

The Raising of Children

This is a collection of my thoughts on various Bible passages and how to use them in child rearing. Books have been written on these subjects and go into more detail than I do. That's why I call this an outline.

If you love your children, spend a lot of time with them, keep a well-ordered household, and take an interest in everything they do, you will be a successful parent. I have written this outline to help you in these areas and maybe add a little to what you know.

I once asked a successful youth soccer coach how he had such good results in his coaching. He said that when he started, he went to a coaching clinic, got a couple of books and just did what the books said to do. This is how my wife and I raised our children; we did what the Bible said to do. We got Christian books on child rearing and listened to teaching, always sensitive to the Holy Spirit to tell us what we needed to know. God blessed us with an abundance of information early in our marriage. **Matthew 7:7 ...seek and ye will find...**

The Bible can be called the, "Operating Manual of Life." Since God wrote the Bible and He is the creator of life, He should know how to do things to get the best results.

2 Timothy 3:16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

2 Peter 1:20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. 21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

This is how I am approaching this study: God's Word is the absolute and final authority.

Whether you let your child stay up to 8:00, 9:00 or 10:00 is up to you and the Holy Spirit. Each family is different and each child is different. Sensitivity to the Holy Spirit is very important in raising our children. Every weakness I see in our children can be traced to my wife or me.

One thing to remember about these principles is that the law brings death, but the spirit gives life.

Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

2 Corinthians 3:6 Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

Don't think I have done all the stuff I am writing about, but had I done them all, the past would have been better. When I don't do things perfectly, I just move on and try to do them better in the future. I am free from the law of sin and death. There is a place in Jesus where the only thing you feel guilty about is not feeling guilty. In Jesus there is no condemnation.

We look at the Bible as a love letter from God to us. God sent his son to the cross for me, so if God tells me to do something, it is my best interest to do it. The point of this outline is to help us have a peaceful and joyful life, not to make a bunch of rules to follow.

We have raised three sons and two daughters.

One thing we must always remember, God's mercy endures forever and the first area I want to look at is the mercy of God.

The Mercy of God

This is the verse that first brought home to me how much God loves us and how he treats us when we sin. Speaking of Jesus, **Isaiah 42:3 A bruised reed He will not break, and a dimly burning wick He will not quench...Amplified.** A reed is used to play music. Today we have reed instruments, such as the saxophone and clarinet. If a person damages the reed, it must be thrown out because it cannot be used. But God says he will not discard someone because that person is damaged and isn't perfect.

A smoldering wick does nothing but stink up the room. I put a bag of popcorn in the microwave at work one day and was called to the phone. When I came back and opened the popcorn, I found it to be smoldering and it started stinking up the place. Everyone started yelling at me to get the smoldering popcorn outside. God will not throw us out just because we stink.

Joel 2:18-27. When we sin and it causes us loss, God is so forgiving that He will give us back what we lost through disobedience. **Joel 2:25 And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten,...** I would like to say more on this but how can you put into words this kind of forgiveness.

1 Corinthians 1:23 But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; Both the religious mind and the rational mind have trouble grasping the fact that the god who created the universe cared so much for me that he sent his son to be nailed to a cross, and that this god will forgive all my sins if I ask him. The religious mind thinks you have to do something to get God's favor. What separates Judaism and Christianity from other world religions is Judaism and Christianity are God reaching to man instead of man reaching to God. The rational mind thinks this concept is foolish.

Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

2 Corinthians 5:21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. When we are born again we are made righteous. That person, born again a minute ago, is just as righteous as me or Peter or any great saint you can think of. There may be a big difference in the conduct of me, Peter or Paul, but our righteousness is the same. This righteousness is based on relationship not works.

Colossians 2:13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; 14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it

out of the way, nailing it to his cross; I only saw this a few years ago. God not only nailed our sins to the cross, but also the law that made us sinners.

Psalm 103:12 As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. We can measure from the North Pole to the South Pole, but we cannot measure from the east to the west. You can go east forever and never arrive. That is where He puts our sins.

Isaiah 43:25 I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins

Jeremiah 31:34 (Hebrews 8:12 and 10:17)

And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

God chooses to forget our sins.

