we were away.

e. List of special pre-planned activities scheduled. E.g. piano lessons, soccer, picnics, church outings.

f. Discipline guidelines:

~Disobedience, disrespect, destructiveness, dishonesty all require discipline. Use small wooden spoon if necessary, alone in the bathroom. After explaining and spanking, love and pray with child giving him *your* forgiveness.

~Always feel free to say, “NO”, “Later, please” or “I don't know just yet”, etc. Avoid saying “maybe”.

~Begging and screaming doesn't get a response.

~ Encourage the “Please” and “Thank You.”

P.S. *I always try to say “YES”* to my children's requests. THANK YOU and GOD BLESS YOU!

4:15pm

1. School children return home. Homework is done immediately after small snacks of fruit or toast, etc.

2. After homework the school bags are cleaned and prepared for the following day.

3. Clothes may be changed if needed.

4. FREE play.

5. Some older children may need encouragement to be alone awhile or help you do something, to help them rest emotionally from a day of noise and self-attention. It's amazing how after they give and serve how happiness grows.

6. Wash hands and put away outside toys, bikes, etc.

7. Indoor play until supper.

6:30pm

1. Serve dinner early if needed. Prayer of thanks by “Special Day” child.

2. Boys and girls take turns with clean up, sweeping kitchen, etc.

3. Only excuse them after they have said to you “Excuse me, please? Thank you for the

food.” P.S. *Everyone* helps clear table before and after dessert. Dessert is not *always* given. Jell-O, fruit, candy, simple bought cookies are some ideas.

4. Each one with your (or the older children’s) supervision makes school lunches.

8:30pm

1. Bath time if required. (At least two times weekly.)

9:00pm

1. Tidy rooms.

2. Lay out the clothes for the next day.

3. Wash face and brush teeth and hair. Little ones taken to toilet.

9:30pm

1. In bed devotional time or together as a family. Take notes of any special messages from the Lord that they may have as all are quiet listening after prayer.

2. Sing or use instruments to sing or make up songs to Jesus.

3. If on a weekend, there's time to see a movie, watch it together with fast forward handy for videos needing censoring. Family games are fun.

P.S. *Have family devotions before* the movie if it goes late and everyone will be sleepy after.

10:00pm

1. Lights out. Night lights in hallways may be used.

2. Remind the little ones to get up in the night if they need to use the toilet and to feel free to call you if they need help.

3. Put on quiet praise music in the kitchen or your own room.

4. Bible reading or teaching cassette tapes may be listened to quietly in bed.

List of Extra Chores Regularly Done by:

Sara: (Age 11) Cooks and bakes double amounts. Irons, puts away clean dishes.

Nathan: (Age 9) Helps cook. Sweeps sidewalks, rakes driveway. Feeds cat.

Seth: (Age 7) Takes out garbage. Helps younger sisters. Makes salad.

Rachel: (Age 5) Helps with dishes. Sets the table with Seth. Feeds her pets.

Sharon: (Age 3) Puts away toys. Helps make her bed. Helps empty trash (washing hands afterwards).

P.S. These chores get moved *down* the ladder with each year and the eldest receives

more exciting responsibilities, e.g. washing the car (then a driving lesson), pet care, etc.

Keep these contacts on hand:

List of neighbors names including phone number at home and at work.

List of church pastor and leaders.

List of family doctor, veterinarian, mechanic, plumber, electrician, fire and police departments, etc...

Tender Topics

Life relationships are forming. As friends move away, encourage the continuity of the worthy ones by keeping up the communication. Our equilibrium and maintenance of a balanced life is often the product of these old friendships. Begin enjoying the friendships of our adolescent children *now* and make memories together. By doing simple things together, like enjoying a sunset or having them teach you some skill or game can facilitate this. Share your feelings about important things. Ask questions, while refraining from judgmental “Good - bad” statements. Using the phrases like “It seems to me,” or “I think/feel” etc. is a non-threatening way to share. Let them draw their own conclusions.

One young African man came to some powerful conclusions and tacked this on the wall of his house.

“I’m part of the fellowship of the unashamed. I have the Holy Spirit power. The die has been cast. I have stepped over the line. The decision has been made. I’m a disciple of His. I won’t look back, let up, slow down, back away, or be still.

My past is redeemed, my present makes sense, and my future is secure. I’m finished and done with low living, sight walking, small planning, smooth knees, colorless dreams, tamed visions, mundane talking, cheap living, and dwarfed goals.

I no longer need pre-eminence, prosperity, positions, promotions, plaudits, or popularity. I don’t have to be right, first, tops, recognized, praised, regarded, or rewarded. I now live by faith, lean on His presence, walk by patience, lifted by prayer and labor by power.

My face is set, my gait is fast, my goal is heaven, my road is narrow, my way rough, my companions few, my guide reliable, my mission clear. I cannot be bought, compromised, detoured, lured away, turned back, deluded, or delayed. I will not

flinch in the face of sacrifice, hesitate in the presence of the adversary, negotiate at the table of the enemy, ponder at the pool of popularity, or meander in the maze of mediocrity.

I won't give up, let up, until I have stayed by, stored up, prayed up, paid up, and preached up for the cause of Christ. I am a disciple of Jesus. I must go 'til He comes, give 'til I drop, preach 'til all know, and work 'til He stops me. And when He comes for His own, He will have no problems recognizing me - The banner will be clear!"

Is the hope of His coming again far removed from our reality now? Does it still transfix and renew, fill each day with hopeful joy, giving us strength? Is our joy and strength in *Him*? Sing, "Hallelujah! Hosanna to the Highest forever." Begin right now and never stop. Shout in the triumph of Christ over the enemy. Raise Him high above all earth's woes. Bring Him down into a little child's heart. Smile, for He loves you and He loves all little ones. He is God Eternal over all. The evil one binds, casts down, and paralyzes. Jesus mobilizes, lifts up, and restores!

*Rocks so hard,
The children's skin so soft
The earth so close
Blue so blue
Red so red
All these and more astound me.*

*A death so final
A work so finished.
Yet only begun.
A pain so real and deep
Yet the love outweighed it
In God's Son.
The only One.*

A very tender topic is this one of relationships. Showing respect, unafraid of risks, real responsibility all are part of the wool and weave of adult preparation. Let's move on to the rewards. Some must be financial.

Our two teenage sons decided to join their finances to buy bigger and better stuff. I called it the Brother's Bank. Now that Nathan is leaving for college, it has been dissolved. The character it has formed will continue in their lives. They learned not only to save but also to give ten percent to their church. As Abraham gave the tithe they felt that to be blessed, they should do the same.¹⁰¹ "Wow! Creator God, You wrote specifically to the young men, my young men: Nathan and Seth! Thank You, God!¹⁰² You told them how to be rich.¹⁰³ Help me to be a good example, God, always."

The daily chores made us part of a functioning home, but the extra chores were paid I told the children extra chores that needed doing but with no pressure or expectations on them to do them. If they wanted to earn the extra money over and above their allowances, it was up to them. If I was desperate for help, I could offer to pay more. If I had no money, I still had trust and faith in God to keep the home running even if those things may not get done! The wants are different from the needs. We *must* trust the Lord completely to meet our real, legitimate needs in His own way and time! (Every one of them!)

Security

1. True sense of security and identity are found in Jesus Christ.
2. Parents never ought to lead children to find security in themselves but lead them by example to place their trust in God.
3. Parents must show the children their willingness to be corrected and have the ability to quickly admit their mistakes all the while securing the child in the Lord God's faithful help and forgiveness.
4. Parents must then show their adjusted behavior freely requesting prayer and founding all relationships on an unconditional love.
5. Parents also, under church authority, must show the children a life of grace, love, and flexibility.

Looking forward to the future with our own children as the leaders of the future, we can say: In Jesus what has come will never outshine what will come!

"Lord, Help us to break out of our moldy holes, our holy molds

Fill us up wholly!

Stack us up high with truthfulness.

If it takes it, Lord, bring some little child starved for love into

our lives to show us how to apply it all.

Shrink our heads with our hearts but keep our hands out of it. We let You do it, God.

'Rebirth' us Jesus, may we be as truthful as light. As it shines it can do no other.

Reflecting Your glory back to You.

May we no longer bring shame

To ourselves, to our name, to You in us which is the same.

With You nothing is impossible.

Amen."

Family Harmony (September 1986 Journal entry)

The little girl sleeping beside me tossing and turning said, "Mommy I want some chocolate!" I said, "What?" wondering if she or I were dreaming. "Mommy, I want some chocolate." Smiling, "OK, Honey, I have some chocolate for you." But she continued to dream.

I couldn't believe it. That same evening when Jim had taken me out for a date, I had eaten chocolate but saved four squares for the kids, I don't usually bring them sweets but she was dreaming about chocolate! How did she know I had it? Jesus knew that it would please me to give it to her after this dream!

This three-year-old's little face, the size of my hand, with morning light shining across it was a beauty to behold. Her skin smooth as a peach, lips pursed a little swollen from the night, looked like a rosebud. The button nose, a little faint pink from yesterday's sunshine and her hair a cloud of yellow curls all around her shoulders. Dark eyelashes fluttered as a fly buzzed passed. "Shoo! Fly! Don't bother my sleeping girlie and my darling man."

