

# Kids are People Too

*By John and Yvonne Cherry*

## *Forward*

This book was conceived as a vehicle to pass on family traditions and Biblical principles to our children. It evolved into something that may be helpful to youth and young adults as they prepare to engage in the high adventure of parenting. Most of the stories and examples come from experiences in the Cherry family, but the Biblical principles come straight from Scripture. No other parenting or psychology books were used as references in this book. While there may be a place for Christian psychology and Christian self-help resources in our society, the Bible contains the truths for successful parenting. *His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness.* After all, the Creator of the universe knows us better than we know ourselves. Obedience, consistency, and sacrifice are always the hard parts. Yvonne and I have made mistakes, and there were times when we took our eyes off the guiding truths of Scripture. Thank God that *He is able to make all grace abound* to us. He has forgiven our sins by His grace, He has compensated for our weaknesses by His grace, and He has graced us with three beautiful children who *are a crown* to their aging parents and who follow after God.

Our entire family has enjoyed the process of putting these words into a small book. Hopefully, you will be able to discover the Biblical truths for yourselves and be able to apply them as the Spirit leads in your family as well. The parenting techniques described in this book are certainly not for everyone. Every parent is equipped differently. They differ in gifting, in personality, and in strengths and weaknesses. On the other hand, the Biblical principles are unchanging and are true for all time.

This book started out as “From Babies to Babes”. Unfortunately, our society has messed up another term and it just seems like “babes” has the wrong connotations for what we desire in our children. Julie, our youngest little cherub, is sitting on the sofa in the living room as I type this forward. She yelled out, “Kids Are People Too.” As I thought more about this title change, it really makes much more sense. So often, we look at our kids as something to fulfill or complete *our* lives. Whenever I see a new born baby, I try to remind myself that this is a real human being. This crying, wetting, sleep depriving creature is not just *cute*, but they are real human beings with eternal souls. Yeah, kids are people too.

## *How it all started*

Another false alarm. Don’t you just hate those Braxton-Hicks contractions? Our hopes were high as we entered the hospital, but we both left the hospital disappointed. It is not easy being a parent for the first time. What do you expect? What have we done?

Our disappointment changed to pure pain a couple of weeks later. The baby didn't come easily. She was turned the wrong way in the womb, so she created immense back labor for mom. Dad had plans for watching monitors, eating chips, and enjoying the entrance of our new little bundle. Instead, the chips were never opened and we only watched the monitor to know when the next round of back pain would start. Although dad's arms were weary from administering back rubs, mom definitely felt the curse of childbirth. With all modesty out the window, mom was checked by doctors, nurses, and a few people we didn't even know! Medication was administered, but the medication didn't work the way it was supposed to work. So much for a drug-free delivery. Finally, after of hours of pain, the monitors were showing that our baby was under stress. The delivery would have to be soon and contingency plans would have to be in place. After a period of really hard labor, which seemed like hours, our child made an appearance into the world. Not only was the cord wrapped around the baby's neck, but a slip knot appeared in the cord. One could actually slide the knot up and down the cord, but if the knot would have tightened, it would have been the end. This child must have had gymnastics practice in the womb! We not only experienced the miracle of birth, we experienced God's grace and hand of protection. This child was truly a miracle.

Was the child going to be a girl or a boy? We would love a boy because we could play catch together, go to sporting events, go on camping trips, go fishing, and do all of those things that boys do. However, we would love a girl as well. Girls lend themselves to dress-up, dolls, reading, and all of those less exciting, yet fun activities. Which would it be? The doctor, a friend from the church we attended, finally announced that our bundle of joy was a GIRL. He placed the child in our arms and a rush of emotion came over us. We were actually holding a real child, a human being, an eternal soul! The eyes of this child darted around the room as she checked out her parents and her surroundings. The doctor made the statement, "Once alert, always alert!" How true that statement turned out to be.

This was the first of three girls who became a part of the Cherry family. Would there be any boys? No. God didn't have that in mind for our family. God knew that I (the dad in the narrative) needed three girls. Little did I know how challenging and rewarding the coming adventure would be. Little did I know that girls grow up to hold a special place in their hearts for their daddy. Little did I know just how little I knew about raising children!

Jamie, our oldest girl had a difficult entry into the world. Jodie arrived a little over two years later. I had prepared for the worst this time around, but Jodie made her arrival without a hitch. Jodie's easy delivery certainly enabled thoughts for a third child, which came a little over two years later. Being an engineer, I wanted to have my children evenly spaced. While Julie's delivery was not as much of a pain as Jamie's delivery, it was definitely not a walk in the park. Each child evoked the same flood of emotion and joy as they arrived on the scene. Each time, we anticipated the arrival of our first son and each time the doctor said, "You have another beautiful girl!"

With three girls, we had the makings of a wonderful sociological experiment. Each girl would be raised by the same parents, in the same living environment, at the

same church, at the same school, and with the same relatives. We had heard that all children are different, but we had the chance to observe three participants in a controlled experiment. We could determine for ourselves what makes them different. Our startling discovery was that all of our children had distinct personality traits and tendencies from birth. Jamie was always a strong-willed child with perfectionist tendencies. Jodie was a compliant child with social tendencies. Julie has always been a people-pleasing child with “random” tendencies. However, we soon found that while there are definite personality differences from birth, there are trainable aspects about their complex make-ups that can be molded and that are consistent across personality styles.

Jamie, Jodie, and Julie have all become godly women and they are all continuing to develop a character that enables them to be salt and light in a dark world. While they are beautiful women on the outside, they all have an inner beauty as well.

When Jamie was about to leave for college, we took our vacation at Cannon Beach Bible Conference. Jamie asked me to write down some of the things that we, as parents, did to raise them. I was greatly honored that a child of mine would even ask such a question. I spent a fair amount of time during the vacation observing my children and asking them questions in preparation for my response to Jamie’s request. I started a notebook to chronicle the events of their childhood and have tried to assimilate the results into both principles and related techniques. Principles are Biblically based and are true for all time and for any situation. Techniques are more about the application of those principles and can vary greatly based on the personality and gifts of the parents.

How do you teach a child unconditional love? How do you teach a child that God is just, but that life is not fair? How do you teach a child to tell the truth? How do you teach a child to be kind? How do you teach a child to respect others? How do you teach humility and self-control? How do you build a godly self-esteem in a child? How do you demonstrate to a child that living by godly principles is better than laziness or selfishness?

## **Preparation for Children**

### *Be Around Children*

Preparation for children does not begin when you and your spouse decide to get pregnant. The preparation begins long before you get married. It begins by developing a true love for children as beings that possess a soul and that are loved dearly by God. In your teenage years, it is often easy to view other small children as pests, unwanted responsibilities, or creatures that keep you from doing the things you really want to do. When Jesus' disciples had that attitude, Jesus rebuked them.

*(Mark 10:13-16 NIV) People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them.*

Yvonne and I always had a desire to be around children. While we seldom talked about raising children while we were dating (generally considered bad form), it was obvious to each other that children were not just a bother to us. Yvonne treated her little brother (Phillip) with love and affection. She watched after him and made sure he was clothed properly in cold weather and that he was safe when we engaged in activities like sledding or playing in the park. Yvonne also taught Bible School classes and chose a summer job working with kids in the park department. When I looked at how she treated children, I knew she valued them. I knew that if she ever became a mother, she would be a loving and caring mother. I also saw that she had purpose in dealing with children. In her ministry roles, she would move children toward a decision for Christ. Others just considered the job as babysitting. I had a similar love for children. I always liked to be around Yvonne's family because there were small children around. In fact, I acquired a reputation for holding babies. I suppose this reputation still exists today.

There are many reasons to choose a mate, but having similar values in child-raising is absolutely required for a happy family life. Yvonne and I recognized this in each other and never doubted the importance of raising godly offspring.

### *Date The Right People*

Often, I will ask teenagers about the most important quality to look for in someone they will date. I have trained them to respond by saying that they will not even date a person that is not a Christian. Of course, I prefer that they go one step further and say that they will only date those who are active, growing Christians. This advice is based on a clear principle from Scripture found in 2 Corinthians.

*(2 Corinthians 6:14 NIV) Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?*

So what about recreational dating? Isn't recreational dating simply doing something fun with a friend? Recreational dating isn't being "yoked", is it? Besides, if you really get serious, you can just bring them to Christ. Right?

Unfortunately, I have seen too many young people adopt the recreational approach to dating and end up really sorry they did it. The problem with recreational dating is that whether we like it or not, we are creatures that seek to make relational bonds with other people. When our relational bonds are based on just having a good time with someone else, the basis for that relationship is totally wrong for the Christian. A relationship based on having a good time usually spawns selfishness and the results can be catastrophic. A relationship based on a common belief in Jesus Christ cultivates selflessness and results in giving relationships. By simply having a good time together, it is easy to slip into a physical involvement that adds to the fun. God is not opposed to fun, but he has given us principles that protect us and that give us lasting joy and contentment. He has told us that any relational bond (or by being yoked together with someone else) must not be cultivated with unbelievers.

### *Pick A Mate With Common Values*

Before you choose a mate, make sure you take the opportunity to work with children on your own. If you don't, you will have difficulty knowing what standard to look for in a mate. And remember, your mate is not likely to change in this area after you are married. You can be exposed to children by coaching teams, teaching or helping with VBS, reading books to small children, babysitting, pushing a child on a swing, or changing a diaper. The ways are endless. Most of them involve a little sacrifice of time and will often keep you from doing other fun things. However, the payoff is substantial. Besides developing a love for children, you will be very attractive to those who are seeking similar qualities in a mate.

Before marriage, seek counseling for marriage preparation. Make sure the counselor covers the areas of having children and raising children well. Not only should your values be similar, but you need to count the cost of having children. How much are you willing to sacrifice as a couple? The cost is not only money, but also time, energy, emotion, circle of friends, ministry direction, and sleep. Who will raise your children? Will you do it yourselves, or will you turn a bulk of it over to a day care worker? I have seen many cases of Christian married couples deciding to have a child so they could "experience" a child. This approach inevitably ends in disaster.

## *Children As Primary Mission Field*

Children are a blessing and they are a parents' primary mission field. You will have more impact on your children than you will ever have on those you lead to the Lord or disciple outside of your family. Godly offspring tend to multiply. If your children also raise godly children and those children do the same thing, you have just impacted hundreds of people! How do you raise godly children? Deuteronomy 6 gives us some good guidelines.

*(Deuteronomy 6:4-9 NIV) Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.*

This is not casual child raising. Raising your child is emphasized in the context of loving God with all your heart, soul, and strength! It encompasses everything from memorizing Scripture to taking walks with your children. Each and every activity in your life with a child is an opportunity to point them to the Creator. This flies in direct opposition to those who say that they will expose their children to many things and just let them decide for themselves. Those that give their children a blank slate are telling their children that they do not have a vital relationship with the living God and that they have nothing of importance to pass on to them.

Once you are married, spend time with children in ministry situations and with your friends and relatives that have children. As a couple, discuss what you have observed in child behaviors and in parenting techniques that you have observed. Yvonne and I became involved with a Junior High ministry in the first year of our marriage. We participated in this ministry together because we felt that it was extremely important to do things together as we began to grow together as a couple. We had many discussions about the children in the youth group. We could pick out those children who were raised by purposeful, godly parents and those who were raised in poor parenting situations. We attempted to emulate the godly parents that we observed. In the situations where parenting skills were lacking, we continually asked ourselves what these parents were trying to teach their children through their parenting behavior. So, based on these observations, we came up with the following activities that we repeated throughout our parenting time:

- Look for things to emulate in parents that are doing a good job.
- Always ask what you are teaching your child in everything that you do.
- Use how our Heavenly Father loves and disciplines us as a model. In each situation, ask what we are teaching about the Heavenly Father.

## *Be Careful About Advice*

Since our first child was fairly strong-willed, “The Strong-Willed Child”, by James Dobson was useful for us. It helped us to distinguish willful disobedience from childish irresponsibility. It was amazing to us how early in life children display willful disobedience. Don’t be fooled. These little creatures are sharp.