Hebrews 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

God is saying, “Come on in; don’t bother to knock; take all the mercy you need.” The old song says, “You don’t knock you just walk on in.” The word “obtain” does not mean ask. If we fall short in any way, we pick up, go get some mercy, and keep going. We will remember that any guilt or condemnation that drives us away from God comes from Satan.

Discipline

Proverbs 13:24 He who spares his rod hates his son,

But he who loves him disciplines him promptly. NKJV

Love is the key word here. I have inserted the 23rd Psalm between Discipline and Submission to Authority and Love.

A child’s will needs to be broken, not his spirit. I was amazed at the rebellion I found in our children at a very early age that had to be dealt with. We had one rule as our children were growing up, and that was “Obey.” If the child did not do as he was told, he was spanked. They were not hit with a hand nor with anger, but with a piece of wood with love. They were not given “three licks” or any particular number, but were hit hard enough and as many times as necessary to inflict real pain. If at this point you are thinking I am some sort of pervert, I would point out that God says this is love and not to do it would be hatred toward that child. I stayed with the child until he had finished crying, then restored fellowship with the child with comforting words, making sure the child understood that my love for him had not diminished and our relationship had not changed. This sounds easy on paper but, because of your deep feelings for your child, you will find this one of the hardest things you will do in your life. The rewards for doing it the way God says are huge. My children did what I told them, and I did not have to ever yell at them or argue about what I wanted done. They were not afraid of me; they knew they had the freedom to express themselves, discuss anything, and if done in a way that is non-rebellious, try to talk

me out of a decision they did not like. They also know that they could pray and get God on their side and have God work on me if they felt I had made a wrong decision.

Sensitivity to the child's age and maturity and will is important. A general age guideline on when to first spank a child would be difficult because all are unique, and a few children, especially those who continuously see a good example set by older siblings, may not ever be defiant enough to need spanking. "No younger than 18 months" or any such specific age is not nearly as important as knowing that the child is willfully disobeying or expressing defiance, and only punishing in such circumstances. When the child has started talking, there is usually no misunderstanding about what kind of behavior is going on. A newborn deserves all his or her needs to be met with love and patience. Gradually, while spending plenty of time with the child in a caring and loving way, a parent gets to know the child's developing personality. This is all about love, not power.

One older child said that one of the things that most impressed him was the fact that I do not get angry with them. He put a scratch on a new car of mine by hitting it with his car. He was sure he was doomed, but was surprised when I did not get mad. (I did make him get the touch-up paint and fix the scratch.) When he was younger, this same child was throwing a tennis ball against a wall at a family gathering. As I was turning to tell him to stop, I got hit in the nose with the ball. My brother said "Well, he's history." I replied "He only gets spanked for disobedience and since he did not disobey, he does not get punished."

You will be surprised how few times you have to spank a child once the child has learned what is expected of him. The most I have ever spanked a child is twice, two of them just once. My wife has spanked them a few times also.

There are many Christian books that give a better explanation on this subject and go into more detail. We strongly suggest you get one and both father and mother read it. Avoid the ones that call punishments "consequences" or vary even slightly away from the God-Jesus-father-mother chain of authority. Consequences are what happen naturally; by contrast, parents must maintain a long, determined will and effort to "**Train up a child in the way he should go:**" It helps to stay encouraged by the promise that "**and when he is old, he will not depart from it.**"

Proverbs 22:6

The 23rd Psalm gives us some insight into raising children. Let's think of ourselves as shepherds. We are shepherds by our being parents. We can understand love by looking at how God loves us. This shows us how to treat others that we have authority over, not just our children.

Psalm 23

1 The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

Our job as parents is to meet the needs of our children. The Hebrew word for "want" means: to lack, be without, decrease, and have a need. It is not just to want a new toy advertised on TV. God also meets our needs.

2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

As parents we are to make our children rest. “Still” means quiet and restful. We are to furnish our children a quiet restful place to be, a home that is peaceful without strife.

3 He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

The soul is the mind, emotions, desires, passions, and appetites. A parent is to support, build up and meet the child’s emotional needs. A path is not just a road to walk down, but an entrenchment or track. We are to lead our children by the way we live. They need to see us as an example of Godly living. We require that they always do the right thing.

4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

This is the same rod that appears in Proverbs 13:24. Not only does it inflict pain on one’s rear area but it also can be a comfort by maintaining and enforcing boundaries. Children want there to be rules so there is no confusion as to what they are to do. The word “staff” means also means support.