Behind me sleeps the perpetually warm mass of my husband. I'm pinned in between, making it hard to sleep but I don't mind. The thought comes to write a life story of the love and innocence of my childhood but, "When?" I sigh. "Could I really capture all these lovely things and the other side?" "Right now?" comes the answer clear as a bell. "In the early mornings when the hours seem longer and the house a quiet sanctuary!" "Yes, Lord. It's a great idea. Creativity has always been my energy. Thanks, Father. It's been a long time since I've written in my journal. It's

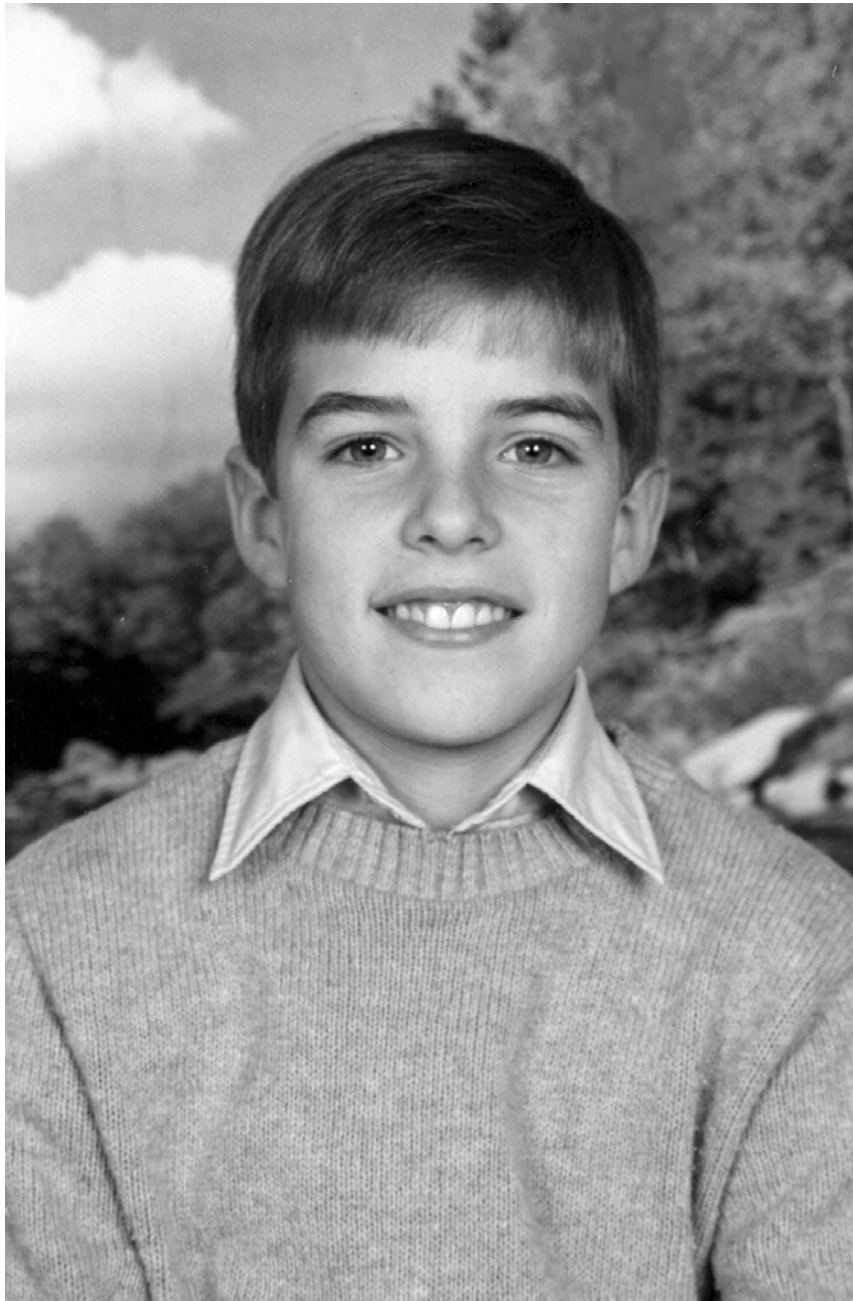
long overdue!"

There's the other side of the story, too, when crying and upset I had gone to bed. Coming home late at night I had found all children had wet their beds some with the blankets too. My washing machine and water supply had both been faulty and with no clothes dryer, it had all been complicated by rain every day. We'd been living in a sauna with all the laundry draped around the heaters in the house. In frustration, I had jumped into bed quickly opening my Bible. Whenever life seems too hard, I find solace there. It fell open to Job (amazing, huh?). My spirit sighed in relief as I focused on the ending chapters. God's words, not the negative counselors', were coming across in all the tender feelings He had about His own marvelous creations. Sure, I felt the same about those that I love so dearly. I saw again the perspective of love, compassion, and also the judgment on us who in pride may think we know everything. Soon sleep came, and wonderful peace knowing His faithfulness that in the morning I would have the joy and strength for my children again.

So now, it was morning and here I lay in wonder admiring God's creation in the dirty little face beside me. Even the little broken artery blemish under her eye adds to the nosiness of this my Sharon-Rose. It's strange but her Grandma has one just like it. Ah, look! The morning sun has found her face! Now, what was she trying to say in her sleep? "Mommy, I want some chocolate!"

Hooray for the joy of love and life! This positive side always wins if we wait. It has God behind it. Harmonies of Hallelujahs ring in my heart. Through the window, I see my two boys. What are they doing up so early? Trying to find me a rose? No, a turtle! Oh, the joy of their first turtle friend and here he is to meet me and not shy either! We call him Speedy because he walks so fast. The day has begun and what's that noise I'm hearing? The washing machine: Sara has begun the laundry. Thank you, Lord! Thank you Sara! That helps. Rachel has started singing already, "Um, dois, três, Deus está vivo. Deus está aqui!" (One, two, three, God is alive. God is here -- or God's not dead. He is alive.)

As the sounds of family life harmoniously begin to fill the house, the other side of my sight is washed away but this time by tears of joy. Joy comes in the morning.¹⁰⁴



Nathan James – Age 8

Chapter Eight

Eight and Nine...Loving All the Time

Topic:

Nathan James – (Love Bug)

Nathan James – (Love Bug)

We've been looking at teens and in joy, we continue. I move on in the story of sweet secrets and share about our number two child who now is an adult. As he turns eighteen years old and is quickly moving on to leave us, my heart rejoices and yet I know there will be pain in his releasing. In two months, we will leave him in another country to begin his upper level studies. When do we see him again? We don't know. But even in these last two months, I am aware that I have a function to fulfill as we are together. Until that very last tear-jerking moment of farewell, we will be *physically* needed and then just as the jet lurches us upward, we lurch into another dimension of parenthood. Parenthood-at-a-distance and that has its own secrets. *Sweet* secrets as sweet as a slowly unfolding rose revealing its fragrant beauty. No matter the treatment or the harsh summer heat, the fragrance will rise. The Creator put it there no matter what. The sweet secret scents come out for others to sense. And I pray that as much as I am enjoying the writing of this book, you will enjoy the reading of it. I pray, too, that the secrets will be whispered to your heart.

Someone once asked me, "What can *you* contribute by a book? There are *so many* books on child-care and parenting!" You know, it matters little to me how many books there are or even if others read this because I am doing this mainly for my own family...it's future, it's love. I *am* responsible for *that!* I also write because it's a joy to fulfill and obey the prompting of the heart. Peeking in on our family, if the secrets help you too, that's icing on the cake, that's grace, that's wonderful, that's delightful, like the wind whispering its secrets to the trees; like the ocean saying, "Shh! Be still and know that He is God." Mmm...

What fun! What fun to have a man-child born to us. And, whew, what responsibility! Little did I know how different from our number one he was going to be. Different to the point of

bewildering his mother. Slowly God opened the rosebud and I could understand and see the beauty of its colors and exquisite creation. I was glad that the practical things had been learned through baby number one. It released my mind to focus on the moment-by-moment challenge of keeping up with a boy that was all man! And would he keep us hopping! We had some excitement in store for us.

Journal Excerpt:

Thirty months ago, tonight I went into labor with Nathan. I had had so much false labor; it was hard to believe he was actually coming. During the forty-five minute drive to the hospital, we had fun guessing how dilated I would be on arrival. We did this with each baby and amazingly, enough we were always accurate! Jim said, "Three or four centimeters," and I said, "Because Jesus loves me it will be five." It was five. During the early morning hours, we were completely left alone. I had only been checked once upon arrival. The contractions were regular but God in His loving mercy always gives rest between the contractions and they are usually exactly 1 minute in duration. So I slept in between, conserving my energy, and breathed easily, then harder in sync with each contraction. Never did I feel I should walk the hallways or aid the process. I just rested as much as possible sucking on a moist washcloth if my mouth got dry. When lying on my side, Jim would often rub my lower back.