When Jamie could barely crawl, she was drawn to the electrical outlet caps which were designed to make outlets child-proof. With her little fingers, she would pry the outlet caps right out of the hot electrical outlet. Since these caps were plastic, there was really no danger of electrocution, but we figured that if she liked to remove caps, the electrical plugs were next. This was a habit that had to be stopped for her own safety. We started the behavior correction by telling Jamie “no” as we lightly slapped her fingers (no real pain). This did not phase Jamie. She went right back to the outlet and started to pick away at the child-proof caps again. This time, we swatted her little fingers hard enough to cause a little sting and moved her well away from the temptation. Jamie took it as a challenge now. She cried for a couple minutes, but it was not long before she was right back at the outlet. After a couple rounds of having her hands slapped and her little body relocated, she found herself one more time sitting in front of the temptation. This time, she was not touching the outlet cap, but simply staring at it. This reminded me of the story in the Genesis where Lot “pitched his tent near Sodom”. In the very next chapter, Lot was a prominent resident of Sodom. Anyway, we thought we would help Jamie to resist this temptation, so we asked Jamie to move away from the outlet. Jamie glared at us, reached out her little finger, touched the outlet cap, and then moved away from the outlet. This was a very deliberate act of defiance. As I recall, Jamie was firmly spanked and placed in her crib until she cried herself to sleep.

When we relayed this story to other Christian parents, the reactions were varied. Some agreed with us that willful defiance had to be addressed. Others felt that corporal punishment for a child under a year old was inexcusable. Some felt that this kind of punishment for such a small child would stifle their creativity.

Scripture teaches that willful disobedience is wrong. Children must learn a to obey their parents (Ephesians 5:33) and to honor their parents (Exodus 20:12). As soon as our children are old enough to willfully disobey, they are old enough to learn to honor and obey their parents.

While there is a plethora of advice on raising children out there, be careful. Advice comes from many sources, many philosophies, and many perspectives. Quite often these sources contradict each other. It seems that those that have sought out advice from psychologists and specialists become self-proclaimed experts, but the end product of this advice has not been encouraging. Most families today, whether secular or Christian, are chaotic and toy with some form of domestic disaster. The problem for Christian families is that they are often receiving a mixture of humanistic psychology and Biblical principles. Many contemporary advisors mix an ungodly humanistic approach with a smattering of slanted clinical studies, and cover it with a thin veneer of Bible verses. The message appears to be spiritually reasonable, but the result is confusion.

Remember that there is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death (Proverbs 14:12). Unfortunately, much of the child-raising advice that you will hear today sounds reasonable. However, wouldn't you rather raise your children on principles that were defined by the One that created your children? Our perspective is limited, but God's perspective is omniscient. God's Word is a light unto our path and it gives understanding even to the simple!



## **Guiding Principles**

Biblical principles are true for all time and for any situation. They are true regardless of the changing winds of popular psychology. They are true whether you are raising girls or boys. They are true whether you are raising your own children, foster children, or adopted children. When it came to raising children, Yvonne and I used some principles that were derived from Scripture and validated by experience.

- Principle 1: Raise children with purpose
- Principle 2: Model unconditional love
- Principle 3: Teach respect
- Principle 4: Work as to the Lord
- Principle 5: Self-esteem is overrated
- Principle 6: Train where they need it the most
- Principle 7: Make The Most of Your Time
- Principle 8: Be Free From the Love of Money
- Principle 9: Don't show favoritism

### **Principle 1: Raise children with purpose**

*(Deuteronomy 6:4-9 NIV) Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.*

I do not often have the opportunity to preach in our local church, but recently I was given the chance to do this and I preached on what it means to love the Lord with everything are and with everything you have. I have always struggled with how this actually plays out in daily life. A passage in 1 John 4 clearly shows that our love for God

is demonstrated in our obedience to Him. Deuteronomy 6 gives us commands that relate to our children in the context of loving God. Our obedience to these commands shows our love for God.

Our heart condition takes the top priority on the list. I can't pass on that which I do not have. I believe God wants me to continually struggle with the concept of loving Him with everything that I am and have. I do this by constantly asking myself questions. Do I really love God? If I love God completely, how would that change my life? How does God want to be loved? Is sin the result of not loving God completely? What can I do to love God more? Why is it that I don't always feel the love? Is love and dependence on God related somehow? Can I love God, but really have problems with other people? Have I internalized the full love that God has for me?

As you ask yourself these questions, don't be afraid to share the journey with your children. These are the things that you are to *impress* on your children. Get to know the God that loves you. Love God the way he likes to be loved.

Do your kids know that you really love God or do they view you as a religious person? Let them see you pray. Let them see you set life priorities. Let them see you reading your Bible.

Yvonne and I felt that family devotions provided an important forum for training, for prayer, and for sharing. This is one way we talked about God's commandments when we "*sit at home*". We tried to set aside 15 minutes each evening for family devotions consisting of Bible reading and prayer. The tradition began before the girls could read or even talk. We would read a Bible story and then everyone would pray, usually from the youngest to the oldest child, followed by mom and dad. As soon as all the children were reading, we decided to read our Bible stories straight from the Bible. Many children's Bible-story books tend to water down the stories and miss the true meanings of scripture. For instance, the story of Noah is not a fun animal and boat story. It is a story about God's terrible judgment on people that had turned their backs on Him. The girls were all exposed to the concepts of deception, circumcision, death/war, judgment, adultery, sacrifice, etc. at a very early age. Sometimes it was difficult for us to explain these things to them in words that made sense to a small child, but many interesting conversations were spawned and I think God honored our desire to use the Bible as the primary text. Over the years, the family devotion time developed into a time where we also shared the events of the day together and it lasted much longer than 15 minutes. If guests came over, they participated in family devotions as well.

Besides family devotions, we were careful to always pray at mealtimes. Rather than to have the father lead all mealtime prayers, I choose various family members to lead in prayer. Quite often, I would choose the one that was the furthest away from thankfulness at the time.

Trips to school, trips to the grocery store, and family trips (usually driving) were opportunities to talk about Him when you *walk along the road*. Commenting on a beautiful sunset or majestic mountains generally led to comments about the Creator who

made them. We purposely planned trips where we were in the car for long periods of time. Over the course of a trip, we would listen to GT tapes (memorizing Scripture), Odyssey tapes, or a more adult tape. The tapes were used for entertainment as well as for opportunities to talk about spiritual things. In their teenage years, we listened to tapes like "Right from Wrong" by Josh McDowell and the origin of religions tape by Frank Peretti. Of course, our overnight stays in motels were always a highlight. It gave everybody a chance to be themselves and to pretend we were on a big slumber party. Sometimes it just takes a quantity of time to get to special moments of quality time.

What is the last thing your child hears every night and the first thing they hear in the morning? You need to talk about God when *you lie down and get up*. It seems that young people are most talkative in the late evening. I would make it a point to go to each child's room and let them know that I loved them and ask them if they had any problems. If they did not have any problems to share, I would insist that they come up a problem before I would leave. Quite often the problem would be that their father was in their room while they were trying to get to sleep.

How do you *tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads*? How do you *write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates*? I believe it should be obvious to those around us that Christians live in the house. Since the girls were tiny, we talked about being salt and light. We would ask them on the first day of school how they planned to be salt and light with the kids at school. We would ask if there were any children that were neglected by other kids.

We also attempted to include the girls in family activities (especially ministry opportunities). We included them in house cleaning, meals with friends/neighbors, taking cookies to neighbors and inviting kids to VBS or youth groups. We went to as many athletic events as possible in order to get to know their friends' parents. We actually made a concerted effort to model Christ-likeness when bad calls were made or when you were treated unfairly by your coach, teammates, or opponents.

## **Principle 2: Model unconditional love**

*(Romans 5:8 NIV) But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

*(Romans 8:35-39 NIV) Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

It is difficult for a child to fully understand the unconditional love that God has for each of us if they do not feel unconditional love from their parents. God loves us with unconditional love and he demonstrated it by loving us even while we were unlovely sinners. He loved us so much that He sent his only Son to die for those ugly sins. The amazing thing about this love is that nothing can separate us from the love of Christ. There are no circumstances, nothing in the physical realm and nothing in the spiritual realm that can remove the love of Christ from us.

How can you model this unconditional love for your children? It has to be done in both words and actions. Almost every night, I would go into their rooms and ask them three questions. The dialog would go something like this.

“Do you know how much love you?”

The answer would be to throw out their arms and say, “This much.” Then we would get into one of those arguments about who loved who more.

“Do you know what I love about you?”

The answer was always, “Everything”.

“Do you know why I love you?”

“Just because.”

I always viewed this as the most important response. I wanted the girls to know that I loved them without any conditions. It didn’t matter how well they did in sports or how well they did in school. It didn’t matter what they looked like or what talents they had. It didn’t matter if they decided to run away from home. I would always love them. And then I would let them know, “As much as I love you, God loves you even more!”

We always encouraged the girls to develop their gifts and their talents. However, we made a conscious effort to make sure that they didn’t feel our love depended on those things. We have seen children destroyed by their attempts to win the love and affection of one or both parents. We have seen the destruction in relationships where one child is favored over another. We have always told the girls that they were all our favorite kids. Of course I would try to individualize it a bit by calling Jamie “my favorite Jamie,” or by calling Jodie “my favorite Jodie,” or by calling Julie “my favorite Julie”. As time went on, I realized that it made just as strong a statement by calling all of them my second favorite child. This tradition of being second favorite was also passed along to all my nieces and nephews. This always sparks dialog and gives me the chance to tell them that I love them.

### **Principle 3: Teach respect**

*(Ephesians 6:1-3 NIV) Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother"--which is the first commandment with a promise-- "that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth."*

Ephesians describes the many facets of respect. It starts with the global statement that we should all "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ." Then it goes on to talk about wives being in submission to husbands, husbands loving wives, the church submitting to Christ, children obeying parents, and slaves being obedient to their masters. In Hebrews, it says that we are to "Obey your leaders and submit to their authority." Our society today tells us that self-respect is the highest calling. In the interest of children's rights, we are told that we should not submit to any authority, except maybe CSD!

While few other parents were asking their children to address adults with respect, we trained the girls to always address adults with Mr. or Mrs.. Most kids refer to their teachers by just their last names, but we asked them to show respect by using formal titles. Showing this kind of respect for their teachers and other adults set them apart from a world where familiarity and equality is king. In the long run, they were able to establish much deeper relationships with their teachers and adult friends by showing them respect.

Coaches are also authority figures. Coaches are not always right, but they have been placed in authority over you as long as you are on a team. When there were times that the girls disagreed with their coaches, we encouraged them to submit to their coaches anyway and to learn what they could from them. This was especially difficult when other children and parents were undermining the authority of the coaches. Again, this set the girls apart as lights in a world where we are taught to always stand up for our rights.

Yvonne and I worked together to train the girls to respect their parents. I would never allow them to speak disrespectfully to their mother and their mother would do the same for me. We were always very careful not to undermine each other's authority. Kids are crafty and they will attempt to find weaknesses in parents. We took care to make sure that we were equal (or at least on the same track) in permissiveness. I realize it was frustrating over the years, but whenever one of the children asked one of us if they could do something or go somewhere, we always ask what the other parent had said. If we found that they had asked one parent for something (and been turned down) and then asked the other parent for the same thing, that was deemed as a serious offense and they suffered repercussions that extended beyond the original request.

One of the ten commandments was and is to honor your father and mother. Respect is not really an option for an obedient child. More importantly, it is not an option for the parent to refrain from teaching a child to respect their parents. Leviticus 20:9 reports that if anyone curses his father or mother, he must be put to death. This offense is listed with idolatry of the worst kind, adultery of the worst kind, homosexuality, and sexual relations with an animal. In Romans 1:28-32, disobedience to parents is listed with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed, depravity, envy murder,

strive, deceit, malice, gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent arrogant, boastful, those that invent ways of doing evil, senseless, faithless, heartless, and ruthless. Lack of respect and lack of obedience to parents will be one of the signs that the end is near. Being disobedient to parents is listed in 2 Timothy 3:1-5 with lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, and lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.