5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

We defend our children. We keep them clean and provide the best clothes we can. We do not have to buy them all the latest stuff but we do need to provide clean clothes that do not embarrass them. We are to make sure we provide for other needs they may have.

I am not talking about spending a lot of money, but I am talking about putting them first. When we chose to become parents we took upon ourselves responsibility.

6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

We do not talk about this enough. I do not have to ask God to go with me when I travel; goodness and mercy follow me. What we do is offer praise and thanksgiving that goodness and mercy follow me when I go out of town.

If we make Jesus our lord, we can quit worrying about heaven and hell. We will live with God forever and we can get on to our main calling in life, to proclaim the Good News. Our goal in life is to take as many people with us to heaven.

Our love for our children must be unconditional.

This relates to our children by always providing a place they can go. I have felt sorry for those whose parents move right after high school; their children do not have a place to go back to and see old friends. I know moving is required in many occupations and it cannot be helped. I am not blaming anyone of anything but I still think it is sad.

Submission to Authority

Matthew 8:5 And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, 6 And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. 7 And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. 8 The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. 9 For I am a man under

authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. 10 When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

Jesus knew lots of folks - Mom, Dad, Peter, John the Baptist etc. He says this centurion had more faith than any of them. The centurion was under submission and had people under him. He knew where he fit in and understood God was involved in setting up lines of authority. He also understood the authority of Jesus' words.

God has set things up so that there are lines of authority all over the place. Let's look at family relationships. Love and service go down and submission goes up, God / Jesus / Husband / Wife / Child. Married daughters should be looking to their husbands expecting God to use the husband for direction. Unmarried daughters should be looking to their parents. Sons, depending on their age and marital status, should look to God. Older children should look to their parents and in-law parents for advice.

We see the centurion's understanding of authority, both his own place and Jesus' place in the authority given by God. Jesus marveled at the centurion's faith, almost equating his submission to authority with faith. Make sure that both you and your child understand God's line of authority, which is husband, wife, then child. Tell your children that they should expect God to speak through you. (You can expect God to speak to you through your children, also). Let them know you realize you are not always right, and that God can change your mind. Obedience still covers the situation in the meantime. Be willing to admit it when you're wrong, and apologize even to a very young child.

We have a computer room that also is my home office. My daughter was playing music on her computer while I was working on mine. I got a phone call and told her to silence the music. I had to wait on her to stop her music before I could answer my phone. She had trouble doing it and I yelled at her thinking she wasn't doing it. After I yelled I looked at her and saw she was frantically trying to do what I told her. After I got off the phone I apologized for yelling at her.

Here are verses that provide a foundation for a happy, joyful, peaceful, well-ordered household in which a child can grow. This is our goal. Every relationship problem in our home has been the result of violating these passages.

Proverbs 21:1 The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.

Years ago, the family business with which I was working owned a building near downtown Fort Worth. A group of investors bought all of the surrounding vacant buildings and were not going to buy ours because, since we had an operating business, it would cost them too much. The problem was that they wanted to block our access to a large street. It would require our customers and us to drive around the block to go anywhere. We fought them at the Zoning Commission and the Planning Commission and lost. I was getting really agitated and we were preparing to go before the City Council. I finally remembered this verse and asked God to handle this, then relaxed. We were relating what was happening with one of our customers who had ties

to the members of the city council. This customer began contacting members of the City Council. We had almost all of them on our side. There was one that was not contacted. The mayor told the developers that they had to settle with us or their project would not be approved. Our main contact on the City Council warned us not to steal from the developers but to treat them fairly. We settled for a fair price that worked out great for us.

We can look at anyone in authority over us as the “King” in this proverb. God cannot violate their free will but can direct them even if they don’t know it. If we submit to those over us, we can trust God to direct them. We should daily pray for anyone over us from the president to our pastor, parents, or bosses. Submission allows God to work on them in our behalf.

2 Timothy 3:2-5

2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

3 Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,

4 Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;

5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

“Disobedient to parents” is listed with some very bad stuff.

1 Samuel 15:23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry...

God views rebellion and stubbornness as serious stuff.