When I could bear the suspense no longer, I asked Jim to call the nurse. I've guessed again. Would it be 10 cm yet? Is it his time? Yes! "Ten centimeters, the baby is coming soon! I'll go wake the doctor," she said. Our doctor left the lights very dim when baby arrived so as not to shock his eyes or was it her eyes? How easy it was and so thrilling. The doctor even let Jim help with everything, much to his delight. Baby Nathan promptly went to sleep on my stomach. I couldn't even remember him crying. So peaceful and sweet he looked. Was he really here? Was he even breathing? Daddy Jim had sped out to call long distance to the grandparents in Alaska and in Canada. Jim as their only son would now perpetuate their name. I felt very blessed!

And now the future is ahead and who may know if we may have more children. I give it all to Him. He knows how to fulfill me and will meet all our

needs, and that is usually over and above what we need. No need to fear of being dismayed with His dear Presence by my side. Now as I lay here in bed, all is dark, quiet, and peaceful. The tiny bedside lamp glows warmly. I too feel like a little child and a babe. "You, Mommy, a little girl, a baby?" I imagine my little ones asking. "Yes, because you see Jesus is looking down on me as well as you, all sleepy and snugly warm. We are all beautiful little children to His eyes. And oh, how He loves us, just as much and much more somehow that I love you my little ones! How well we sleep as He watches and stays by our side ever smiling in love. He never gets sleepy, tired or sick and never even shuts His eyes unless it is to wink and smile at us in our surprise!"¹⁰⁵,

Day has come to an end. The sunshine slides down the trees and jumps into my glass vase setting the flowers a sparkling. Another day of love, of joy, and chores to tend...of fulfillment. A little Nathan in his second month: eating, sleeping, waking, smiling, and eating! What a sweet tenderness he brings to our home. So patient and quiet he is with such a little pout when he's upset, such as to say, "Please, mommy!" His name means 'gift from the Lord' and he really is. It is fun to compare the girlishness of our two-year-old Sara and our little boy. She is so sweet like honey or cookies. She always seemed older, somewhat shy, but laughing, teasing, getting older. Lord help us mold her! She likes to please us as she says, "Me, do it!"

The Love Bug nickname came early in his life. One of his ways of showing love was by licking. I was amazed by one of our favorite baby-sitters, Kathy Nash. She allowed him to give her a licking all over her face in the middle of church. How he made her laugh! At five weeks, however, a defect was discovered, a pyloric-stenosis which is a tightening of the upper stomach muscle and he began projectile vomiting. We knew our baby was in deep trouble. However, as all things work together for good to those who love God, we went into the situation prayerfully. The doctors assured us that the solution was a very simple operation and a common procedure.

During this time of our life, we had begun to really intercede for the youth of our little 500 people town. Somehow, drugs were being brought in and the kids seemed very oppressed. On our way into the city hospital, we picked up a hitchhiker. Jim shared his story, of how God saved him from a life of drugs and confusing philosophies. The man shared that he needed to get out

of them too and actually confessed to trafficking drugs in a little village that unknown to him was ours! We saw that in this situation with Nathan, God was moving us to some divine appointments. Nathan in the Bible was a very bold prophet unafraid even to rebuke his own king. Our little Nathan seemed to have courage about him far beyond his size and maybe yes, even a prophetic quality. Now later on in time, we see it beginning to bloom, blessing many with his wise words.

While waiting for the doctor I heard Nathan crying long and loud. Cringing inside I asked what was going on and the doctor said that they could not operate without first feeling the muscle deformity. So they were kneading his little stomach. As panic and hurt began to fill my heart, I internally knew I was going to lose control. Jim was with the doctor so I had no one to turn to. It was almost as bad as when I heard him screaming during his circumcision while the doctor explained step-by-step to my Jim. Inwardly I heard that small voice. The Holy Spirit speaks from our spirit not our brain and He said, "Go now and give what you need!" So I began wandering in the children's ward and focused on the other needy children. Soon the operation began. Being a nursing mother, I stayed the night. I was studying Revelations and as the sun arose I read the verse about the lightning of God issuing forth continuously from His throne. Looking out the window from that high-rise building, I saw a perfect white little cloud and a lightening bolt coming down from it. I remarked to the nurse, "It's going to rain today?" She looked surprised and said that none was forecasted. She was friendly and noticing the Bible, mentioned that she needed to get back to God. I told her that I could help her talk to Him. Embarrassed slightly she laughed, saying that she couldn't kneel on the job. I said that no, we could just talk to Him as a friend and holding hands she repeated the simple words after me. With thankful tears, she said that it was a divine appointment because she never worked that floor, but was called on that day. As she left I looked out of the window again and the sky was empty, not a cloud in sight! God had let me see the heavenly lightning, the grace coming forth for the one nurse. He was so close in that room. Of course little Nathan was fine and as always God's beautiful positive side of the scale way overbalanced that negative experience. In fact, any negative memory can be healed as we see the Father walk back through it with us.

As Nathan tumbled through childhood and I through motherhood, there was another lesson God taught me as the blood flowed. After warning, my son not to touch something, a few minutes passed and deeply engrossed in something (as was common) he forgot and touched it. I

should have moved it, but didn't, and he got a nasty cut on his forehead. Soon blood was dripping off my elbow as I applied pressure to the wound. Sara typically girlish began screaming and I rebuked her harshly saying, "We bind fear in Jesus' name!" Immediately, we all felt at peace and Jim arriving just then took Nathan to the hospital. The bone was fine and just stitches were needed. Alone at home I was feeling sick to my stomach, but irritated at the distraction got back to work. Soon I felt I had to sit. *This* time it wasn't a distraction but a lesson and quietly I listened. What bothered me the most, I told the Lord, was all the blood! The reading for the day was on the blood of the Sacrificial Lamb and how it was applied in the private sanctity of the Holy of Holies. He began to show me how the blood was needed in the privacy of our lives where no one else sees. Gently, He showed me where I had been disobedient in areas I judged to be insignificant and not important. If this continued, the safety He provided couldn't be guaranteed. Again, the lesson learned was priceless. Needless to say I didn't feel sick to my stomach anymore! When Seth, our third, came along, I asked the Lord for special grace over his life so he wouldn't have accidents and scars, as did his brother. I asked also for more wisdom and discernment to be a more careful mom too.

When a child is gifted intellectually, he has an ability to concentrate on something and be so focused that he can actually forget what has just been said to him a few minutes before. He loved puzzles and my toys. It took special attention from me with his toys before he would even look at them. Soon I gave up. In innocence, he would show me his creative "masterpieces." One was the cat food mixed with the laundry detergent "painted" over the sewing cabinet! When he began school, life was different. He was in his groove and the intelligence God gave him was delighting us all.

He had many more challenges. In the middle of grade school at a tiny Christian school, we had to transfer him to a Portuguese school. By this time he could understand a little of the language but they couldn't pronounce his name. We went with his second name, James, and soon he was James Bond 007, known worldwide! Our Love-Bug never took long to love or be loved. As a teenager, he is thriving on it, especially from girls. We have these prayer request cards at church. Once I pointed to them, asking him if he had any prayer requests, quickly without hesitation he said, "Pray for me and my relationship with girls." Jesus has kept him and helped him to love Jesus first and all else has been falling into place. After two years in the public school, God provided for us to put him in the private Christian school again from which

he graduated. Always enjoying school, he is now enjoying the prospect of going to a community college and majoring in Computer Science. However, much to our pleasure, recently he said that one day he feels that the Lord would like him to come back to Portugal and help his dad. We entrust him to the Lord to confirm and to redirect in anyway He chooses. He will always be our "gift" from God and to God.

In parting from our home and the friends in Portugal, we gave him a *manhood party*. The meal and gifts were brought to a wonderful dessert climax of words of wisdom, admonition, and prayer. All the messages in the little school's yearbook are precious to him. The little notes of love hidden throughout his stuff, he shows to us. Soon the summer travel will be done and we leave him in the home of our precious friends as he begins further studies.

I think he would like this little poem I wrote a long time ago when I was a teen:

An Autograph Book

"What is it?" you may say.

I'll tell you if I may

It was an ordinary thing as I grew

Stayed with me and everyone knew!

It is a little book with paper fine

Each page is someone different with a sentimental thought or poetical line.

Sometimes funny, sometimes sad

But never ugly and never bad.

Sister, principals, boyfriends, girlfriends, the lot.

All leave their friendship signed with a dot

However far one travels with an address or not

Thoughts of caring keep staying to sweeten your lot.

So Heavenly Father I ask You today

Send Your mighty angels I pray,

As You see each name written in this my autograph book

To bring back to them whatever Satan took.

As they have sowed goodness too.

Bring them always back to You.

On Your silken pages of loveliness untold.

So they may have their name written in gold.

May these names be written in the Autograph Book Above

Designed for all to see Your faithful love.

You have also engraved Your children's names on the Palm of Your hand.

So You have said, multiplied like the sand.

Not that You might forget

But that all may see

Your love for me

And the list is not finished yet.

Maranatha



by Nathan Age 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ yr.