When a parent allows a child to be disobedient or irreverent, it becomes a moral issue. The main reasons I have heard for tolerating disrespect or disobedience are:

- I feel guilty disciplining my child after working all day.
- I want to be liked by my child.
- I just don't have the energy to follow through with my threats.

Nobody said child-raising was easy. Consistency in discipline, love, and training must be maintained no matter what your child thinks of you and no matter how little energy you have. In fact, if you don't teach your child to respect and if you are not consistent in discipline, the Bible says that you *hate* your child.

*(Proverbs 13:24 NASB) He who withholds his rod hates his son. But he who loves him disciplines him diligently.*

*(Proverbs 23:13-14 NIV) Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you punish him with the rod, he will not die. Punish him with the rod and save his soul from death.*

*(Proverbs 19:18 NIV) Discipline your son, for in that there is hope; do not be a willing party to his death.*

*(Proverbs 29:17 NIV) Discipline your son, and he will give you peace; he will bring delight to your soul.*

Many parents would disagree with this statement, but if you don't train your child to respect you as a parent (and sometimes it requires a rod), how do you expect the child to submit to his Heavenly Father? If your child does not submit to his Heavenly Father, you may have sentenced the child to eternal punishment. I believe this is the link between not teaching respect and hating your child. The ironic thing is that parents think that they actually love their child by letting them do what they want to do. And the sad part is that some parents let their children do what they want to do because it makes them feel loved or accepted as a parent. Even our Heavenly Father punishes us because of His great love for us.

*(Hebrews 12:5-6 NIV) ... "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son."*

*(Revelation 3:19 NIV) Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent.*

#### **Principle 4: Work as to the Lord**

*(Colossians 3:23-24 NIV) Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.*

One thing I was told growing up was, “Wherever you are, be there!” I had a difficult time focusing on something and keeping on a task with all my heart. There is certainly a balance between family and work, but modeling a good work ethic is vital in raising kids with purpose. The Puritans emphasized working with their hands and it is part of our American heritage. When we work for men, we are actually working for the Lord. Both Joseph and Daniel are good examples in the Bible. They were both thrust into undesirable working conditions, but they did their work to please God and not men. God honored their faithfulness, blessed their work, and gave them incredible influence for the kingdom of God. In the end, nobody could find any fault in either one of them. We have tried to model this for the girls as well. There have been times where work has been difficult, demanding, or unpleasant. I worked hard and attempted to exceed the expectations of my employer. I committed to working a little more than what is expected (usually 40 hours a week), so that I would have a clear conscience before both men and God. There have been times where my work has not been appreciated, but I always had a clear conscience that I had given my best to my employer and that I had not stolen from him in my hours or quality of service.

The same work ethic is true in school and in sports. We never cared if the girls were outstanding in their gifts or talents, but we always wanted them to work at it with all their hearts and to give their best to their teacher or coach. God has really blessed the girls for their wholehearted work in music, sports, schoolwork, jobs, and ministries. The world tries to convince you that you need to cut corners, cheat, and find the minimum you can do (or get away with) without getting fired. They will justify their actions by saying that everybody else does it. As the girls grow older and move into the work force, they must remember that whether they are rewarded for integrity on earth or not, they will receive their reward from the Lord. After all, it is the Lord Christ they are serving.

Yvonne and I have been blessed financially to be able to give the girls the things they need. We even have enough to give them most of the things they want. However, we have chosen not to give them all of their wants. Those that receive all of their wants end up not appreciating them. How often have you heard a child throw a tantrum for receiving something that wasn't exactly what they wanted? How often have you seen children with piles of toys that never get used? Showering a child with “things” not only decreases a child's desire to work, it makes them unthankful for the things they receive. The girls have turned out to be very thankful people. It warms my heart when they thank

me after going out to eat or after we do a special family activity. Thankfulness is definitely linked to a godly approach to work.

### **Principle 5: Self-esteem is overrated**

*(2 Corinthians 3:5 KJV) Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God;*

As Frank Peretti said in one of the tapes we heard, “In the first class at school they will tell you that you are all an accident and then in the next class they will talk about self-esteem.” If we were an accident of evolution, then we would definitely need to look far inside ourselves to find value and meaning. Unfortunately, we are all fallen human beings. The more we look inward, the more we see things that we don’t like. As we view our lives as purposeful creations of God, our need for self-esteem is completely different. We have worth in God’s eyes no matter what others think about us. 2 Peter 1:3 tells us that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

As far as self-esteem is concerned, our primary job as parents is to lead our children to realize that God loves them and that He created them for His purposes. If we fail at that, no amount of self-esteem training will help. Besides, most self-esteem programs are pretty empty these days. When a child is continually showered with empty praise for things he/she did not deserve, it just makes self-esteem more meaningless. Praise should be based on something real and when a child receives praise, they should also be reminded that all of their gifts and talents come from the Creator who made them.

### **Principle 6: Train where they need it the most**

*(Titus 2:1-10 NIV) You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine. Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance. Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God. Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled. In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us. Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them, and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive.*



This is always a favorite passage for discussions at our extended family campouts. It addresses areas that tend to be the most difficult for men and women of all ages. When I talk to the younger boys, I tell them that they only need to concentrate on self-control. This is very difficult for young boys. The younger women are to be taught to love their husbands and children. Evidently, this does not come naturally for women. We can look at our society today and see what happens when we don't train the younger men and women in these areas. A couple items fly in the face of our culture today, but truth applies to all people, in all places, for all time. For women to primarily focus on things of the home and to be subject to their husbands is ludicrous in many circles today. If you are pure in today's culture, you stand a good chance of being persecuted by your friends.

#### Men's list

- Temperate
- Worthy of respect
- Self-controlled
- Sound in faith, love, and endurance

#### Women's list

- Reverent in the way they live
- Not to be slanderers (or gossips)
- Not addicted to much wine
- Teach what is good
- Love husbands and children
- Self-controlled
- Pure
- Busy at home
- Kind
- Subject to their husbands

Paul ends with the reasons for this teaching. Our lives should not give anybody a chance to say bad things about us. It is interesting to note that the example he gives for being a good example is being a good employee.

We have focused on each of these at various times in our devotional times. Oddly enough, when you discuss these things early in their lives, the culturally controversial things really don't become issues. We emphasize that being busy at home does not mean that women cannot pursue a career. It simply means that in a family setting, a primary responsibility is raising godly offspring. A wife/mother has an incredible impact on the spiritual well being of every member of the family. As a wise philosopher on said, "If da mama ain't happy, ain't nobody happy!"

Likewise, men need to be trained in self-control. No man is immune from temptation. If a boy can be raised with self-control, he will have a wonderful family life

and he will be able to provide for his family. He will be worthy of respect and he will be disciplined enough to be sound in faith, love and endurance. I have never had the opportunity to impart this knowledge to a son, but I have worked on these things personally and have passed it on to nephews and other young people. The bottom line is that if this training does not happen, self-control will not come naturally.

On a humorous note, we started training the girls early for junior high. While they were in grade school, we told them of a time where everything their parents said would seem silly or irrelevant. We showed the girls how to roll their eyes. We called this, “junior high practice”. When the girls finally reached junior high, I am sure this crossed their minds several times as they thought their parents were silly or irrelevant.

We also told the girls that teenagers tended to be rebellious. Rebellion could be verbal or it could be shown in more subtle ways. We asked them that when they became teenagers to please give us 24-hour notice if they planned to be rebellious. This has been a point of humor throughout their teenage years. It also gives parents a chance to request 24-hour notice if we sense some kind of rebellion brewing. It has been a great form of communication.

When the girls started to become integrated into the high school, we knew they would be confronted with a whole new world that they had not experienced before. The language the kids used probably hit them the hardest. For parents, it is tough to see some of the naïve innocence disappear as they are exposed to crude and sexual verbiage. We would always ask the girls to tell us what kinds of things they were hearing. This opened up many discussions about the hearts of unbelievers and what to expect from un-regenerated people. I also told the girls that if they were ever tempted to drink or smoke that they should let me know and we would try it together. They never took me up on it.

### **Principle 7: Make The Most of Your Time**

Everybody complains that they are too busy. There are demands from family, work, church, school, and people that can be insurmountable. On top of that, there are people dying in the world without Christ.

*Ephesians 5:15-16 (NASB) Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil.*

Most of us have seen the priorities that look something like:

1. God
2. Spouse

3. Family
4. Work
5. Church
6. Ministry
7. Leisure
8. Fitness

The problem with priorities is that they are all important and none of them can be excluded. Priorities like these must be balanced. The only reason they are in priority order is because if the items at the top of the list are neglected, there is a larger spiritual impact. For instance, if I focus all my time on my spouse and family and exclude time with God, I will be in a spiritual wasteland. On the other hand, if I don't follow God's commandments with regards to work, family, and rest, I can also be in a spiritual wasteland.

So, how do you make time for all the priority items in your life? The most obvious way is to eliminate or reduce the things that suck the time right out of your life. The three big items in our culture are TV, computers, and mobile devices. These absorb huge amounts of time and provide a minimum of mental stimulation and socialization. One of our friends tells their small son that when he watches TV, it sucks the brains right out of his head. The TV and computers (especially the games) allow us to turn our minds off and to cease being creative. What a disaster for society! Lastly, the people that I know that claim to be the busiest watch the most TV. I wonder if there is a correlation?

What can a family do to keep a balance in their priorities? Perhaps the only way to keep a balance is to combine activities. For instance, ministry opportunities can be combined with family activities. A creative family can combine ministry, leisure, family, and fitness into a single activity. An example of this for our family is participation in the PRC (Pregnancy Resource Center) walkathon. It is a family fun activity that serves a ministry and provides exercise. Of course the alternative is to send your kids out for pledges, drive them to the event, pick them up, and then complain that there was no time for family activities.

Listed below are some suggestions for time-saving activities that address multiple priorities:

- Family devotions. This is the #1 item for spiritual input and family interactions. We always planned for about 15 minutes of family devotions, but it often turned into 2 hours of devotions and family interactions. It has the nice side affect of encroaching on TV time.

- Attend church as a family. Even if separate churches may meet some specific need (like a youth program), it takes away from family interactions.
- Family ministries. Some families have adopted a nursing home or have assumed a family ministry at church. When we cleaned the church, we always brought the whole family, even if it did not enhance the speediness of the job.
- Family vacations. I suggest car trips. Use the time for spiritual discussions, social interactions, and family discussions. Our family has been known to do pushups and sit-ups at rest stops around a picnic table. We get some funny stares, but it is fun and it helps us stay fit on vacations.
- Take somebody with you. Whenever I go to the store or run an errand, I take somebody with me. Julie is always up for a trip to Frys!

The other day, I mentioned to Randy Hill that I would be loading a large planter box with soil. As I was preparing for the job, I received a call from Randy asking if he and Kyle could help. I usually hesitate to accept this kind of help (probably because of pride), but I was compelled to accept his offer. Randy came over with Kyle, a young grade school boy at the time, and they helped me shovel dirt for a couple of hours. Kyle was strategically situated in the trailer on top of the dirt pile with his small little shovel. His contribution to the job was fairly minimal, but Randy was teaching Kyle about service, about socialization, and about a job well done. I'm sure Randy had some "quality time" with Kyle in the process. This was a great example to me of including your child in service activities and in making the most of your time. As a bonus, I got terrific help for this chore. Did I mention that Julie, my teenage daughter at the time was helping at the other end unloading the dirt? My heart was warmed many times that day.

### **Principle 8: Be Free From the Love of Money**

*(Hebrews 13:5 NIV) Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."*

The Bible has more to say about money than any other subject. One could surmise that this might be a problem area for people. The love of money can afflict both the rich and the poor. It can hit both large families and small families. Most Christians agree that loving money and things places idols in the way of a relationship with God. Hebrews 13:5 says that God will never leave or forsake you. Loving money and things tells God that you love Him, BUT you need to do things on your own to find peace, happiness, or security.