Exodus 20:12 Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. One of the keys to long life is honoring our father and mother. All the commandments of God come with blessing and with relationship to him as heavenly Father through Jesus, they are not burdensome.

Ephesians 5:22-6:4 – 22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

The 23rd Psalm gives us some insight into raising children. Let’s think of ourselves as shepherds. We are shepherds by our being parents. We can understand love by looking at how God loves us. This shows us how to treat others that we have authority over, not just our children.

Love

Philemon (note verse 21) Having confidence in thy obedience I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say.

Paul expected the best from Philemon and expected Philemon to do more than he asked.

1 Corinthians 13 (note verse 5-7) ⁵Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; ⁶Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;

⁷Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

Love always expects the best from everyone. Our attitude and speech should not be, “You are a bad boy,” but instead, “You’ve done a bad thing”. This may seem only a little difference but our attitude will, over the years, affect the way our children see themselves.

Mark 11:23 For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.

Colossians 3:18-19

Ephesians 5:22-6:4

22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

It has been said that the best thing a husband can do for his children is to love their mother, and the best thing a mother can do for them is to respect and submit to their father. As a husband and father, I want to concentrate here on ways a husband might love his wife as Christ loved the Church. Let’s look at what Jesus did and is doing for the Church:

1. He was nailed to the cross, died, and went to hell to free the captives there before he was raised from the dead. (How about going to the store or your in-laws?)
2. He fasted 40 days to make sure He was in tune with the Holy Spirit. (Do we fast and pray to stay in touch with God and to find His will for our lives, or do we get upset when supper is late or not what we like? I’m speaking to me now.)
3. He is at the right hand of the Father interceding for the church. (Do we continually pray for our wives?)
4. Jesus washed his disciple’s feet. (Dishes? Bathroom? Clothes?)
5. Well maybe four is enough. I’m sure God will reveal more to you if you will ask Him, but for me it’s going to be tough enough when my wife pastes this page to my bathroom mirror.

Love flows from the top down, God-Jesus-husband-wife-child. Obedience and submission flow bottom up, child-wife-husband-Jesus-God. Blessing flows out of it all.

Training

Training children is absolutely necessary. As mentioned earlier, Proverbs 22:6 commands it, and promises great reward. Your child will in his adult life be what you train him to be.

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

In my first assignment as a Second Lieutenant in the Army, I was to go make copies at the base headquarters. This was 1972, and copy machines were not in every office. As I was looking for the copy machine, the base Master Sergeant began to help me. Because he was older than me, I called him “Sir” even though by rank I should have called him “Sergeant,” and him call me “Sir.” I could not get away from what my dad had trained me to do. Any time he heard me say to an adult anything except “Yes, sir” or “No, sir” while I was growing up, he corrected me.

Proverbs 4:3. For I was my father's son, tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother. 4. He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments, and live.

5. Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth.

We always talk about what a hotshot Solomon was because, when God asked what he wanted and offered him anything, Solomon said “Wisdom”. In the first five chapters of Proverbs we see the real reason Solomon asked for wisdom. His father told him repeatedly, “Get wisdom.” When God asked Solomon what he wanted, his training took over, and he said “Wisdom”.

1 Kings 3:9 Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people? 1 Kings 3:5-15

We also can see the negative side to training. David had many wives, and he took Solomon’s mother by adultery and murder. We see in Solomon’s life both supernatural wisdom and the effect of uncontrolled lust. Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines which led him off after other gods. **1Kings 11:1-13**

When our children are old enough to get an allowance, they give 10% to our church and save 10%. We have covered the subject of tithing and giving many times in our nightly bible/prayer time to add faith to their training. As they have gotten older they did not have to struggle with tithing. One child was not regularly going to church while in college. When that child started a job after college that child realized that they needed to tithe if they wanted to be financially successful. That child starting tithing to a certain church before they began attending it. They sent the tithe with a co-worker. That child decided to go see where their tithe was going and was very active in the church for years.

There are many ways we impact our children’s lives. Think about what you say and what you do; things like eating habits, church attendance, TV watching, reading, prayer, bible study, honesty, truthfulness, etc. I can plainly remember my mother going back inside a store to return money that was given her by mistake.