Chapter Nine

The Extended Family

Topics:

The Extended Family

Foster Children

Unofficially Adopted

The Extended Family

In the Old Testament, we see a sweet and wonderful story called simply, Esther. Read it! Another one is Ruth. Esther was taken into the family of her uncle and aunt when her parents died. She was extended family and couldn't have been more submissive or respecting daughter. What a lovely example of God's care over a child. She was raised to be pure in her heart towards God and was eventually honored to be the queen of the nation! What an example of hope. In the first years of our marriage, we had Jim's youngest sister live with us. We really enjoyed the extended family.

As we raised our family, other children were attracted to us. Naturally, they became playmates. Even as our children became adults, moving out to fulfill their unique destinies, more children moved into our home. It seemed from the time our first born, Sara, was five years old, we had extended family and the momentum continues. I would like to share some of these examples but there were many, so many it would be impossible to write of each one. Each is so precious, especially to the Heavenly Father.

Foster Children

In the United States of America, there is a program to care for needy children called the Foster Program. We sign papers to their condition of staying with us but for a permanent solution. At any time, we may be called to release the children back to their natural families. One little girl, we'll call Angela. She spoke up to the social service officials when being assigned to a foster home to get away from her drunken parents. She said, "I know a family who would

want me!" We had two little ones and I was pregnant with Seth, our third. Angela would visit her Aunt next door and came over to play with our children. She was in her early teens. It was a blessed experience and she was a very loving and obedient teenage, she was just so thankful to be with us! We wished she could have stayed longer! Now about 30 years later we still have Angela's love.

Then there was the single mother of four daughters who almost lost them but because she promised that after school each day they would come to our home, the government allowed her to keep them! We had little to say in this because she had no time to consult with us. I found our family instantly doubled! Not only after school, but also on holidays were shared as well. What hilarious times we had! We are also privileged to keep in touch with these after 30 years or so. A few years ago, one of the daughters was very sick and we were able to go to the country where she lived to pray for her. Her children were called in from their jobs. It was an occasion for them to meet their adopted "grandparents". She recovered. We greatly rejoice to see in almost all of these cases the fruit remains, to God's glory.

Then there was Denise, who is now in Heaven. Her heritage had no redeeming faction. One of seven children, each of different fathers, she was born into poverty of inner city "life". Jim helped drive a school bus to their school and she began to tease him. Very large and masculine for a girl, she also was picked on and made fun of a lot. Boisterous, loud, and rebellious she declared she didn't believe in God. Jim shared his testimony with her and invited to our home, which was nearby. In the three years, we spent in inner city Kansas City, Denise and her family became our family. We, as a white people had a debt to pay which we did as we washed dishes, prayed, and stayed by their sides as surrogate parents! We saw literal miracles happen in their family. What a joy to keep in touch with them and see God's hand on each one. Where once there was degradation, sickness, immorality, rage, and poverty; now we see the saving peace of Jesus. Jim became Denise's father, unofficially. We helped in difficult family decisions and in her funeral when she died. We are still in touch with them and words can't describe the love between us even living on different continents!

As the numbers dwindled with our five children leaving one by one the space seemed to always be filled in our ample house. Once while visiting a North African nation, we met a beautiful girl whose uncle, who worked for the embassy, had brought her from own nation that was in a civil war. She was trying to take some expensive final exams in another language other

than her own and was failing. Nearing 20 years old, she couldn't seem to pass the 12th grade! Where we lived, the schools were all in her language so we invited her to stay with us to take the final exams. God arranged for her birthday to be on the same day as her adopted dad, Jim. She passed finally and returned to continue her studies in her own country. Not having earthly parents we are still considered her "adopted" parents. Sometimes as we travel in Africa, we can visit her. She is responsible to raise her six brothers and sisters. Oh God, may we have sown some seeds for the saving of future generations, the leaders of the future!

Another special one shared my birth date! Her mother and stepfather asked us to raise their 17 year old, offering even money if we would. Her natural father found out and even after not being part of her life since a little girl, invited her to go live with him in another country. So after a week she left. We had no contact with her but after two years we heard she had a bad experience, had a child, and was with a man who was a drug pusher. In the span of about seven years she almost died. Her baby was being raised by others and at the lowest point her mother once again brought her to our door and left! This young lady was a defeated wreck of skin and bones with both arms totally scarred and bandaged. Trying to escape from the police in a stolen car, she was stopped and taken to a hospital. Since she wasn't the one driving she escaped imprisonment. I've visited a very large women's prison for over 17 years now. This has opened doors to care for children and their mother's as well. But having this girl was different. She knew we had already "adopted" her into our heart seven years earlier. Because of the scars on her face from the beatings from her mother, I didn't recognize her. Jim, as was the case often, was away on a ministry trip when she arrived. It was evening and in 10 minutes, her mother was gone. She didn't want to drive after dark. Facing withdrawal pains from heroine, cocaine, and nicotine I told her to pray to Jesus herself. To ask for His forgiveness, mercy, and healing. He delivered her and she knew it was a miracle. She didn't stay with us long, still smokes, but is working. To our disappointment, she chose to go away from the Christian family, but we continue to pray for her. She called me on our birthday this year, saying, "We must get together again!" but no word since. Once I asked her on the phone why the years of silence again? She tried to encourage me by saying, "but don't forget you are my spiritual mom!" I replied, "No, you perhaps accepted Jesus with someone else but we have to be first friends and friends keep in touch!" That was one of the hardest things for me to say. Love loves to give, but it has to be real. She had played many games with us. I had to make a break. Loving keeps us vulnerable. Every hurt has a healing in

Jesus. It is my own responsibility to go to Him to be healed when this happens. If I don't, a deception begins and life begins to be warped so I don't want to give again! Gingly I protect the "wound" and my reactions to normal circumstances are far from normal! Receiving and giving forgiveness is key to healing these memories. These foster children are all God's.

Unofficially Adopted

Adoption is God's invention and a big blessing! But why do I say, "unofficially". Because they are close to becoming adults and "official" adoption isn't necessary. Even still, clear signed agreements from parents, guardians, grandparents, or others that are responsible may be a very wise thing to have! Our eldest, Sara, perhaps from being raised with Denise and others, brought our first "unofficially" adopted one to us. Her name is Silveria, and both Sara and she attended the same school. Her parents agreed for her to live with us. She could go into school with Sara and it would be very convenient. She is about one week older than Sara is and became our permanent oldest child. After eight years with us, she married a close friend from America and is so happy with now four of our 11 grandchildren! In so many little and big ways she is like me. We laugh to see that God really brought her to encourage me. The others don't seem to understand our "silly" sense of humor. Oh, what a blessing they are to us! She had not felt loved, accepted, or safe. She had had many severe bouts of depression but the Lord in His mercy has made Silveria a blessed mother and wife! Now they are a permanent part of our family. No "foster" program here! Then we had an empty nest for approximately a year and a half.

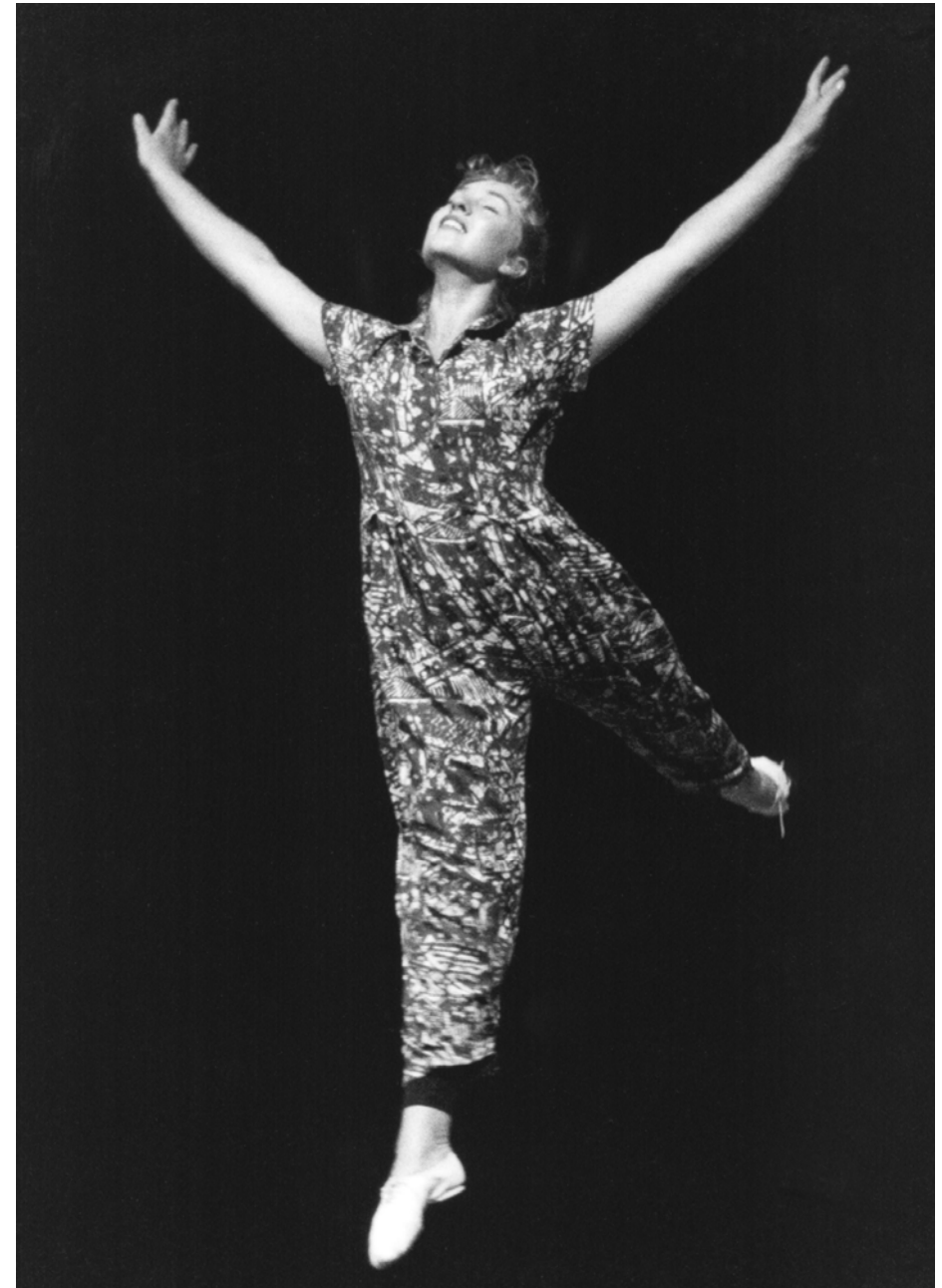
Now God has brought us our youngest "unofficial" adopted one. My last born, Sharon Joy, will always be our "baby", but the youngest number seven is Catia. Will this really be the last? I think so. Even though others will probably visit, seven seems to be a perfect "ending" number for a family. She has no one to trust as parents other than us, and even would love to take the family name, Reimer. That won't be necessary for it seems that she has found her Prince and will take his name. In the years that we've known her and of those years she's lived in our home, there's been a strong upward climb with weekly blessings watching her maturing into a woman of God. From parents that I met in the prison where I work; from the bring of suicide, Satanism, and insanity, from a mental hospital, she has come forth as gold from a furnace, just in the nick of time! All our parenting skills have been tested!