*(1 Timothy 6:9-12 NIV) People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. {10} For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. {11} But you, man of God, flee from*

*all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. {12} Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.*

So how do you teach your children to be free from the love of money? I can sure tell you a lot of ways that you can demonstrate to your children that you are NOT free from the love of money. Some of them that I have observed are:

- Always comment on what other people are wearing.
- Don't have your devotions (or have token devotions) because you are busy with work.
- Give your children anything they want.
- Always try to have the nicest house or the nicest car in the neighborhood.
- Compare what you have (or don't have) with others.
- Buy lottery tickets. Talk about what you would do with the lottery if you won it.
- Go shopping a lot and always check out the ads in the newspaper and on TV. After all, you need to know what you don't have.
- Complain about things that you own that don't work right.
- Call your friends over as soon as you get a new toy.
- Harp on your kids about getting a good education so that they can get a good job. Don't be concerned that they are neglecting their time with God.
- Give generously so that you can feel good about yourself and so that others will regard you as generous.

Now if you want to model a lifestyle that is free from the love of money, I would suggest the following things:

- Give regularly to your church. Don't even question whether you should do this or not and give it before you pay the rest of your bills.
- Give to kids going on mission trips.
- Send your kids on mission trips and help them raise support.

- Give to organizations or missionaries outside the church. Let the children help you decide which ones to give to.
- Don't talk about household finances around the children unless there is a good reason to do so.
- Don't play the lottery or get involved in any get rich quick schemes.
- Allow children to wait for toys or things that they really want.
- Don't always buy the fads in clothing or toys.
- Don't teach your children the "joy" of shopping...for shopping sake.
- Use coupons.
- Let your children experience (in some form of ministry) a soup kitchen or migrant camp.
- Visit Mexico.
- Let your children buy Christmas gifts and birthday gifts with their own money.
- Give generously because of your love for other and because of Christ's love for you.

While it is true that it is more difficult for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, there is also the concept of stewardship discussed in Scripture. Being a wise steward simply means that you are a faithful servant that uses wisely those things that have been entrusted to him. Rather than loving things and using people, we are to love people and use things. The main difference between these two perspectives is the concept of eternity. People last forever and things don't! If you don't have an eternal perspective, your focus on money and things will be completely backwards.

*(Mark 8:36 NIV) What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul?*

*(Luke 12:16-21 NIV) "The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. {17} He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.' {18} "Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. {19} And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.'" {20} "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?' {21} "This is*

*how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God."*

You can teach your child about money management, tithing, investing, and other forms of giving, but you will not teach them the true value of money without the concept of eternity. The rich fool could not take anything with him. What good is it if you gain everything there is to gain in this world and lose your own soul? There are people around us that are going to get it all and miss out on eternity with Christ. How do you teach a child about eternity? I go to Ecclesiastes for the best answer to this question.

*(Eccl 7:2 NIV) It is better to go to a house of mourning than to go to a house of feasting, for death is the destiny of every man; the living should take this to heart.*

Take your child to funerals! We always want to protect our children from death. In fact, our society has sanitized it to the point where we really never have to encounter death if we don't want to. A funeral or memorial service is a unique time for any individual. We don't go to many of these in our lifetime. However, it is at funerals that the concept of eternity passes from the theoretical plane to every day life. We ask ourselves whether this person who has passed on will be spending eternity with God or in eternal torment. We ask ourselves about whether this person can see us now in their heavenly bodies. We wonder about our own eternal existence. Will we recognize each other in heaven? What will we do for eternity? What is happiness without sorrow? All of these questions take on new meaning when you attend a funeral. Children are never too young to think these thoughts.

### **Principle 9: Don't show favoritism**

*(James 2:1,9) My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favoritism. But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers.*

How often do you read in the Bible that playing favorites with your kids causes problems? In Abraham's line alone we see a struggle for favored status with Isaac and Ishmael. Then Isaac favored Esau, while Rebecca favored Jacob. And, of course, when Jacob favored Joseph, Joseph's brothers ended up selling him into slavery in Egypt and pretending he was dead.

In our modern times, favoritism with our kids can actually break apart our families as well. The subtle danger is that we might be showing favoritism without even knowing it. Each child has different character traits and personalities. Naturally, you might be drawn to one of your children over another just because you enjoy being with one of them more than the others. How do you overcome this kind of favoritism? All I

can say is to recognize the tendency that you might be showing favoritism, and then DON'T DO IT.

The negative impact of favoritism amongst siblings can produce the following problems:

- A child may feel as if he/she has to earn our love.
- A child may simply feel unloved. If you are not the favorite, you are nothing.
- There could be unhealthy competition between siblings for favored status.
- Siblings could even despise each other in their quest for favored status. You would really like your children to be best friends when they grow up.

Probably the biggest way parents can avoid showing favoritism is to let your kids know that you are not the kind of person who shows favoritism. Here are a few things to think about while determining whether you really show favoritism or not:

- If you talk about a favorite aunt or a favorite uncle, perhaps your child will also think that they need to play the favorite game so that someday you will say that they are your favorite child.
- Whenever you ask the family for an option on something, like where to go for dinner, use the round robin approach and don't always pick the same child's opinion. This can be very difficult if one child is more like you than the other children.
- When you are with one of your children, give them your full attention. If they think you would really rather be with one of the other kids, it will be devastating to them.
- On the humorous side, I tell each of my children that they are my second favorite child. I do the same with my nieces and nephews. In this way, they know that I don't play favorites. *Note: This doesn't work if you have two children.*
- Lastly, don't strive to be somebody's favorite person yourself. If you are striving for special treatment or recognition from some other person, your kids will pick up on that, and do the same.
- Give all your children unconditional love. See principle #1.



## **Priorities and Discipline**

It seems that many parents these days are trying to be the “best friends” of their children. This is not necessarily a bad thing, but it cannot come at the expense of more important things. We are not called to be the best friends of our children. We are called to *train them up in the way that they should go*. If relationship takes priority over godly training, priorities are messed up. Some friends of ours summed it up well when they said that when it comes to a parent’s relationship to a child, the priorities are rules, roles, and then relationship. This does not mean that you ignore roles and relationships while you are working on rules. However, it means that you might have to sacrifice relationship for instilling the guidelines and boundaries that a child needs. This means that you may have to discipline a child even if it hurts you or even if it means that your child may not “like” you for a while. Proverbs 13:24 says, “He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him.” Teaching godly roles, like the things mentioned in Titus 2, give a child purpose. When a child has a framework to live in and a purpose for living, the relationship with them will come naturally. As an added benefit, you will actually enjoy being around your child. Many children who have been “loved” by a lack of guidance and purpose consider their children to be a burden. Proverbs 29:17 says, “Discipline your son, and he will give you peace; he will bring delight to your soul.” When you lovingly guide your child through rules and roles, it is interesting to note that a depth of relationship develops that exceeds expectations. Ironically, when friendship is sought above all else, that friendship is often lost when the child realizes that he has been used as an emotional crutch and not truly loved through the development of character.

The most important thing that you can do for your child is to bring them to a life-changing relationship with Jesus Christ. As parents, we should not do anything that will hinder this. We don’t want our child to just “say the words”. We want them to have a genuine faith in the almighty God. We don’t want them to make a decision for Christ just to make their parents happy. That will just inoculate them against a sincere decision to follow the Creator of the universe in the future. Love involves training and discipline. Some have told me that if they discipline their child, the child will not love them and hence they will not have a role model from which to love God. The opposite is actually true.

*(Heb 12:5-11 NIV) And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son." Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they*

*thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.*

The benefits of training and discipline are that your child will be fruitful in their lives because of righteousness and they will have peace. These are things that you want for your child.

Discipline can have negative connotations for many people because of the ways they may have been disciplined as children. There are definitely many examples of ungodly discipline out there. Godly discipline always involves training. Proverbs 22:6 say, “Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.” Godly training always has a positive long-term impact. Ungodly discipline usually has a negative long-term impact. So what is the difference between godly training and ungodly discipline? Godly training has a purpose and that purpose is for the child become more like Christ. Ungodly discipline is correction that is born from selfishness or anger on the part of the parent. Godly training is always deliberate. Ungodly discipline is generally spontaneous.

When a child is disciplined, it should never be a surprise to him/her. If training is to happen in the discipline, the child should know the consequences of his/her actions beforehand. They should also know why you set up those guidelines. Most of the time, our girls knew their boundaries and they knew the consequences. Some children tend to be more defiant than other children. Jamie was disciplined quite regularly in her first three years of life. Jodie was much more compliant. However, Jodie knew that if she violated a guideline, she would get the same consequences that Jamie received. Julie, just to make life even, was somewhere between Jamie and Jodie in her need for discipline.

Be consistent in discipline. This is one of the most difficult things to do when you are tired or when your child is wearing you down. If your child is defiant or violates a guideline or boundary you have set for them, discipline them as soon as possible. Don't train your child that they get two, three, or even four chances. Remember, you are training them whether you discipline them right away or if you give them multiple chances. There are a couple of problems with the “multiple chances” method. One, it will confuse your child. If they get disciplined after four chances one time and the next time they get disciplined after two chances, what made the difference? Was it because dad or mom was angrier this time? The child may learn that discipline depends on the mood of the parent more than the violation of the guideline or boundary. Secondly, they may learn that a little sin is OK, but a lot of sin is bad. Is this the message you want to send to your child?

Many say that the use of pain in discipline is wrong. However, I cannot find this in Scripture. When the rod is referenced in Scripture, it generally implies pain. Small children respond to pain much better than they respond to reason. It cracks me up when I

hear a parent try to reason with a two-year-old child about fighting with a sibling or about not doing something that could be dangerous. Pain is an attention-getter. Even with corporal punishment, the child needs to understand why they are being punished. They need to know that the purpose of the punishment is because it makes Jesus unhappy when we do bad things. You should always remember that corporal punishment based on sound training that has eternal benefits. Corporal punishment from anger is generally child abuse.

*(Prov 13:24 NIV) He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him.*

*(Prov 22:15 NIV) Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline will drive it far from him.*

*(Prov 23:13 NIV) Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you punish him with the rod, he will not die.*

*(Prov 29:17 NIV) Discipline your son, and he will give you peace; he will bring delight to your soul.*

There were times when we disciplined the girls and they actually became angry with us. I would ask them, “Do you think that your mother and I stayed up all night thinking of ways to make your life miserable?” They would always say that we would not do that. We would explain that we disciplined them for their own good even though it was painful for them. We let them know that the character they were developing was much more valuable than the inconvenience or pain they were going through. In the thick of the moment, they may not have always agreed with us, but they heard it and it registered.

Lastly, there will be times where you can't explain something to a child. It may involve their safety or it may involve information that they are not prepared to handle. A child needs to learn to trust you first and obey knowing that you have their best interests in mind and that you will explain your discipline when and if it is to their benefit. For instance, if a child is heading toward a busy intersection and you ask them to stop, you don't want to be in a position where you have to explain your reasons in order for your child to obey. Splat! There may be guidelines about purity that your child needs to obey without knowing all the details about adultery or rape. Develop trust with your child. Sometimes, delay explanations for a while.

## **Humor**

Humor is a tool that can be used for many purposes. Proverbs says that when words are many, sin is not absent. Humor can be a great thing, but care must be taken in its use. I have been guilty many times of going over the line with my humor. One guideline that we have used is that humor is OK as long as the object of the humor thinks it is funny. If humor hurts someone, it has gone too far. Sometimes, the person who is at the end of the humor will politely laugh, but the humor still penetrates. When using humor, always put yourself on the other end of the humor.