Education is an interesting subject for the Christian. On one hand it is not a god and should not be worshiped; and on the other hand God wants us to do our best and be successful at everything we do. Paul was one of the best taught men in the world in his time yet he referred to his education as “dung”. **Philippians 3: 7-11 8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,** God also used Paul’s education to lay out the theology of the church. Most of the men who wrote the Bible were the best educated men of their day: Moses, Jeremiah, Paul, Luke. Education does not insure success. Before the flood men’s brains were being used at 100% capacity instead of the 10% we use now, and all what people did was invent ways to do evil.

Honesty

Colossians 3:9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;

James 3:14 But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth

Revelation 22:15 For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

The first Christmas we had a child old enough to understand what was going on, I began telling her about “Santa Claus.” The words seemed to stick in my throat, and from that point on I never lied to my children again. (We have many times told them something was not their business.) We bought a great book on Saint Nicholas and helped them understand the reality and the legend at the right ages. We treated Santa Claus like we would Bugs Bunny.

One son recently talked about this to me. He said he had great respect for us because we did not lie to them about Santa Claus. He told a church friend and she felt we abused him by not lying to him.

God Teaching Parents

I don’t know how anyone can raise children without some sensitivity to the Holy Spirit. I thank God that He got us information early in our marriage and helped us with what we didn’t know. I believe that happened because from nearly the start of our marriage we tithed. We turned to God and God returned to us.

Malachi 3:6-12

6 For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.

We are sons of Jacob by our blood covenant with God. God will not abandon the Jews; they are His chosen people and we can partake of the blessings of Abraham by faith and our relationship with Jesus. God does not change!

7 Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return?

When my wife and I were living in Virginia, during my time with the Army, we went to our first charismatic church. We made the decision to start regular church attendance. Before it had been hit or miss, and we had been trying different denominations. I said to my wife, “I don’t know much, but I do know that to be financially successful in life we must tithe.” Growing up in a Baptist church, we had tithing testimonies each year. We made the decision to begin tithing at that point and have not backed off since. That was November 1972. I don’t brag about that because it is the best business deal I have ever made, and I started with the attitude of “What’s in it for us?” I expected monetary blessings, but God also began pouring the Word into us. Over about the next year, my wife and I received much of the basic Christian teaching that we have been living by and giving to our children. God revealed Himself to us in a big way. So an increase in revelation is another blessing to the person who tithes.

8 Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.

We must be honest and say that if we do not give God His 10%, we are stealing. Recently, I have begun to learn that there may be something regarding “**in offerings**” I have been missing. It seems to teach that we are robbing God if we do not make special offerings. I would think the other required offerings under the old covenant are covered by the blood of Jesus because He is our sacrifice and offering.

9 Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.

Remember about this curse stuff that Jesus took that curse of not tithing to the cross; however, when we steal, we are in Satan’s territory, which is not a good place to be.

10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

Remember in John 6:25-70, Jesus spoke on eating his body and drinking his blood. When the people began leaving him, he did not run after them saying, “Hey, let me explain better.” No, he put out the Word and they could take it or leave it. When people asked for a sign, he said that a wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign (Matthew 12:39). His family came to get him because they thought he was out of his mind (Mark 3:21). Jesus put the Word out: take it or leave it. Zechariah, John the Baptist’s dad, asked for a sign about the birth of his child. He should have kept his mouth shut (Luke 1:18-20). Gideon asked for a sign, but since he had no access to the Word, God let him get away with it. Mary only asked how it was going to happen and the angel told her how.

Everything about signs I just said is true except when it comes to tithing. We can make God prove His Word, and He wants to. He wants us to put pressure on Him to fulfill His Word. We can say, “OK God, I’ll tithe for a month and if you bless financially, great, I’ll keep doing it and if not, I will stop.” And God will love that prayer because it is based on His Word. Hebrews 4:16 says to come boldly to God’s throne.

The Hebrew word for prove means examine, try, tempt. The storehouse is usually the local church where you are being spiritually fed. When in doubt, tithe to the church you are attending. That is always correct. I like the New American Version: “blessing you cannot measure”. Other translations have “cannot contain”. God invites us to let Him prove He blesses the tither.

11 And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts.

God will prevent Satan from eating and destroying our stuff. God will keep our things from wearing out before they should. God is not going to let Satan mess with our stuff.