Being raised on a mission station my aunts, uncles, and grandparents were all "unofficially"

adopted. When I left to go study in America as a 17 year old, I didn't realize those ones would cease to be aunts and uncles, etc... It was a conditional love because of their circumstance there as missionaries. The only comfort I had was to realize that one day we would all be with God the Father in heaven as family, as we kept close to Him. Then from our local church where we lived aunts and uncles came to us. God supplied that to us. Now with our children's marriages, they have other aunts and uncles and we have a huge family. We believe God is please with this. Slowly we are seeing the whole extended family come to have faith in the Lord Jesus.

To end this chapter about our bigger family is difficult. There are so many precious things to share, all to encourage each of you to extend the cords of your tents and to make it larger! Allow the Father's love to increase your family. His love is in you and it is ample. This is not a feeling but a fact of faith. You will never feel lonely in His smile, for He loves a life of faith in His love! Love never fails. Read I Corinthians 13 often and receive His divine love!

When each of our sons-in-law came with humbleness to ask for our blessing to marry our daughters, our hearts melted! They recognized we had the responsibility, unto God, for our daughters to protect them. Now we were to give them away. We had to have faith and trust, not only in them, but mainly n the love each one had for Jesus, the source of all love. We knew, without a doubt, the keeping power of Jesus' love in our marriage. An Alaskan marrying an African is a combination only God could arrange and sustain! All six of our children were virgins when they married. This is a miracle too of God's grace. Catia, the seventh, is on the verge to be the next! The love we feel has no boundaries or differences between those born to us naturally or by the Holy Spirit because, in fact, life springs from the spirit. May the Heavenly Father continue to breathe life into each of us so we can support and parent the future generation. We will see eagles fly high! All praise to the Lord, our God!



Sara Lynette – Age 20

Chapter Ten

Ten and Going on Twenty

Topics:

Sara Lynette (Sweet-Server)

Adulthood's Additions

Sara Lynette (Sweet Server)

With a sweet sense of thankfulness and joy, I begin this last chapter about our first-born. Now at the lovely age of twenty she is on tiptoe once again just as she was as a little girl anticipating the arrival of her Daddy. She hasn't begun a study for a career, but is continuing the one she began in the tenth grade. She is teaching and training others in the area of worship. She graduated from high school with a special degree to teach ballet. She has about 38 five and six year olds in two classes earning in the four hours the same as a full-time weekly wage earner. So she is free to do her favorite activity...serving!¹⁰⁶ What willing hands she had and has and what respect she has earned everywhere!¹⁰⁷

Within the first two years of her life, we quickly saw the eager joy she had in being Mommy's helper and how I needed her! She'll never know unless the Holy Spirit chooses to reveal it supernaturally, how *much* her sweet serving was needed. I was totally unprepared experientially to be a mother. I felt really shocked and inadequate with babies coming every two years or so. I had no in-laws, parents or even out-laws to help me. In my weakness, I cried out to my husband to "take over" or I found some secrets dropping into my mind from the Holy Spirit. Sara was thrilled to be so needed. She really was what her name means, Mother of a Multitude. I wanted to put the 'h' on the end of her name. How we came to name her was interesting. Being born and raised in Swaziland to missionary parents, I did not know my grandparents, but Sarah was great-grandma's name. I was not remembering this but God was. My father's name being Alexander was one of our choices. The nickname of it is Sascha but it seemed a little too difficult in the American culture so we ended up with Sara. Her second name Lynette was after a high school friend of mine who was a wonderful Christian example to me and was the

daughter of medical missionaries like myself. The meaning was found to be the name of a tiny French bird.

She brought so much joy into our lives and being very sensitive and emotional she was easily trained. It seemed only an explanation was sufficient. She loved music always and by five, she had already received several sweet original songs from the Lord. It was such a blessing to have our eldest to be such an easygoing child. There was no hurtful teasing or hitting and she is still very sensitive to this. She was kind, giving, and forgiving, taking after her quiet father.¹⁰⁸ But can they ever concoct a wild party together! They are fondly called our "Party Animals!" Even in her looks, she favors her father a lot. By seven, she was well established with the Lord Jesus as truly Lord of her life. She had been praying in tongues for several years when I read one day that she had a strange date written in her Bible. It was a recent date being put as her date of salvation. She had been saved already for years! So I asked her about it and she said that at school they had insisted on putting on a date for her salvation and because she couldn't remember it she chose that date. How we chuckled. It was a Christian school and that was important to them. It wasn't to her.

Here is a little song we four girls made up together (put your own melody and actions with it):

One by One

Jesus made our Toes, one by one,

Jesus made our Toes just for fun.

Jesus made our Fingers, one by one,

Jesus made our Fingers to get things done.

Jesus made our Legs, one by one,

Jesus made our Legs like an engine.

Jesus made our Arms, one by one,

Jesus made our Arms to reach to everyone.

Jesus made our Hands, one by one,

Jesus made our Hands to praise God for His Son!

Jesus made Us, one by one,

And He loves us one by one!

Here are some of the things I learned with baby number one to make the new mothering job more exciting:

1. Be creative each day. It's energizing!
2. Create new outfits with our clothes.
3. Experiment with new hairstyles.
4. Let your family hear you tell them of your love and life commitment often. Let them know you look your prettiest for them and for Jesus.
5. Remember one fresh new insight from the Bible daily.
6. Teach some of your favorite childhood games or exercises to your children. E.g., Hide and Seek, Tag, Leap Frog, Tick-tack-toe, Jumping Jacks, and Watercolors.
7. Successful experiences are essential, be aware of these needs in your family and do what you can to help them be successful. Don't push too hard to cause a failure.
8. Give surprise gifts.
9. Change things in the home around for a fresh look once in awhile.
10. Decorate your table and food for mealtime enjoyment. Even one flower or a little music adds a lot.
11. Sing, whistle, or whisper instead of just talking all the time.
12. Ask the children to tell a story or share an idea. Clap for their reward.
13. Try out another culture's custom. e.g., Chinese meal sitting on the floor, everyone putting on slippers at the door, etc.
14. Begin a hobby or project of your own. Even a little at a time is as refreshing as a good book and helps your family to be happy for you. How about a walking or jogging schedule?
15. Keep a prayerful attitude asking God for His wisdom and guidance step by step. Your life will be much more peaceful.
16. Grow something: alfalfa or soybean sprouts, sugar crystals on a string, a start from a friend's plant.
17. Keep the variety. Be moderate but in many things. Beware not to even start into soap operas or non-Christian cheap romance novels!
18. Let the children help in calling or sending a letter, card, or package to someone.
19. Adopt a lonely older person as an extra grandparent.
20. Practice a special song to sing to someone.
21. Memorize scripture by singing it. Rewards are given here!

22. Begin a family history recording with interviews, baby sounds, and songs, etc... We do ours before opening presents at Christmas each year along with a very special devotional time.

23. Find some neighbors to take them cookies. Invite them over too!

I could go on and on.