One of my favorite sayings is that self-esteem is overrated. I usually get a great reaction from this because every kid gets self-esteem indoctrination at school. I use this bit of humor as a teaching opportunity. Self-esteem, as it is taught in school, is pretty empty. At a self-esteem assembly at Tualatin High School, the leaders were coming up with all kinds of ways to recognize kids. Everybody was recognized. Nobody was really impressed. The praise was empty. Besides, in science class, they are told that they are a cosmic accident. How can you tell a kid that he is an accident and that he has self-worth? God created everyone with purpose. Our sufficiency is from Christ. When we look inside ourselves, we generally see all of the grime that nobody else sees. Are we supposed to derive self-esteem from this grime? When we see ourselves as Christ sees us, we see that we have been bought with a price. We have incredible worth to God. This is the primary source of self-esteem. Teach your children to develop their God-given skills and talents. When they acknowledge that the gifts and talents that they have developed have come from God, then your child will have self-esteem. Of course, it never hurts for a parent to give a child genuine recognition for the gifts and talents that they have developed, but continue to point out that it all comes from the Source of their gifts and talents.

A child really needs the perspectives of both parents. A mother tends to demonstrate more compassion and a father tends to demonstrate more courage. Each of our girls played soccer. When one of them would be injured on the field, Yvonne's first reaction was to run out onto the field and care for the child. My first reaction was to tell them to get up and walk it off. Having both perspectives gives a child balance. If all a child gets is compassion, they turn into milk toast. If all a child gets is to be courageous, they become hardened. I have been known to say things like, "You will feel better when it quits hurting" or "I don't see any bone poking out of your leg." Of course, when one of the girls was seriously injured, I was the first one out on the field. Fathers like to think of themselves as protectors.

Some of the humor that I use may not be recommended for other families. Much depends on how your children react to the humor. We have a long running line of humor that girls are kind of like dogs. They are both really cute when they are little. Both are "man's best friend". Both like to go for walks. As an extension of this humor, I would often whistle to the girls like a person would whistle for a dog. The girls think that it is sad that they often respond to my whistles out of habit. One time we were walking down a sidewalk in downtown Cannon Beach when someone behind us whistled to call their dog. All three girls turned around in response to the whistle and then they just started to

crack up laughing. This humor only works because the girls are very secure in knowing that their father loves them immensely and thinks that they are the most beautiful children in the world. More importantly, he thinks that they are beautiful on the inside as well. The girls were raised knowing that the things that make a woman beautiful are a smile on their face and Jesus in their hearts.

## **Traditions**

One movie that became a family favorite for us was “Fiddler on the Roof”. Most of the songs were memorized and many of the lines were repeated over and over. The major theme in this movie relates to tradition. While there are positive and negative aspects of tradition, tradition has some unique qualities that provide security for a child and common ground for family bonding. Often, when I asked the children why we were doing something, they would raise a finger into the air and declare, “tradition”.

One of our most traditional family times is at bedtime. Just about every night, I walk into Jodie’s room to give her a kiss, and she dives under the covers. I have to peel the covers off of her to give her a kiss and she always shrieks in mock terror. Then I ask her about her troubles and she generally responds that her biggest problem is that she wants to go to sleep and that I am in the room. After leaving Jodie’s room, I start Jamie’s ritual. Julie is usually involved in this ritual because she is listening in the adjacent room and offers her comments as we proceed. Jamie requires that I sit on the edge of her bed to ask the question about her problems. Jamie’s problems generally revolve around sporting injuries and the expected response to these problems is for me to pass them off as insignificant. Then I probe for deeper emotional problems. This is where we branch off into frivolous discussions with commentaries from Julie’s room. Following these discussions, Jamie requires a kiss on the cheek. After the kiss, I attempt to leave the room, but I am physically restrained until she is allowed to give me a kiss on the cheek. However, rather than giving me a kiss, she will stall for more conversation (for some unknown reason). I generally give her 5 seconds in which to give me a kiss. She grabs my neck and waits until the fifth second to kiss my cheek. When she does, I push my cheek out with my tongue and she complains about it. Then I proceed to Julie’s room. Julie takes her kiss very well and generally shares pretty readily about her problems. Then Julie complains that I spend more time listening to Jamie’s problems. I explain to her that she was actually part of the discussion that I had with Jamie. Then I ask if she has any more problems she wants to talk about. She rarely has more problems but she tries to keep me from leaving the room. Quite often, I will leave her room with her hanging on to me as I drag her across the floor. By this time, Jodie is generally yelling something like, “Hey, can’t a girl get a little sleep around here? This whole ritual was never planned. It evolved. There were slight variations of the ritual in their earlier years.

When I asked the girls about the tradition that stuck out in their minds, they all came up with Saturday morning trips to Donut King. Until the girls were in Saturday sports, we would hop into the car each Saturday morning and go to Donut King for breakfast. Often, the girls would call their friends and they would meet us at Donut King. The owners knew us all by name. This tradition has contributed to my advanced girth in later years.

Road trips have been a key part of our family traditions. Most trips start with a trip to the service station to fill up with gas. While I pay for the gas, I generally purchase rolls of Sweet Tarts for each of the girls. Somehow, this turned into a tradition. We love to travel by car and to stay in motel rooms that have Nickelodeon. The longest trip took 5 weeks and we toured the entire country and attended about 5 church and family

reunions. We took shorter trips to Colorado, Victoria, California, Arizona, and of course Yakima. Since music was such a big part of the girls' lives, we sang a lot in the car. We sang songs from musicals as well as hymns/choruses. We sang along with tapes as well. Perhaps the favorites were GT tapes, but we listened to Critter County and a variety of other tapes that taught the children Bible verses. Even as adults, we enjoy singing these songs as they pop into our minds whenever we hear certain Bible verses. Times in the motels were always exciting. We liked to find a motel early enough in the evening that we could watch some old shows on Nickelodeon. We have never had cable TV, so this is where the girls were introduced to shows like "The Mary Tyler Moore Show", "I Love Lucy", "Superman", and "The Dick Van Dyke Show." After the lights went out in the motel room, it turned into a slumber party. This is where I found out how goofy girls can be. I am always amazed at the things kids remember from our trips. When I asked Julie what stood out in her mind, she recalled the feeding frenzy we had in Sydney, BC. We were just about ready to leave Canada and since I didn't want to convert currency, I bought a bunch of junk food for a feeding frenzy. We spent the evening watching the Seattle Mariners on TV while eating chips and dip, a tub of ice cream, popcorn, pop tarts, macaroni and cheese, and an assortment of other junk food. We were all pretty sick after that, but it stood out in their minds.

Birthdays hold a couple special traditions. A favorite meal is prepared. The birthday child gets to specify the type of party/sleepover. And finally, on the evening of her birthday, Yvonne would either get her out of bed or let her stay up late. They would go through baby pictures together from the picture albums. Of course they could look at these pictures any time, but it is a special tradition to do it on their birthday evening.

Family devotions are a tradition and they also carry many sub-traditions. Regular family devotions have been a tradition in our home since the girls were very young. The intent was to read a passage out of the Bible, briefly discuss it, and then have prayer together. Yvonne and I estimated that it should take about 15 minutes. Over the years, I suspect our family devotion time has averaged 1-2 hours a night. This is because it became tradition to expand our devotion time into a family sharing time as well. Our sides were often sore from laughing because as we shared, the girls tend to get a little crazy. Finally, our prayer tradition is to pray from the youngest to the oldest, with Dad closing. This generally meant that Julie started unless we had guests visiting with younger children. Another tradition was to include our house guests in our family devotion time whenever possible.

The process of going to church on Sunday holds a variety of traditions. It is a tradition to always go to church, even when we are on vacation. However, when we are in town, it is a tradition to turn on Sunday morning music (a hymns and choruses CD) while we are getting ready to go. It is also a tradition for dad to shout things like, "Is everybody beautiful yet?" Since the children were small, we made it a tradition to be at church early, usually about ½ hour. This tradition allowed the family to prepare themselves for worship, practice music, prepare coffee, and greet people as they arrived. On the other end of the coin, it seemed that it was tradition for the Cherry family to be the last ones out of the church as well. Everyone in the family tends to be a bit on the social side. For a period of time, a tradition of going to Taco Bell after church was observed. It

was not unusual for half of the families in the church to be there after the service. It was a wonderful tradition that allowed us to socialize with brothers and sisters in Christ without the need to prepare a meal!

The tradition for Christmas was that it started the day after Thanksgiving and it ended the day after Christmas. The tree went up on the day that most other families are shopping the after-Thanksgiving sales. The tree came down the day after Christmas, unless Yvonne decided to take it down before we left for Yakima. During the Christmas season, the family enjoyed reading the Christmas story for devotions. Usually, one of the girls acted out the story with the porcelain nativity scene characters. Before leaving for Yakima, it was a tradition to open the presents at home. After all, we didn't want to pack all those things up for the trip to Yakima. We all looked forward to opening our stash of socks and underwear, which was a tradition passed on from Grandma Cherry. Every Christmas Eve, we packed up as many relatives as possible and attended the Christmas Eve service at West Side Baptist Church. Usually, the Santas (Yvonne and Lillian) were up late on Christmas Eve putting the final touches on the stockings. Every Christmas morning, we gathered in the living room and opened presents and enjoyed the contents of the stockings. Quite often, extra stockings were placed on the mantle in case friends stopped by on Christmas. One stocking had several names on it and the "crossed-out" names stand as a memorial to past Christmas guests.

An early tradition was passed on to our family from my father. When the girls were very young, they would watch Lawrence Welk with Grandpa Cherry. They loved the music and the twirly dresses. After Grandma and Grandpa Cherry went to be with the Lord, the tradition continued. On Saturday nights, the girls would take their showers and come down to watch the show. They made comments about how Bobby and Chrissy danced and they always chuckled when "smiley" played the piano. Of course, they would sing along with the songs they knew and they gained an exposure to music that few other kids their age received. When the show closed with, "Good night, sleep tight, and pleasant dreams to you..." that was their cue for devotions and bedtime.

Cannon Beach is another tradition that was passed on to our family from Grandma and Grandpa Cherry. When I was a child, we would go to Cannon Beach and attend the Bible Conference, but we never stayed at the Conference Center because of the expense. I have grand memories of walks on the beaches and wonderful family times in tiny motel rooms. While we enjoyed many weekend trips to the beach, our first year at the Cannon Beach Bible Conference came when the Jamie, Jodie, and Julie were 6, 8, and 10 respectively. We have been to Cannon Beach every year since then with the exception of the year that we took our 5-week vacation across the country. The mini-traditions surrounding the Cannon Beach trips included Dad's request to see the largest Sitka Spruce tree and then listening to the girls whine about not stopping the car so that we could get there as quickly as possible. Our week at CBCC always included family time in the room, Dad running off to play basketball late at night, participation in the talent show, soccer games at the park and trips to the Coach (snack shop) with coins that came from desk and dresser drawers (mainly change collected from Dad's pants each night during the year). Each year we had the opportunity to meet new friends and since we have been there so many times now, we have many repeat friends.



Heatwole family camp is a tradition that started before the girls were born. In fact, it started before Yvonne and I were married. Each year, the Heatwole clan, from Grandma and Grandpa Heatwole on down, meet at a park to camp for the weekend. The most popular sites have been Iron Creek (near Randall) and La Wis Wis (near Mt. Ranier). The ranks have grown to over 40 relatives and in-laws plus a friend or two each year. Even the meals at camp are traditional. We generally have sausage and egg gravy, taco salad, homemade soup, and maple ring pastries. Snacks always seem to include snicker doodles and chocolate chip cookies. Much time is spent around the campfire talking, playing games around the tables, and playing with children. Sunday morning is a time for sharing and prayer.

Other traditions seem somewhat insignificant, yet they each hold special memories. The girls will always remember sitting at the same places at the table each meal. They will recall the times that Dad wanted to go for a ride in the country in spite of family rebellion. We always tried to attend sporting events as a family. We always seemed to have peach pie and jello with banana slices at Thanksgiving. These kinds of traditions provided security and comfort for the girls (and their parents). I wonder which ones will be passed on to the next generation.