12 And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the LORD of hosts.

This is a good time for testimony. My favorite God blessing story happened when we went to Disneyland. When we went to check in at the Disneyland Hotel, the lady at the desk went to

check our reservation and tried to enter the information twice, and then finally said, “They ran out of your room (we had reserved the cheapest room for five of us) and have booked you into the Royal Suite all week.” This room had a kitchen, dining area, and sofa beds that made up to a couch during the day. A similar thing happened to a pastor friend and his wife in Mexico. Also, I paid \$138 for the most recent suit I bought, originally priced at \$450. I went to a department store because they had advertised a sale on clearance suits. They had one suit my size on sale and it would have been the suit I would have picked if I had many choices.

Any time we feel that tithing is costing us anything, we can re-read Malachi over and over until our faith is built back up. Do not tithe or give because I say to, develop your own faith. In fact, don't do anything because someone says to do it; do it because God says do it. Don't believe anything without finding it in the Word of God.

Words We Speak

Psalm 127

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

2 It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep.

3 Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.

4 As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth.

5 Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.

We have all seen that poster that says “We have two rules here: (1) The boss is always right. (2) When the boss is wrong, see rule 1.” Psalm 127 says that children are a blessing and a reward. When they do not seem like a blessing and a reward, see Psalm 127 and tell yourself that they are a blessing and reward. This does take some faith. I go into Psalm 127 a little more near the end of this outline

Numbers Chapter 13 and 14 Numbers 13:32 And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature.

The Israelites did not believe that God would do what he promised, and that whole generation was not allowed into the Promised Land. Their negative report was called “evil”. **Mark 11:14-26** Jesus said that if we believe, we can have whatever we say. Some Christians do not think this passage is important. God says in **Proverbs 18:21 Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.** A certain preacher tells that, when he was age 16, he had a deformed heart and an incurable blood disease, either of which would have eventually killed him. The doctor told him if he had one-in-a-million chance of surviving that would be something, but he didn't have even that. To receive his healing from God he used **Mark 11:23 For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be**

thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. He lived to be over 80. We can run our references for words, speech, and mouth, and decide for ourselves.

Fear

Job 1 and 3:25 note 1:5

Job 1:5 And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually.

Job 3:25 For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me.

Even though Job was perfect and upright, he lived in fear when it came to his children. He offered burnt offerings just in case they sinned. He also said the thing I have feared has come upon me. He did not understand that God loved his children more than he did.

Mark 4:1-20 note 4:19

Mark 4:19 And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.

The cares of the world choke the word. Find all the promises concerning our children, meditate on them, and do not let them depart from your mouth. See **Joshua chapter 1** for the great things that will happen when you do this.

Psalms 91 Note 5 and 6

2 I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.

5 Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day;

6 Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.

Some years back when my oldest girl was in elementary school a note came home from school saying a man in a blue Ford had tried to pick up a young girl on her way home the day before. My wife asked me what we were going to do. I said “The weather is bad and you will drive her to school tomorrow anyway. But the day after that if the weather is nice, she will walk. If Psalm 91 is not true we have bigger problems than having our child abducted.” She knew I was saying “Our life is based on God’s word and if we cannot trust in God to see that his word is fulfilled we will all go to hell anyway so nothing else mattered.” Look at verse 2. The word “say” shows up again.

Genesis 3:10 And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.

The first words of Adam that were recorded after he sinned was “I was afraid”

Revelation 21:8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

The fearful will have their place in the lake of fire. God is real serious about this not being afraid stuff.

1 Peter 5:7 Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

Philippians 4:6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

The facts are I cannot physically protect my children anyway, so I might as well let God. He wants to and can do a much better job than I can.

2 Kings 6:8-23

16 And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.

17 And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.

God wants to surround our homes and children with His angels.

Pride

Proverbs 16:18 Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.

1 John 2:16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

After you do all the stuff in this book, you will find that God begins blessing your children. This is where you and Satan can start messing things up. Do a word study on pride. Read every reference in the Bible with the word “pride” in it. Pride caused Satan’s rebellion and Adam’s sin. The first thing Satan tells you is that you sin too much to have God bless you. When you find out that is not true, Satan tells you that you are the best parents ever.

My pride has blocked some of the success my children could have experienced. When we’ve been complimented on our children, we immediately give God the glory and tell people we also are very pleased with them.