Back to our Sara girl. What fun in discovering the awe of motherhood. To have someone need me for her *life!* It sure changed me! I had the independence of a Mary Slessor, David Livingstone, Mrs. von Trapp ("Sound of Music"), or similar. I had desired early in life to go into the farthest frontiers to *seek* the lost and see them saved by Jesus. He had called me! Never once did I think of mothering in the context of marriage. Why? Isn't it just natural, inherent, and instinctive? No, it is learned, caught, and taught. Leaving home to go to a boarding school at twelve years old I didn't look back. I was His intercessor, His missionary but ended up being trained in a tiny American country town of 500 people and married to an Alaskan! I do believe I was in shock (but a happy one) that threw me totally upon the shoulders of a dependable Jesus and husband Jim! I can remember looking at the first soiled cloth diaper and thinking "Now what do we do with this!" Quickly I learned about pre-rinsing the urine out, diaper pails and got so flexible I could diaper even with a dishtowel! Sara was a wonderfully patient baby. I preconceived her needs so she never had to learn to scream to get her needs met. How good it was too, for baby number two to come so she could learn to be even more patient obeying within the first two times of asking her. No time for witchy manipulations! She learned to be secure in the black and whites of life, but also had to learn to wait and understand that even though life isn't always fair, Jesus takes care!

She had a *best* friend *JESUS*. Another good friend was Denise Standifer. She was a black inner-city teenager we 'adopted.' Denise died and Sara was a part of it all. Denise is in Heaven partly because of little Sara's loving acceptance.

Sara's sensitivity came to our rescue one dark night on a lonely country lane. I had pulled to the side in our car, stopping to give a bottle to a crying baby. She yelled (very out of character), "Everyone get out of the car!" "Father?" I queried. "She is full of My Spirit. Listen to her!" He answered. I'll always remember that lesson. As we all carefully climbed out onto the road, we noticed the car dangerously slipping into a reed covered ditch. It all had looked like grass to me!

More from my journal about the beauty of parenting:

*Laughing so free in the joy
Of pure yellow sunshine.
Smiling in a quiet peacefulness
Like a little child's sleep.
So deep, so sweet.
A father's son, a grandfather's son,
A great grandfather's son.
And the future unfolds.
Like a butterfly's wet new wings
With colors, so sparkling vivid and shiny new
And few can surpass
This type of surprise
When looking up you see life smiling at your delight.*

*Bright bouquet of flowers under lamp-light
In the mellow glow
Circled by reflecting sunshine.
Light upon light, upon light...
Precept upon precept, upon precept.
The Father, the Son, and the Spirit
The perfection of three.
Past, present, and future; the Trinity.
Given to us in part
Yet part by part by part the glory is revealed
And passed on
From glory to glory.¹⁰⁹*

*The flower fades and yet the color heightens in the trees.
The leaves fall by and yet the color abounds*

*From sparkling snow reflecting and contrasting
Covering all with brightness
And sunsets! They are so gorgeous
From glory to glory.
The promise of the Holy Spirit
Given by the Son.
Who ascended to the right hand of the Father
Was a promise fulfilled.
Already in all who believe.
In all the children who receive.

The Spirit so holy, so strong
Led men who had led the throng
For so long.
God always had a people,
In whom He placed His Spirit
Where He could belong
And to whom He could give a promise
Of joy and Eternal love.
Father to son, to son, to son.
Mother to daughter, to daughter, to daughter
It was passed on
And on...

So now we have some,
Children - gifts from the Father above
And one day a helpmate
May be given them
Made by the Father's loving hand
Suited each to each
And she will love the flowers*

*And arrange bouquets to grace their home
Where he will rest.
And he will know the continuity of God's plan
Man to man
Raising others alongside in the Father's family plan*

*The initial inspiration is from the Father of all
The grace ability is from the Holy Spirit in all
Our example of love and submission is the Son, Jesus; Lord of all!
Woe to anyone who acclaims themselves or their achievements.
We have divine permission to be creative
To be a free, willing agent.
But woe again to anyone who does not do all for His glory.
Who does not procreate for spiritual goals.
Spiritual begins and must end as spiritual
Goodness being the desired fruit
By His Spirit the relay is run
In the Fatherhood Love as it begun.¹¹⁰*

My in-laws have been married fifty years. What an example! Another small part of our inheritance from my father is seen in this letter. These heartfelt words are better than any store-bought gift, any Hollywood scheme on the silver screen.

Dear Jim, Helen, Sara, Nathan, Seth, Rachel, and ?

I guess I had better get to writing before January closes. So here goes. Mother and I have had a good time of reading the Bible and praying for you this evening. Then we went to the organ, sang, and played for about an hour. I have restrung my mandolin after years of not touching it. We are a little rusty but improving.

It has been like spring here this January. The buds are swelling. I dug up a lot of Jerusalem Artichokes yesterday. The ground was soft and the artichokes were firm and good. Wish we could share some with you...

We are praying that the Lord will help you with your painting Helen...

We love you so much,

Your Mom and Dad Stark
and Grandpa and Grandma.

P.S. How about some more letters Sara, Nathan, yes, even you Seth. Guess that Rachel is a little too small yet.

Now my first letter from my adult (eighteen-year-old) daughter Sara after she left home. Again, it was to another continent, I see the inheritance being reflected here. Without the regular Mr. and Mrs. on the envelope, she just addressed it to "Mom, Dear!" And she writes:

Well, I love it so far. I'm keeping busy, but I do have quality time with the Lord and have heard some real encouraging things as well!! Things like how to be spiritual and real at the same time and not be religious, just to be natural -- like Jesus. It's interesting, but it requires a lot on my part. Also He's been teaching me about love and how His love is unconditional, things I already knew but seem to be coming to life in me. It's neat because on February 21st, I'm going to do a solo about God's love: He's preparing me!

I've been faithfully running and doing exercises everyday except Sundays. God's helping me in disciplining myself. I have the willpower to do it. I just have to get started. I think I've lost weight too. You don't have to worry about me -- everything is in God's hands. I consider this time of separation a time of death (to some things), if they are of God, they will resurrect, right?! Give my love to everybody. Tell them that I miss them too!

Love ya lots.

Sara

How did I, as her mother feel? This is how...

Today, I let a beautiful little bird fly away.

She was happy to be free

I was happy to see that she could fly!

Her name is Sara Lynette, my first born.

Lynette is a name derivative of the tiny French bird - Linnet.

It is meant to fly; she is meant to fly.

Each mother and father has the pain again and again

As each child leaves the nest.

When that time comes

We must help it to happen

Or else the nest becomes a cage!

Some birds would die in a cage!

So today was her graduation day

The 'diploma' was the flight ticket to another country

There to stay for eight months, or...?

Now we let her go to bless and to cheer

To give, to learn, to hold others dear.

Better a tear than to sear!

But how do we fill the vacant space she leaves within?

Our hearts and homes?

So many hearts; so many homes she warmed.

"How do we let go, God?"

Yes, it just happens

As naturally as the breeze turns this page.

But as I turn now to my work

I see her absence everywhere

In the pain in all

Those who needed her presence

What do we do?

"We turn to You, Lord"

Thank You, Father, for showing the way

To give and give again.

To receive forever because You invested through Your Son,

In the dust of the earth, that You made human.

Thank You for enlarging our hearts to love others through her.

Many more to enter into our needy hearts.

She now becomes that gentle tentacle

Of the family vine of faith

Reaching, growing, and spreading

Your sacrificial love

May we not fail You, my Lord.

May we not fail to intercede!

Fill those spaces with Your love

As only You can do.

Then overflow again as we give

Again and again.

As we pray and keep in touch.

The union is never broken in Your Spirit.

I now receive Your diploma

Written in the blood of Your Son

As I begin the journey of giving and sharing

My flesh and blood children one by one.

I know as I entrust them to Your care

We will live forever together there.

And there where You are now

United with Your Son

Not just as a family but also with many others

Won by the grace You have taught us

As they come through the lives of those we share

In Your Divine Love.

She flew away today.

Our little Sara Lynette bird, our sweet-server.

It was her appointed time.

Not by our decision or hers only

But by a much higher bidding.

That deep calling to deep; in her heart of hearts

Her life continues but now out of our nest.

So, "Thank You, Lord God

For the diploma of our job done to our best."

We've raised this one, but we will not rest

Yet another job has begun our faithfulness to test

The continuing inheritance of the reaching for His Best!

We will be their personal intercessors always! What does intercession mean? Intercession means between two points. It is being a bridge to touch another in identification. Then bringing that other one into connection with the Divine through prayer. Sometimes God allows them to come home. She did.

Love-Light in Flight

Speeding onwards in a land of misty blue

I think of you.

With patchwork quilts below and sequined lakes that shine

Sail toward all that's mine.

From where did our love come from?

A love continuing true as it begun

Shining in my heart today

Like the sun.

The topography of clouds: a transparent mass of pastel shapes

Float serenely by.

The sun seems close enough to touch!

So beautiful is all is to me!

The clouds also make shadows on other clouds beneath

And the ocean is dotted by their passing

With our lives it is the same

Touching as we pass.

And even if a distance comes between

There is still a sharing

And a flying upward within the Love-Light of God!