In Julie's junior year in High School, she was thrust into a very challenging writing class. Her first assignment in the class was to write something about themselves. Julie was frustrated in knowing exactly what the teacher wanted for this assignment. In fact, the teacher evaluated Julie's first assignment very harshly. She was told that the poetry was too obvious and that she did not dig deep enough into herself. While the poem did not please her teacher, it became a treasure to her parents because it spoke of the traditions of her life as well as who she is in Christ.

### ***Where I'm From***

*By Julie Cherry*

*I am from simplicity and wistful memories.*

*I am from red tricycles, pigtails, and walks with my mom.*

*I'm from Bible stories, Bernstien Bears, and everything in between.*

*I am from dancing with my sisters, imitating Ginger Rogers and Judy Garland.*

*I am from Never Never Land and the hideout of the lost boys, the adventures and escapes.*

*I am from dress up and teacups and sprinkles on Christmas cookies.*

*I am from dresses and long hair, and C Major scales.*

*I am from collections of stamps, coins, dalmations, and zebras.*

*I am from trips to Donut King on Saturday mornings and family outings to the rose garden.*

*I am from playing with cousins and building dams in the creek,  
From Christmas in Yakima Valley and pinochle tournaments in the evenings.*

*I am from sleds and dares and Christmas lights.*

*I am from uncontrollable laughter and awkward situations.*

*I am from tears and being rocked to sleep by my mother singing “Great is Thy Faithfulness.”*

*I am from dates with Dad and baseball games in the “rock pile.”*

*But more than anything, I am from faith.*

*I am from questions and answers, prayer and passion, hope and peace.*

*Sometimes I am from doubt and uncertainty,*

*But inevitably I am reassured.*

*I am from Christ, and to Him I will return,*

*I am the visible expression of the invisible God.*

*That is where I am from, and that is where I am going.*

## **Stories that Must Be Told**

This chapter contains stories that my girls requested that I tell. These stories are purely from my perspective. Yvonne and the girls will probably read this section and demand a rebuttal or at least a chance to tell their side of the story. If this happens, I will add a chapter for opposing views.

### ***The Saga of John and Yvonne***

The saga of John and Yvonne began in the summer following my ninth grade year. Each summer, I went to a national youth conference with other youth from the northwest district. Most of us were competing in some form of competition at the conference. I was on the Northwest Bible quiz team each year. We would quiz other teams from other districts around the country. This particular year, I was with a group of 9<sup>th</sup> grade boys who thought it would great if we would return from conference with girlfriends (obviously, for letter writing relationships). After the first couple of days, we had scoped out the field and each of us had chosen a girl. By the end of the week, my two best friends had established a “relationship” with the girls they had chosen. The girl I had chosen was a member of the North Atlantic quiz team. I was so shy that I had just managed to introduce myself and to say “Hi” a couple of times. This girl was Yvonne and she lived in Pennsylvania. I returned from national youth conference as a failure at love!

Four months later (in December), I was sitting in church one Sunday morning when my friends started to nudge me. I looked around and could not believe my eyes. There in the back of the church was Yvonne and her family. Yvonne and her family had moved from Pennsylvania to Yakima, Washington and had decided to go to our church. What are the odds of something like this happening? This had to be a divinely appointed relationship.

Rather than happiness, my first emotion was worry. I was afraid that my friends would ask Yvonne out before I had a chance to make my move. I had already experienced defeat at national youth conference. Our youth group was going to have a Valentine banquet early in February. To make sure I was not beaten, I mustered the courage to ask Yvonne to the Valentine banquet a month prior to the event. When she said she would go with me, I was so surprised that I answered, “You would!?” That month was one of the most awkward months of my life. Do I call her? Do I sit next to her in church? What will she think if I talk to her? Well, as it turned out, we had a fairly active youth group and I was at least comfortable around Yvonne in a youth group setting. Finally, the big night came. My mother drove the car to pick up Yvonne (Mom and Dad were youth leaders). We had a fairly relaxed banquet, but we managed to have a little pressure on us. We were asked to perform a musical number. Yvonne sang “Love Was When” and I accompanied her at the piano. This was our first time making beautiful music together. After the banquet we went bowling. I looked forward to our car rides from place to place because I could actually sit next to Yvonne. It was kind of an awkward evening, but I knew after this date that I was twitterpated (a love condition that strikes young 10<sup>th</sup> grade boys).

Our next date (one or two weeks later) was a traumatic experience for a shy guy like myself. I took Yvonne to a Christian concert. On the way to the concert, I made a comment that Yvonne talked a lot (which she did). So, in order to set me in my place, Yvonne decided to give me the silent treatment the rest of the night. She did not say another word! What does a shy guy like me do when your new girlfriend quits talking? It was fortunate that this was a double date or it would have been a real adventure. It was at this point that I realized that I really liked this girl. She had spunk!

When we started dating, I was 15 ½ and Yvonne was almost 16. For the first year of dating, we did a lot of double dating and youth group activities. There were a couple of times where Yvonne had to drive when we went out. We ended up dating all through high school. The majority of our dates were to a Bible study in Selah and sporting events. I was in the pep band, so I had to go to all the home football games and basketball games. Yvonne would be by my side. When the game was over, we would go out for pizza (every time). Looking back, I did not show a whole lot of creativity.

Our college years were pretty rough. I went to school in Phoenix and Yvonne went to school in Los Angeles. Yvonne broke up with me a month or so after going to school. That was the beginning of a three year “on and off” relationship. I was bound and determined to marry Yvonne the entire time. I’m not sure if I was persistent or bull-headed. Anyway, God knew what He was doing. I developed a lot of character and ended up becoming engaged between Yvonne’s junior and senior year.

Our engagement deserves a little ink because it was far from normal. When Yvonne and I arrived in Yakima for our summer vacation after our junior year, I was under the impression that Yvonne and I were in one of the “good times” in our relationship. It didn’t take long to find out that I was mistaken. Yvonne informed me that she had feelings for another guy (a soccer player). He was one of the guys in the carpool that had just driven Yvonne from Biola to Yakima. I was devastated. I thought we were finally going to make it and I was caught by surprise. Well, a couple days went by and my mom asked me to drive to Portland to pick up my grandmother from the airport. An idea popped into my mind. Why don’t I ask Yvonne to drive down with me? Perhaps we would have a chance to talk this thing out. Well...I called her...and she said “no”. I was just about to be totally bummed out when the phone rang. Yvonne called back and told me that she had decided to go with me to Portland! Later, I found out that an elderly friend (from Pennsylvania who just happened to be visiting) of hers had been jilted by a girl early in his life and had talked Yvonne into going to Portland with me. Anyway, we had an enjoyable ride to Portland, but we did not broach the subject of this soccer player. Just before we returned to Yakima, I thought I would suggest the possibility of going to a concert together (strictly as friends). Yvonne actually said that she would like to go, although I still did not have a clue where we stood in our relationship.

I sat on my bed that night and started to plot. Perhaps I had just never asked Yvonne to make a commitment. We had dated for 6 years at this point. Perhaps she was looking for a commitment. What should I do? I know! I’ll ask her to marry me! I took my idea to Jeanie (my sister) for an opinion. She thought I was crazy, but she was

willing to help. I had \$250 to my name. Jeanie and I went to the jewelry store. She helped me pick out a very modest little ring. Everybody in the jewelry store thought that Jeanie and I was getting married and laughed when we said that the ring was for someone else...likely story.

Well, I took Yvonne to the concert. When I drove her back to her sister's house (where she was staying that night), I read a poem that I had written (I was really learning this romantic thing) and then I handed her the ring. She took the ring box, stared at it, and then started crying while muttering, "I can't believe you did this!" I realized that I was pushing my luck, so I told her that she did not have to answer me that night. Of course, I told her to keep the ring while she thought about her decision (I'm not as dumb as I look).

The next week or two were the most romantic years of my life. I brought flowers, bought gifts, wrote poems, and took her out regularly. Each night I would ask her if she had decided yet. Each night, she would look at me with those puppy-dog eyes and say that she just could not decide. I was taking summer classes and had to return to school. Two days before I had to leave (on a Saturday morning), I received a call. Yvonne was on the phone and said, "John, you may talk to my father." Yippee!! This was not the way I had planned it. In fact, she never really said "yes", but I was a happy man. Later, I learned that Yvonne's mother had talked her into making the decision. Thanks Mom!

The Saturday that Yvonne told me to talk to her father happened to be the day that Yvonne's brother Doug was married. Many of the relatives were at the Heatwole house. I drove over to Yvonne's house to talk to her father. He was busily engaged in conversation in the living room. I was having difficulty getting his attention. Finally, I wrote a note to him and passed it over to him. He jumped up from his circle of relatives and signaled me over to the other room.

He asked me, "Do you love her?"

I replied, "Yes."

He responded, "You got her!"

That started a year-long engagement that had its ups and downs as well. But we finally made it to our wedding rehearsal. After the rehearsal, we had a dinner at my parents' house. While at the dinner, I realized all was not well. Yvonne barely talked to me that evening and she looked scared to death. I suddenly had visions of being stood up at the altar. Was I going to make it? Later, I found out that Yvonne was so scared that she vomited (I do that to women). I also discovered that Yvonne's mom came through one more time. After a mother/daughter talk, Yvonne felt fine and we had a great wedding. Thanks again, Mom!

After seven years of dating, we were married. We had ups and downs, but now we were together. I believe God orchestrated the whole thing. He knew how much I needed to grow up. He knew that I really needed some hard times to help shape my

character. I thank God every day for giving Yvonne to me. I look forward to growing old with this woman.

### ***I Wanna Play – for Julie***

While I was sitting at my computer working on my Sunday School lesson, Julie (about 4 at the time) hopped up on my lap and promptly told me that she wanted to play...but not with adults. She missed her sisters. Jamie was at a friend's house and Jodie had a friend over. Julie felt quite alone. After trying to console her, I offered her love (something children don't want when they want to play). Realizing that I was not meeting her needs, I asked her what she would like to do. After she told me, I really had to admit that we had a problem! To remember this little event, I wrote a poem for her.

“I wanna play with kids”, she said,  
As she jumped into my lap.  
“Why not play with me”, I sighed,  
“I’m quite a fun old chap!”

“But you are a dad and I am a kid,  
There is nothing we could do.”  
“You could sit in my lap and snuggle,  
While I tell you, ‘I love you’.”

“That is not play, that’s love, “she whined  
As she gazed into my face.  
“So what could we do,” I asked my pet,  
“To have fun around this place?”

“I’m so glad you asked.”  
She bounced with glee.  
“What could we do?  
Let’s see. Let’s see.  
We could play Barbies,  
Then we could play house,  
Or we could play dress-up,  
Or act like a mouse.”

“You’re right! We have a problem!”

### ***Responsibility – for Jodie and Julie***

When I was trying to teach my youngest two girls about responsibility, they thought that I was being mean to them. They even told me that I loved their oldest sister the best. I tried to explain to them that the reason that I wanted them to be responsible is because I loved them and I wanted them to learn self-discipline. This is a little poem that I wrote for that occasion.

Re-spon-si-bi-li-ty,  
Its an act of the will, you see.

You make your bed, pick up your toys,  
Then comb your hair, with style and poise.  
You wash your face, and clean the sink,  
And do all this, quick as a wink.

When Mother calls, do not delay.  
There's time for work and a time for play.  
When father says, "Its time for bed."  
You do not ask for drinks instead.

When Mom and Dad seem cruel,  
They are teaching you the rules.  
But thank God in heaven above,  
That they are teaching you in love!

### ***Which seat***

The girls are basically very traditional. When we sit down at a table, they each know which seat is theirs. After all, they have been sitting there all of their life. However, there was a stage when the girls were very young that they liked to jockey for position in the car. In a five-passenger car, one child always gets stuck without a window seat. I wrote this little poem to describe this jostling.

Front seat  
Window seat  
Door seat  
Side seat  
Middle seat  
Back seat  
Which seat is the best seat?  
Your seat!

### ***Oil Can Henrys - Jodie***

This poem was inspired by some time that I spent with Jodie in a line of parked automobiles at Oil Can Henrys. Jodie began to let me know about her hunger, thirst, and boredom as we sat in the car with no place to go. I offered her suggestions, but she finally decided that I was driving her nuts.