Spiritual Warfare

Ephesians 6

11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. 13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

We battle Satan for our children, plain and simple. Our fight is not against the school system, members of the opposite political party, or other people; it is against Satan and the demons driving other people who mistreat us.

The more I meditate on this, the more I see where my spiritual warfare helped our family. I have come to believe that my spending large amounts of time praying in tongues kept Satan from messing with my family.

I asked God why He didn't tell me about the baptism of the Holy Spirit while I was in high school and college. He said to me he did all He could but I needed people praying for me to really make a difference. My mother prayed that I would not get killed or go off the deep-end while away from home and God honored that prayer. (Sometimes I wonder how I made it through high school and college.) I always felt that God sent me to the Army to learn about the baptism of the Holy Spirit, but He said that was wrong. I was in the Army to meet a certain lady who prayed for my wife and me.

James 4:7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

1 Peter 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

God says "like a lion" not "is a lion". All Satan can do is roar if we fight him.

We are dealing with the victorious Christian life.

First, God wants us to be strong in him and the power of his might. We do this so that we can stand against the wiles of the devil.

A bullfighter uses a cape to distract the bull. The bull thinks that the cape is his problem. If the bull understood what was happening in the ring, he would beat the matador every time. Our fight is with demons, not people – not people – not people – demons. (Note that there is an organization of demons. Just as angels have territories, so do demons. Satan has sent demons to harass individual churches, denominations, and geographical areas.) Satan wants Christians to attack each other and not attack the real problem – him.

We need the whole armor of God to be able to stand. We have good armor and powerful weapons. That is why I dislike songs (and will not sing parts of them) that talk about how weak and tired we are.

We gird our waist with truth. Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth and the life; no man comes to the father but by me." Not Buddha, not Joseph Smith, not Mohamed, just Jesus. We should have correct doctrine but God doesn't get bent out of shape if our doctrine isn't perfect. He wants us to love and serve. Love trumps doctrine every time. This truth goes around our middle; truth needs to be at our core.

Righteousness must to cover our breast. **We have been made the righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:21)**. Our hearts need to know that we are righteous, no matter what Satan or anyone else tells us. The murderer who is about to be executed, but near the end repents and makes Jesus his Lord is just as righteous as me or St Francis or the Pope. Righteous is our position; it has nothing to do with our conduct. Correct conduct and works of righteousness are important and helps us live; but it has nothing to do with our righteousness. We cover our heart with the knowledge of our position in Jesus.

Our shoes are for spreading the gospel.

With the shield of faith we stop ~~some~~ all of Satan's attacks. This shield of faith comes by meditating, reading, and studying the Bible. We speak the way God speaks. Jesus used the Word to stop Satan's temptations.

The helmet of salvation can be two things. It can mean to keep your mind under control. It can also mean – When you don't feel loved by God or you cannot hear him, use your mind to remember what God has done for you. You can remember encounters with God including your salvation experience. You can remember that we do not go by how we feel but we go by the Word of God. Our mind is in the soulish realm. Here David tells his mind to bless the Lord.

Psalm 103 A Psalm of David.

¹ **Bless the LORD, O my soul;**

And all that is within me, *bless* His holy name!

² **Bless the LORD, O my soul,**

And forget not all His benefits:

³ **Who forgives all your iniquities,**

Who heals all your diseases,

⁴ **Who redeems your life from destruction,**

Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies,

⁵ **Who satisfies your mouth with good *things*,**

So that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

The sword of the Spirit is God's Word. It is an attack weapon. We are to use the Word to control Satan and tear down his kingdom.

Psalm 8:2 Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.

Satan or other demons do not like to be around praise. They are stopped and cannot operate. **James 5:14 Confess to one another therefore your faults (your slips, your false steps, your offenses, your sins) and pray [also] for one another, that you may be healed *and* restored [to a spiritual tone of mind and heart]. The earnest (heartfelt, continued) prayer of a righteous man makes tremendous power available [dynamic in its working]. Amplified**

Prayer makes power available for warfare

1 Corinthians 14:4 He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.

Praying in tongues builds us up; at the same time we are interceding for someone. This comes together and we ready to minister and the other person is ready to receive.

Personal Helpful Ideas

School teachers are people. Look for ways to compliment them and the school. Do what you can to help the school, and volunteer your time. After doing this a few years something may come up negative that needs to be taken care of. Do not attack anyone; deal with the problem in a detached, positive way. The school people will know you are not a complainer and will be positive about solving the problem.