This thing about *distance*, does it bother you like it bothered me? That is only one of the *many* things Jesus took on the cross in our place! "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" He cried as His heart broke.¹¹¹ Not only did He suffer the absence of the Father but also as the twilight zone closed in even His disciples fled. These sufferings He took upon Himself. All that He did was to save us from it. A spirit of heavy grief and sadness will only cloud the light radiating from His joy in us. People reject and deny the reality of our testimony, so we must refuse to carry *any* of the pain. Daily we decide to allow His life, healing, and divine grace to be our substitute.

Once I had a vision. Father God was presenting a gleaming gold supersonic jet. "Whenever I send you, it is yours to use." Distance is no problem to Him. We are in His timing. No matter the age or the generation, the similarities of the adolescent and adult's face remain the same. This can be illustrated by some prose I wrote as a seventeen-year-old traveling to a foreign land. I thought I would stay four years, but I have just returned to visit my homeland after over 30 years away! It has now been twenty-four years!

Beloved, Far or Near?

I shut my eyes and immediately there is darkness; gone the skies.

I open my eyes and the land of light and colors surround me.

I stop up my ears and there is silence.

*Like the darkness, the whole world and its people rushing on without a sound.
Then I can hear once more and with a wave of gladness I hear the rain, the people and
the cars once again.*

*Only by a slight movement I can remove the sights and sounds around me.
Only by a small perhaps even unconscious effort I create darkness or the sky,
friendship, or loneliness.*

Do I unthinkingly fall in so small a way?

Do I let another feel far from me; pushed into oblivion?

Oh, do I deprive myself of the joy and beauty created around me?

Created for me to enjoy, just by closing myself off?

Do I live within the limited realm of my own complexities?

“Dear God, help me, teach me more.”

Come see the pictures on my wall

I think you ought to because you're in them all

Bring some love before they fall!

My understanding of all is very small

I have very much to learn

I do, I know it's true.

The sun's burning pierces my eyes and body as I climb

The cliff is rough and steep.

Yet beside me climbs another

Encouraging me as I upward creep

My loving Jesus keeps me on the trail

Shows me you and others loving me also.

Show can I fail?

Again today I awoke with the sun in eyes

And as I lay quiet upon my dreams

I watch the moving skies.

Empty thoughts of everything

And peace vibrates through my being.

Staring with sphinx - like eyes I meditate

Upon the changes in the sands of time and mankind.

Changes! Changes to what end?

The breeze sings through the trees

I hear the golden tinkling of wind chimes

Stretching my hands and legs

Coolness from the smooth sheets soothe away drowsiness

And I awake.

There is a lonely emptiness without you.

Yet, still at peace I go with the morning mists...

“Oh drenched from the dew of Thy holy - mountain morning,

Wring me out upon this day,

To bless! And I will rise again...

Fly with me,

And we shall be one, together with Heaven

We need no wings; we have love to sustain us.

Is there fear?

No, fear cannot be. Fear is not here?

We fly in naked faith.

Below, beyond, and above, white love-light reflects on a Sea of Tears.

The adolescent traveling onward and upward dreams...

She makes her peace with the harsh reality of separations.

Tomorrow or perhaps tomorrow I will look up and see your smile.

Tomorrow or perhaps tomorrow my dreams will no longer be

My only comfort for I will see your face.

You are a stranger now because you have been gone so long.

But perhaps tomorrow, who knows how or where.

*You will be right with me and I will touch your hair
 My heart will sing its song.
 And thank God that you're really there.
 When we meet, if we meet, breast to breast
 May it be upon the breast of God
 Perhaps that tomorrow will never come.
 Perhaps you and I will never meet again.
 But it that is to be, I will be unaware of it
 Because it would have just had to be
 And God with time would have erased those dreams as I sleep
 But I still love you now in my dreams.*

Our Sara, like all our children sent out, is to be like those beautiful arrows spoken of in my favorite poetry book, Psalm 127:3-5. The shaming enemies of our lives are defeated through their witness. *They* are our poetry written for the world to read.¹¹² If we release the arrows in the power of the Holy Spirit, the winds of change will not change their destiny. May it be!

Adulthood's Additions

To end this book on parenting I must address the topic of romance. As parents, are we to be involved or not? Who does the 'matchmaking?' Why does Daddy have to give permission, or does he?

I only deal with it now for most likely between the ages thirteen through nineteen our children will not want to marry. There are exceptions of course. As soon as we have children, our prayers, thoughts, and dreams can find themselves finding the prince in shining armor or the princess awaiting marriage to our beloved child. We plead:

"God, prepare the perfect match for our child. Protect them; help them to find your best. If there is to be a mate, bring them together quickly, surely and beautifully!" We emphasize the "quickly," perhaps, or is it "if?"

We see them getting romantic. Perhaps strumming a guitar in a dreamy way. Maybe laying out in the meadow writing poetry as I did for example:

Spring Fever
*There comes a day
 When daffodils play.
 Down in the meadow green.
 When robins preen
 Their plumage clean.
 The air is fresh and crisp
 Gone is the winter mist
 The sun a visitor no more.
 For spring is at the door.
 Tingling with new life.
 Nature hears the call
 Fresh green leaves and trees grow tall,
 Silently unfolding.
 Singing, bursting, blooming.
 Dewy petals, bright and new
 Blend gently with the growing hue
 Of green and rose and sky so blue.
 Two lovebirds softly coo nearby.
 Sheep in meadow sigh
 Sniffing air after cool showers
 Bees humming amongst the flowers.
 Spring fever! Romance is in the air!*

In the Western world and now it's creeping into all the cultures, is the Hollywood romanticism. Children grow up so fast, so early that we wonder if they had a childhood at all. Parents don't make fun of or push your child into romance. Better no romance than the wrong romance, right? Our adolescent may not agree. Before a young man thinks of courting or acting out romance with your daughter, he should Biblically respect your role of protector of her, and ask your permission. Dad! Your son, should he wish to seriously court a lady for marriage, should seek your advice. He should talk to the lady's father even before he talks to her!

I do believe in following the Biblical pattern in our teaching and expectations. Only then there can be a degree of confidence in this area. Who is *the* Matchmaker? The Holy Spirit! When the right time came for me to marry, He had searched the whole world over it seemed. My husband came from the very opposite side of the world from where I was born! *He* is able! Read Father Abraham's story as a wife was found for his very precious and only son Isaac!¹¹³ Rebecca was custom-made for Isaac. Why? Because of her sweet serving *character*. Isaac was comforted from his grief. Yes! He was grieving still over his mother's death. But God's Holy Spirit brooded over the situation and His Father's heart found the solution. He brooded as He did in Genesis over creation.¹¹⁴ He cares for our children as a mother hen with her chicks under her wings. We must ask, release, and trust Him with this topic.

In some parts of the world, the young people go out with the opposite sex and call it 'dating.' They seek to be alone together even though there is no intention of marriage but the game of romance is being played out. The end is bitter if the entanglement gets out of control. Why begin a good friendship just to break it by romanticism out-of-control? I suggest young people keep in a public place, in a group, and not put themselves under this unnecessary pressure. I had decided to do this as a young girl. I kept the words, "I love you" for my fiancée; my husband *only*. I did have special friends along the way but I didn't ever willingly or did I *have* to *break* those friendships to marry! They were all Christian brothers anyway. We will have eternity in God's family of love! I know without a shadow of a doubt that God is the matchmaker *when* the time is right! Nothing should be used to persuade the other in the match against their will. Their free will is holy and not to be touched. Our prayers, our words if they become selfish or manipulative, it is the same as witchcraft. We must always release our desires to His will, just as my daughter said in her letter "...if it is from God it will resurrect!" Love never fails. Live is giving and releasing. If we will serve God better together than apart then He will probably put us together.

I would like to end with a story I wrote in my journal a long time ago.

A Love Story

*A love story I shall tell.
The lovers in it you all know well.
Let it ring a bell
Deep down inside your heart
And take the part*

Of the lover from the start.

"Blest be the day I was called to walk in the love of my Lord!"

My heart echoes the song.

My Lover calls to take me away to His mansion in the sky.

Yes, I know why He calls.

For here is not where His bride belongs. She belongs with Him; by His side.

But no clothes have I in which to wed the Lover of my heart!

No joy has I with which to greet the Lover of my heart!

I feel He has gone too far away for me to reach.

I cannot see Him, nor hear His everlasting song!

The well of faith within my soul is dry.

My soul thirsts for my Lover of my dreams.

A love story I tell

Walk with me a little spell

And dream a little; smile awhile

Do not be weary or be sad we shall meet Him mile by mile!

"Around the bend, oh, glorious sight!

A Kingdom without end." The song continues in my heart

Oh, the beauty, the brilliant splendor of the place

Where I shall see His face.

But no, alas, unveiled am I and in disgrace

No clothes to wear.

No song of joy to bear

To meet my Lover there!

All around me faces frown,

"Sackcloth, ashes, a heavy burden has you bound.

In that kingdom you won't be found!"

And laughing they tease; confound.