I'm hungry!  
You are?  
I'm thirsty!  
You are?  
I'm bored!

You are?

When you are hungry,  
Be thankful.

When you are thirsty,  
Count your blessings.

When you are bored,  
Think thoughts you have never thought.

I'm still hungry.  
What did I tell you?  
I'm still thirsty.  
What did I tell you?  
I'm still bored.  
What did I tell you?

Dad, you are driving me nuts!

### ***Donuts – Jodie***

It is our family tradition to go to the donut shop every Saturday morning. Our three girls were raised by the same parents and lived in the same house. However, there always seems to be one child where making a decision is a challenge. In our family, this child was Jodie. She has become much more decisive now, but this poem reflects on the time when the children were young and where EVERY Saturday morning meant a trip to Donut King.

Another Saturday morning,  
We wanted to sleep 'til noon.  
It's time to go out for donuts...  
Goodbye honeymoon.

The kids have been up for hours.  
They're plotting behind the door.  
It's time to go out for donuts.  
Sleeping will be no more.

It's because we love our children,  
That we drag on out of bed.  
It's time to go out for donuts.  
We're up, but we still feel dead.

They want to call their buddies.  
They want to call their friends.  
It's time to go out for donuts.  
When will it ever end?



We pile into the donut shop.  
They know us there by name.  
This happens every week, you know.  
It really is insane.

It's time to place the order.  
My girls are all in line,  
To pick their favorite donuts,  
We can even read their minds.

The first one wants a cream filled roll,  
The next one wants the sprinkles,  
And the last one wants...  
And the last one wants...  
And the last one wants...  
And the last one wants...  
(There's one in every family!)

### ***The Tantrum – Jamie***

I never have been too fond of tantrums. Tantrums are generally an overt rebellion and not just childishness. When we experienced tantrums with any of the girls, we made sure that we won the battle! Jamie was the proud owner of the most memorable tantrum. She was about two years old and to this day, we can't really remember what the tantrum was about. Jamie was our strong willed child and on this particular occasion, she was not going to give in. I remember putting her in her crib while she screamed and stomped shook the bars. We closed the door of her room in hopes that she would run out of energy and come back down to earth. This was not the case. When I opened the door, she screamed even louder. Her little face was beat-red, she had tears coming down her face and she was mad. Communication was not an option. Discipline would have no meaning at this point. At last, I went into the bathroom (right across the hall from Jamie's room) and put some water in the bottom of the bathroom cup. When I re-entered Jamie's room, the screaming got louder again. I had no other choice than to go up to her and throw the water in her face. All of a sudden the crying stopped. She couldn't believe her father would do such a thing. Her little body was so hot from screaming that the water actually cooled her down. The water did no harm to the child. In a few minutes, she had settled down and was resting quietly in Yvonne's arms. The battle was won. Jamie slept well that night. For the next couple of weeks, Jamie reminded anyone that was willing to listen that daddy threw water in my face. We laughed about this one for years to come, but like most discipline that happens early in life, Jamie has no firsthand memory of it today.

### ***That Looks "Grate" On You – Jodie***

A few days after Julie was born, we moved to an apartment in Tualatin. This was a temporary arrangement while we looked for another house. Apartment life was great for us. We had access to a pool, we didn't have any yard work to do, and we had a lot of family time. Jamie was 4 years old and Jodie was 2 years old. The only drawback to the apartment was electric heating. With small children, it made us very nervous to have these heating elements at a child's level. The children were often warned to stay away from the heaters, even though they were not on very often.

One morning, Jodie did not look like her normal perky self. She was moping around the house and looked listless. When we asked her if anything was bothering her, she just complained that her tummy didn't feel good. She didn't even want anything to eat. At last, we decided to check her out a little closer. When we lifted up her shirt, there on her stomach was a perfect imprint of the heater grate. Earlier that morning, she had warmed up next to the heater and probably felt that the best way to get warmer faster would be to actually put her tummy on the heater itself. As any burn victim can attest, she must have been in unbearable pain, but knowing that she was warned to stay away from the heater, she didn't even cry. We took a picture of her little gridded tummy, but it didn't turn out well. This little episode showed us just how strong willed and brave Jodie really was – not to mention her high tolerance for pain!

### ***Lady-like lessons – Jamie, Jodie, Julie***

It is not always easy to be the father of three girls. There are many things that I could have passed on to a son, but how do you teach little girls to be little ladies? I chose to use “lady-like lessons.” I would show the girls how to hold their teacups with their little fingers extended, how to sit like a lady, how to walk like a lady, and even how to belch like a lady. The girls would giggle as I demonstrated each of these techniques. Of course, I also had to show them the “manly” things that a man has to do!

### ***Lost Child at Family Camp - Julie***

It was a beautiful day at Iron Creek Campground in Central Washington (just SW of Mount Rainier). This was the site for the Heatwole family camp this year. On Saturday morning, the moms had decided to go into town (Randall) for some things and so I took all the nieces and nephews for a hike. While on this hike, we sang some songs and then we found a clearing where we could work on a drama for the evening campfire time. We all had great fun on this hike. When we returned to the camp site, we all dispersed and started doing campy things while we waited for the moms to return. After about an hour of this, the camp ranger drove up in his rig, opened the car door, and out bounded Julie. Julie (about 4 years old at the time) had gotten lost on the hike back to camp when she tried to follow the “fast” group and took a wrong turn in a trail fork. The sad part about it was that she was lost for over an hour and nobody noticed. Even her own father didn't notice! Did I mention that there were a lot of nieces and nephews? Julie ran over to me and I gave her a big hug. She had been scared to death and ended up sitting by one of the dumpsters at the far end of the camp until a ranger came by. Julie drove around with the ranger until she found where we were camped. I held Julie in my arms and told her that I was so glad that she was OK and that she was back. I told her

that this is the kind of thing that would really disturb a mother if she were to hear about it. About 10 minutes later, the moms arrived back from town...and dad was in trouble!

### ***The campfire dowsing – Jamie, Jodie, Julie***

Yvonne and I led the junior high group at Boones Ferry Community Church for a number of years. One of our summer traditions was to take the kids camping at Indian Henry campground. One year, we had a very large group in the campground. After a long day of activities, sessions, singing, and eating, a group of boys were standing around the campfire. The girls had all gone to their tents, or so we thought. While the guys gazed at the flames, we were contemplating the long walk to the outhouse to take care of our final duty before going to our tents. While we stood there, I had a great idea. I told them, "Let's kill two birds with one stone. We could put out the campfire and avoid a trip to the outhouse if we all work together." From just behind the circle of boys, Janine Rozos yelled out, "I think it is time for me to leave!"

### ***You're On Vacation - Julie***

There have been a few times in my life where my job has not been something I looked forward to each day. It seems that during these times, I find it more difficult to sleep. Lack of sleep can snowball the situation and make the prospect of going to work even more difficult. Julie, being a very sensitive child, catches on to these things quickly. One night as I was somberly sitting on my bed preparing for a sleepless night, Julie came into the room and proclaimed, "You are on vacation! Wee!" When I gave her a puzzled look, she replied, "Tomorrow morning you may be disappointed, but you will be well rested!"

This little routine has been repeated many times and each time it is exactly what I need. Julie used her creativity and humor to touch her father's heart when he needed it the most.

### ***Make beautiful music for me - Jamie, Jodie, Julie***

When the girls were young, we encouraged them in their music. We sensed that they might have musical leanings at a very early age. They loved to sing and pretend to play the piano. They loved musicals like *The Sound of Music*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*, *Music Man*, *Oklahoma*, and more.

While they were interested in a variety of musical instruments, we encouraged them to learn the piano first. While it was difficult in the beginning to practice, they soon developed to the point where they really enjoyed their music. While we were home schooling, the girls would take their breaks from their normal subjects to play the piano. For several years, they practiced several hours a day without really considering it to be a chore. Once they had the foundation of the piano, Julie added the guitar and Jodie added the clarinet and the flute. While Jamie concentrated on the piano, she toyed around with the guitar.

Quite often, I would come home from work, plop down on the sofa and yell, "Play beautiful music for me!" The closest girl would usually go over to the piano and grace her father with beautiful music. Quite often, I would doze into complete relaxation with the music.

In their teenage years, each of the girls have accompanied at church, accompanied the school choirs, accompanied school soloist, and performed in music competitions. Jamie held the position of playing the piano while I played my baritone or trombone. I would just need to suggest it and Jamie would run over to the piano. When Jamie left for college, she made a tape for me with many of the songs we used to do together. I must admit that it is not the same without live accompaniment. Jodie and Julie have picked up the slack in Jamie's absence.

God has truly blessed the girls with musical talent and he has given them the discipline to develop it. This music has in turn been a blessing to their parents as well as many others that enjoy their music.

### ***The Wooden Spoon – Julie***

Discipline usually came quickly around the Cherry house. If a child willfully violated a known boundary, we took care of things right away with whatever was handy. It so happened that when Julie was very young, she did something that warranted a physical reminder. Yvonne grabbed a wooden spoon from the kitchen and gave Julie a little swat. Julie was in tears immediately and she kept crying for quite some time. Yvonne knew that she did not spank Julie very hard and asked her why she was still crying. Julie pointed to the spoon and said, "That was the wooden spoon that I gave you for Christmas!"

### ***The Unprom Date - Jamie***

Jamie had her first real date in her junior year of high school. For a father, this is always a traumatic experience. No matter how much you like the boy your daughter is dating, all of your basic instincts are to rebel against such things.

I always asked the girls to have the boy come and talk to me before their first real date. A lad name Mike took this one step further. Mike wanted to take Jamie out on prom night, but neither of them were keen on going to a dance. They decided to do an unprom date instead (dinner and a symphony). A couple of weeks before the date, I received a manila envelope from Mike. It contained a cover letter requesting permission to date Jamie, copies of the tickets, the seating layout, and the restaurant menu. This was all fine. However, he also included a paper called the "Parent Release Form". While I knew it was all in fun, I knew it was time to call in the lawyers.

I enrolled the services of Bill Kasje, Daniel McNeil, and Stan Dolson to pen a reply. This reply turned out to be a contract as well as a request for additional information. Mike replied by offering suggestions to change and amend the contract. He also included much of the requested information, which included school transcripts,

driver's license, insurance cards, a reference from his youth leader, his birth certificate, and a variety of other little items.

We finally settled on the contract and had a signing ceremony on the night of the date. Jamie has laminated the contract and is keeping it as a memento. Some of my friends wanted me to send it to Dr. Laura as a humorous, yet serious way to start a relationship. I have not done this to protect their privacy, but it has been the source of much entertainment with family and friends.

See Jamie for a complete transcript of the unprom contract.

### ***Playing with sharp knives – Jamie, Jodie, Julie***

When Julie was about 2 years old, she wanted to play with Jamie (6 years old) and Jodie (4 years old) in Jamie's room. Jamie and Jodie refused to let her into the room. Julie yelled from outside the room that she really wanted to play and she yelled loudly enough for her mother to hear. Yvonne asked Jamie and Jodie why they did not want to let Julie into the room. The reply given by the two older girls was that they were playing with sharp knives and didn't think it was safe for Julie!

### ***The last family picture - Yvonne***

When I was 30 years old, I contracted mononucleosis, which turned into hepatitis. This resulted in a couple of weeks of high fever followed by several months of extreme fatigue. While I still had the fever, Yvonne informed me that we had an appointment with a photographer to have a family picture taken and she didn't want to break the appointment. Later, I found out that Yvonne had been talking to a friend who had lost her father and she did not have a family picture including him. This inspired her to have our family picture taken...just in case!