I did not push grades much. I did however make them do their best in all their schoolwork. One child did not turn in a book report due close to the end of school. I required him do four book reports over the summer. One child did not turn in a Spanish project due just before Christmas, so she spent her vacation doing her Spanish project even though she got no credit for it.

We required our children earn video game time. Reading any book was one minute reading per one minute game time. Reading the Bible got two minutes play time for one minute reading. We did not allow playing of video games on school days unless there was a good reason. (like getting a new game)

Read to your child. Make sure there is a lot to read around your house. Make a lot of trips to the library.

Our family has a Bible reading and prayer time every evening. One of the children reads the Bible, then I sometimes teach a little, and then we each pray. Our children know it is an important time. If we are out and it is late, we just don't do it. If someone is not home during prayer time, we go on without him. We must never make a good thing into a law. Remember Jesus said that the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.

We require our children to go to most of the things our church offers. We want to train them in church attendance. If a child says he or she has homework to do and cannot go to a particular church function, we tell them to take an "F" and go to church. This shows the child what is important.

Psalm 112

As my children were growing up, I kept the words **Psalm 112:2 ...the generation of the upright shall be blessed** in my mouth. I am upright because Jesus made me upright and I stand on this verse based on what Jesus did, not what I have done.

Psalm 112

1 Praise ye the LORD. Blessed is the man that feareth the LORD, that delighteth greatly in his commandments. First we are to praise (halal-rave, boast, act clamorously foolish) God. The way this Psalm works is by fearing the Lord and delighting in the commandments. It is important to do things because the Word says to do them not just because of what someone taught. Commands that have their origins in the Word will be a joy when we find out about them because we know God has our best interest at heart. God's commands usually have promises

attached to them. We have one law and that is to love. When we make a decision to do something out of love, it is a joy. When we do something because of a man-made rule, it is usually not delightful. Outside of love, the only rule I see that needs to be made is: Church starts at 9:00.

2 His seed shall be mighty upon earth: the generation of the upright shall be blessed. I

expect my children to be blessed. I am surprised when they are not at the top of whatever they are doing. I expect my children to find answers to problems that come up in their different fields of endeavor, make a lot of money and be listed as the great ones in their field. The upright are people who do the right thing. Our righteousness and salvation comes from Jesus and He gives us the power to do the right thing. I am looking forward with great expectation to see the great things my children accomplish in their lives.

3 Wealth and riches shall be in his house: and his righteousness endureth for ever. I look forward to see the vast amounts of money that God will give my children to help others and promote the Gospel. Get out of the habit of thinking God is referring to spiritual wealth and riches. God wants to bless us to establish His covenant.

4 Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness: he is gracious, and full of

compassion, and righteous. During the problems we face in life, a light will shine. If we do **Isaiah 58**, the darkest time in our life will be like noonday. We should be jumping up and down and screaming at this point. It is too good to be true. One great thing about Abraham is he did not stagger at the promises of God. **Romans 4:20 He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;** We accept what God has promised us so that non-Christians will see how blessed we are and want to get into this “God thing.”

5 A good man sheweth favour, and lendeth: he will guide his affairs with discretion.

6 Surely he shall not be moved for ever: the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.

This sounds good, nothing can knock me down. I will be remembered and not die in obscurity. Dorcas was like this (Act 9:36-41). She was loved for the acts of charity she did for the church.

7 He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the LORD. I’m going to put on my dancin’ shoes, I am not going to fear anything anymore.

8 His heart is established, he shall not be afraid, until he see his desire upon his enemies. If anyone comes against me, they’ve lost before they get started.

9 He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his righteousness endureth for ever; his horn shall be exalted with honour. By humbling ourselves and saying about ourselves what God says about us, no matter how unreligious it sounds, God will honor us. We don’t honor ourselves, we let God do the exalting.

10 The wicked shall see it, and be grieved; he shall gnash with his teeth, and melt away: the desire of the wicked shall perish.

I believe God is blessing my children because I expect him to bless us. This would be called faith and believing the Word. He wants to bless us not because of anything great we do, but

because He wants to bless people who delight in His commands and can receive the blessings He has for us.