*"Oh, Jesus, my heart is bleeding!
 On Your Life bread I've been feeding.
 In Your living water I've been growing.
 And slowly I've become more knowing.
 Than those voices all around me
 That tell me I'm not worthy.
 I know, oh yes I know
 You love me so and call me.
 You, my Love, my All!
 Oh give me garments.
 Garments of perfect praise so I will not fall.
 White, dazzling garments.
 Holy, radiant and pure.
 So that never sorrow nor fear may sever those garments from my soul.
 You found me naked, shivering.
 A babe so newly born.
 Unloved, unwanted, all things lacking on that dark and windy morn.
 In the mountains, in the valleys, You sought me and finally found
 The child, the infant that Satan had bound."
 I saw a blazing cross and a Voice cried,
 "My child, I died for you. Now I walk beside you,
 I want you for My bride!"
 "But Lord," wept I, "I cannot see the glory of Your face.
 The sorrow, sin and pain I cannot erase!
 No song of joy can overcome, no love can replace,
 Except Your love, Your song and the assurance of Your grace!
 I come, I come."¹⁵
 Amen*

Children Learn What They Live

By Dorothy Law Nolte

*If a child lives with criticism, he learns to condemn.
 If a child lives with hostility, he learns to fight.
 If a child lives with ridicule, he learns to be shy.
 If a child lives with shame, he learns to feel guilty.
 If a child lives with tolerance, he learns to be patient.
 If a child lives with encouragement, he learns confidence.
 If a child lives with praise, he learns to appreciate.
 If a child lives with fairness, he learns justice.
 If a child lives with security, he learns to have faith.
 If a child lives with approval, he learns to like himself.
 If a child lives with acceptance and friendship, he learns to find love in the world.*



The End

Verses to be Meditated Upon

1. God, Father of all families, Ephesians 3:14.
2. Jesus' birth, Luke 2:10,11.
3. Jesus' promise of inward peace, John 16:33.
4. The life in Jesus as the door to God the Father, John 14:6.
5. Passing on perfection, John 17:17-26.
6. Resulting joy, John 17:13.
7. Words, Hebrews 11:1-3, John 1:1-4.
8. Resulting faith, Romans 10:17.
9. A prayer for you, Colossians 1:9-16.
10. Joy-power, Colossians 1:11.
11. God made the baby, Psalm 139:13-18.
12. He is with me in birth, Proverbs 23:25.
13. "Replenish the earth!", Genesis 1:27-28.
14. The same of us now? Hebrews 13:8.
15. Not alone, Genesis 2:18.
16. Extended family, Psalm 68:6.
17. Man and wife giving of their bodies, Ephesians 5:21-31.
18. God and man's friendship, Genesis 3:9.
19. His friendship with us, 1 Corinthians 1:9.
20. Spirituality of man, Romans 8.
21. Longevity of life, Exodus 20:12.
22. Life, a private property, John 18:31.
23. Our evil nature taken away, 1 John 1:7-10.
24. Death is not to be feared, Isaiah 25:8.
25. Sorcery and magic is evil, Revelations 21:8.
26. Praying for a baby, Matthew 7:7-12, 6:9-13.
27. God's creativity in conception, Psalm 139:13-18.
28. He is a baby's hope, Psalm 22:9-10.

29. Materialism's trap, Matthew 6:19-24, 33.
30. My ear hears the Lord, Isaiah 50:4,5.
31. I have no fear, II Timothy 1:7.
32. Spiritually minded is life and peace, Romans 8:6.
33. We rule our own house well, I Timothy 3:5.
34. First give myself to God, II Corinthians 8:5.
35. Give much; receive much, II Corinthians 9:6.
36. Our child's angel, Matthew 18:10.
37. Selfless love? I Corinthians 13.
38. Humility is teachable! Matthew 18:1-4.
39. Cheerful in our compassion! Romans 12:8.
40. Childbirth protection, I Timothy 2:15.
41. Freedom to trust, Matthew 6:30-34.
42. Joyful days! Ecclesiastes 5:20.
43. Responsibilities reward, Proverbs 22:6,15a.
44. Responsibilities Reward, Proverbs 23:13,14.
45. The "Rod of Comfort?" Isaiah 23:4, Psalm 110:1-3.
46. Anger diffused, Proverbs 10:13, 15:1.
47. You've been wronged? Matthew 18:15-19.
48. Obedience is rewarded, Ephesians 6:1-4, Colossians 3:20.
49. We are foreigners, Isaiah 56:6-7.
50. Hope does not disappoint, Revelations 2:25.
51. Forcefulness is OK...sometimes, Matthew 11:12, 21:12-13.
52. Greater is He in me than all, I John 4:4.
53. We bear fruit and patience, Colossians 1:10-15.
54. Siblings MUST love each other, I John 3:10.
55. God's escape is always there, I Corinthians 10:13.
56. Be secretive in your good-works, Matthew 6.
57. Social privilege - brotherly love, I John 4:19-21.

58. A gentle and quiet spirit, I Peter 3:4.
59. Companionship in grace, Romans 5:2
60. Only by grace in weakness, James 4:6.
61. Need = Supply, Philippians 4:19.
62. Courage, Joshua 1:9.
63. Green pastures and grace, Psalm 23.
64. Know Him as the Lamb of God, Revelations 5:9-14.
65. Peace and digestion, Proverbs 15:17.
66. Jesus as chief cook, John 21:9.
67. Love one another, Galatians 5, 6:8.
68. Jacob's ladder, Genesis 28:12.
69. Your child's angel, Matthew 18:10.
70. Ask for wisdom! James 1:5,6.
71. Confidence in Him, I John 2:28.
72. The young learn scripture, Psalm 119:9.
73. Don't leave baby alone, Proverbs 29:15.
74. Children prophesying, Acts 2:17.
75. Spiritually mature! Hebrews 5:14.
76. Gladness to go to church, Psalm 122:1.
77. Devil stoppers, I John 3:8.
78. Three deadly enemies, I Corinthians 2:13, Isaiah 1:27.
79. Power of the RESISTANCE, James 4:7.
80. Escape the snare! I Corinthians 10:13.
81. Two agree to bind Satan, Matthew 18:19.
82. Die daily! I Corinthians 15:31.
83. My weaknesses? His strength! II Corinthians 12:19.
84. *Every* need met, Philippians 4:19.
85. Integrity at home, Psalm 101:2.
86. Ask for wisdom, James 7:5,6.

87. Our shield of protection, Ephesians 6:16.
88. Giving in joy, Luke 6:38, 1:80.
89. Extended family unit, Psalms 68:6.
90. Conscience? Deuteronomy 6:4-9.
91. We must teach! Deuteronomy 11:19.
92. *Ask* for wisdom, James 1:5-6.
93. Build on The Rock, Galatians 6:1.
94. Maturity, Luke 8:14, 11:5-8.
95. Anger, Proverbs 16:32, Galatians 5:24.
96. Work for God, Proverbs 6:6-8.
97. Baby-sitters, Proverbs 22:6, Genesis 4:7.
98. Children must know, Deuteronomy 31:10-13a, 32:46.
99. Jesus obeyed His parents, Luke 2:51, Matthew 18:13, Ephesians 6:12.
100. Godly confrontations, Matthew 18.
101. Money and Abraham, Genesis 12, Leviticus 27:30,32.
102. The Creator and youth, Ecclesiastes 9:10, 11:9-10, 12:1.
103. How to be rich, Proverbs 22:4, 9:10.
104. Weeping in the night but JOY in the morning, Psalm 30:5.
105. He never sleeps, Psalm 121.
106. Love to serve? Get rewarded! Galatians 5:13, 6:9.
107. Willing to work? Take a bow. I Thessalonians 4:11, 12.
108. Love that sweet life, Ephesians 4:31-32.
109. Change from Glory to Glory, II Corinthians 3:18.
110. The origin of parenthood and prayer pattern, Ephesians 4:14-21.
111. Distance pain? Don't accept it, Mark 15:34.
112. Our adolescent reflects us, II Corinthians 3:2-6, I Samuel 3:13.
113. Our matchmaking Holy Spirit, Genesis 22.
114. He broods over us, Genesis 1:2.
115. Light, glory will come, Isaiah 60:1.

About the Author

Helen was born in 1953 to medical missionary parents in Swaziland, Africa. Far from the distractions of modern life, she developed a keen sense of God's Presence. By the age of 12 she had to go to boarding school. There she experienced persecution because of her love for Jesus, never wavering in her faith. After two years, she

transferred to another boarding school closer to her elder sister, who was a missionary nurse in South Africa.



When Helen was 17, she moved to the United States of America to attend Northwest Nazarene University in Nampa, Idaho, where she met Jim Reimer of Alaska. She married him at the age of 19 and graduated with degrees in Art and English by 21. Both Jim and Helen share a call of God for missions. While pasturing a rural church, Jim attended seminary in Kansas City, Missouri. Since then they have planted churches in many parts of the world from their residence in Lisbon, Portugal.

Some of their children have moved back to America, where they have begun their own families. They all serve the Lord. Helen remembers how she was totally desperate with the challenges of motherhood. Because of this weakness she depended completely on the Lord Jesus. By grace, God taught her some of His divine secrets on child rearing. Be blessed, encouraged and illuminated as you read "Sweet Secrets of Parenting".