### ***Mrs. Jones (driving lessons) – Jamie, Jodie, Julie***

When I was teaching the girls to drive, I wanted a way to impress on them the consequences of mistakes. In most things we do, mistakes can be tolerated to some extent. However, when you are driving a ton or more of metal, glass, and rubber down the road, mistakes can be fatal. If I would point out a driving mistake to one of the girls, they would say, "sorry". To drive home the point that you can be fatally sorry, I would use the fictitious Jones family. I would say things like, "I know you are sorry, but shall we go to Mrs. Jones and explain to her that we are truly sorry we just ran over her little boy?!" The girls hated it when I did this, but they got the idea. They are all pretty safe and conscientious drivers. In fact, sometime my own words are echoed back to me when I am driving. Ouch!

### ***Brick – Jamie***

Jamie and I would often practice free throws at our basketball hoop in the back yard. We would encourage each other, but we would also bug each other if we missed a shot badly. Perhaps the most commonly used word for a bad shot was, "brick".

When Jamie was playing basketball in her freshman year, Yvonne and I were sitting in the stands with other parents. Jamie would often go to the free throw line and I would yell out words of encouragement. When I wanted her to relax, I would yell, “Pretend we are in the back yard!” One time, she was at the line and she missed the first of her two shots pretty badly. I instinctively stood up and yelled, “brick!” Of course it was very quiet at the time and just about everybody heard it. Jamie thought it was funny, but you should have seen the expressions on some of the other parents’ faces. I had to casually explain that this is how we talked to each other when we practiced in the back yard. Sigh.

### ***The Father’s Manual – Jamie, Jodie, Julie***

At times, the girls would question some of the things I liked to do, like giving hugs and kisses, swatting them on their rears, sitting at the head of the table, having them introduce dates, giving them curfews, and so forth. I would use the mythical Father’s Manual to justify any of this behavior. As an example, I would tell them that that in chapter 2, section 5, paragraph 8, it states that a father must kiss each of his children on the forehead at least three times a day. The girls would always ask me to show them a copy of this document. My reply was that chapter 3, section 2, paragraph 4, states that no child shall ever read the Father’s Manual. Now that the children are older, they actually want me to write a Father’s Manual for fun. We’ll see...

### ***You are grounded – Jamie, Jodie, Julie, and Jenny (Hija #4)***

Now that the kids are older and they actually like to be grounded, I have used this threat as a fun thing. When I ground Jodie, she actually thanks me and asks me to send her to her room.

Jenny (Jamie’s roommate at OSU) stayed with us in Tualatin for part of the summer of 2002. She painted houses and didn’t want to drive all the way home every day to Salem. Since she became our fourth daughter for the summer, she was grounded occasionally as well. One day we came home and the following note was on the desk:

*Having been grounded, it is my solemn duty to disregard this infringement on my freedom and rights and to uphold the unity of children everywhere who rebel against this form of tyranny. Thus said, I have snuck out without parental approval (smiley).*

*Went to Portland to hang out with some of the boys (NOT RUSS).  
Don’t wait up (hee hee).*

*Love, Hija #4*

### ***The Graduation Speech That Was Never Given – Jodie***

Jodie should have graduated with a 4.0 GPA and she should have been able to give a speech at the graduation ceremony. However, the following speech was submitted to the administration and shortly after it was reviewed, she was denied the opportunity to give

the speech because some of her credits were from home school and community college. While this denial was disappointing to Jodie, we were very proud of her accomplishments as well as the speech she wrote. The speech, in its entirety, is included here:

## **The Diversity of Life**

*By Jodie Cherry*

In a perfect world, we would all be born with five working senses, with an abundance of good looks, with exceptional physical abilities, and with a loving family. Unfortunately, we don't live in a perfect world. We live in a world where just about everyone has disabilities which were either bestowed upon us at birth or which were acquired through physical disruption or relational disaster. We all carry baggage from our imperfect environments and display physical, emotional, relational, and personality scars.

Who has more value? A person whom society esteems as perfect, or one who lives with difficult obstacles. Who needs more love? Who contributes more to society?

I am speaking to you with my hands today because there are thousands of people in the world who have less than perfect bodies, but who have extraordinary value and worth. Those that have lost their hearing have sensitivities that the hearing public do not. It is not unusual to talk to a deaf person and find out that they would not want to have their hearing back even if they could. My great grandmother went stone deaf when she was in her mid-thirties due to a bout with the mumps. She had twelve children and never heard any sounds from her last six children. My great grandmother's worth did not diminish when she lost her hearing. Her eleven children who are still living would attest that she is one of the greatest women who have ever lived. By the way, my great grandmother is now 96 years old and traveled cross-country last week to attend my cousin's wedding. She is still deaf and still has a great impact on every life she touches.

Another person in my family also has great worth. My cousin Kelly is roughly my age. She was born with Turner's syndrome, which has left her physically and mentally handicapped. She still wears diapers and cannot speak. Kelly has enough mental capacity to understand love and she contributes to the family in ways that others cannot. It is always a delight to see the excitement in her eyes when we arrive for visits. She sits on the couch and looks out the window for hours as she anticipates our arrival. Kelly is not expected to live much longer, but when she leaves us, she will leave a lasting impact on all of our lives. How much worth would you say that Kelly has?

As we travel through life, we will all have the opportunities to be involved in the lives of those people that have more disabilities than we have. We can either avoid these people and maintain our comfortable lives, or we can reach out to them and receive benefits beyond our imaginations. Everybody has worth. We were all knit together in our mother's wombs with a divine purpose. We were fearfully and wonderfully made. I have been blessed with two family members that illustrate the worth of people with disabilities. You will also have the opportunity to associate with people with physical, social, and mental challenges. Get out of your comfort zones. Take the time to meet

people that are not exactly like you. I was always told that on the first day of school that I should look for somebody that nobody else was talking to and get to know them. I urge you to do this in life. You will be surprised where your real friends come from.



## **Advice from Father**

H. Jackson Brown Jr. sat down at his kitchen table and jotted down a few pages of instructions and personal observations for his son, Adam. Adam was beginning his freshmen year at college, and H. Jackson Brown felt that a collection of the insights and discoveries, which had positively influenced his own life, might be an appropriate gift to commemorate this important event.

That first list of fatherly advice contained 511 entries. A new collection was sent every two years. These collections were compiled into a book called “Life’s Little Instruction Book”.

This chapter of the book is a collection of instructions and personal observations from my perspective for our three girls. Some of these tidbits are inspired by “Life’s Little Instruction Book” and some of them are more original.

1. Pay attention to those kids at school that nobody else pays attention to. These people need it the most and may become your closest friends.
2. Say “please” and “thank you” a lot.
3. Arrive at church early. This has always been a family tradition and it helps you to focus on why you are coming to church.
4. The way to a man’s heart is through his stomach. Be careful what you cook for boys!
5. Eat meals together. It is easy to just grab food and not sit down as a family.
6. Listen. Don’t try to “one up” the person that is speaking.
7. Don’t make excuses, even if you have valid ones.
8. Teach in some kind of class and be taught in some kind of class.
9. Be on time. Being late tells those you are meeting that you do not respect their time.
10. Financially support every kid that is going on a mission trip (if they ask).
11. Show real character when you lose a game.
12. Show real character when you win a game.
13. Attend funerals. What will they say about you at your funeral?
14. Learn to read and then read to learn.
15. Learn how to type early in life.

16. Use credit cards for convenience, not for credit.
17. When starting out, don't worry about not having enough money. Limited funds are a blessing, not a curse. You will think back at those days with fondness.
18. Drive like you are invisible to other drivers.
19. Keep good records. Save receipts and anything that might be tax deductible.
20. When you borrow anything, return it in better shape than when you borrowed it.
21. When complemented, a sincere "thank you" is the only response required.
22. Praise in public; criticize in private.
23. Keep good company. A friend of fools becomes a fool.
24. Don't make any serious judgments about a person until they are past the "good behavior" phase.
25. Respect tradition and seek to find out the reason for the tradition.
26. Be modest. A lot was accomplished before you were born.
27. Don't whine. It can become a habit.
28. Never talk about another person as being stupid or an idiot. It will come back to haunt you in ways you cannot imagine.
29. Don't spread yourself too thin. Learn to say no politely and quickly.
30. Get in shape and stay in shape.
31. Complement the meal when you are guest in someone's home.
32. Remember that winners do what losers don't want to do. Do the hard stuff first.
33. Read to your children.
34. Sing to your children.
35. Listen to your children.

## **Failures and Shortcomings**

This chapter is a very difficult chapter for me to write. As men, we have difficulty admitting our areas of failure, especially when it involves our wives and our children. For the benefit of my children, it is important for them to know the areas where I have failed and where I need to improve. After all, they have both the genetic tendencies and the environmental upbringing to repeat those failures.

### *Lack of vulnerability*

I have always been a bit insecure. There are probably some psychological roots in my childhood somewhere, but I have always felt "behind the curve" when it came to sports, academics, and social skills. Because of this, I have hidden my true self from my family and friends. I have the feeling that if others really knew me, they wouldn't like me or they would reject me in some way. Whether this is rational or not, this has caused me to avoid vulnerability. When people get too close, my sense of humor will put up a defense. When I am confronted or criticized, I feel like I am being attacked personally. Again, I will either defend myself with humor or fight back. I hate it when I do this. I know this is irrational, but I have only "felt" like I have been loved unconditionally by one human being, my mom. I felt like I could say or do anything to her or around her and she would still love me. If I went off the deep end, she would have sought me out and loved me anyway. What am I learning from this? I am learning that people need to know that they are loved unconditionally. This is why unconditional love is one of the principles I wanted to teach my children. I am learning that I need to let my family know that they are loved by me unconditionally, especially Yvonne. I need to be more vulnerable to those that love me unconditionally, especially Yvonne.

### *Lack of sensitivity*

It is easy for me to be insensitive. After all, men are insensitive, right? When I am insensitive, it is usually because to be sensitive would require both vulnerability (see above) and effort. Sensitivity means to take on somebody else's problems and make them my own. Quite often I feel overwhelmed with my own problems and in my own mind I try to protect myself from overload. It seems much easier for me to be sensitive to Yvonne's needs when I don't feel overwhelmed myself. However, I am learning that this does not need to be the case. God will give me the capacity that is needed to truly love someone and to be sensitive to their needs. When I manage to do this, my own burdens seem somewhat lighter.

### *Selfishness*

This one probably encapsulates all the other areas of failure. For men like myself, pride is pretty synonymous with selfishness. I hate to ask for directions because a real man should be able to figure it out. I always try to do it myself before asking for help. I like to carve out my own space and my own time. Because of my insecurities and selfishness, I can be very competitive. I always want to look good for my family. For instance, if I want to look disciplined, I may go on a diet where I am disciplined when my

family is watching, but when I am alone, I may down a whole bag of iced animal crackers! This kind of pride makes me feel like a hypocrite (and well it should). God loves me just the way I am. I need to be more vulnerable to my family and trust both God and them to love me anyway. I am also selfish with traditions and with doing things the way they "should" be done. Please be patient with me as God works with me in these areas.

## **Notes from Mom**

### ***On Traditions***

Some traditions have changed as the girls have grown. The girls no longer take turns being rocked before bed (although I would do it again if they wanted to ☺). Until recently, I didn't remember that part of the rocking ritual included singing hymns while holding our girls. Julie began singing a hymn that I was surprised she knew because it wasn't sung much at church. When I questioned her about it, she replied that it was one that I used to sing while rocking her

During the elementary years, after tucking the girls into their respective beds (usually "hot dog" style), reading novels aloud while sitting in the hallway became an anticipated nightly tradition. I often heard Julie or Jamie's voice pleading for "just one more chapter." The problem was that by then Jodie had already fallen asleep, and we had to back track a bit the next evening for her to catch up. This was especially frustrating for Jodie when I was reading Caddie Woodlawn. She loved that book and asked me to reread much of it. (It became one of the first books "with chapters" that Jodie wanted to own.) Other favorites were Papa's Wife and Little Women.

### ***On Lessons***

As with any lesson, the best way to teach and learn it is to live it. As a family, we were given an opportunity to live the lessons of giving by helping new Russian immigrants.

After Gorbechov became the Russian premier, he allowed many to leave the country. To obtain greater freedom, a wave of Christians flowed to the Portland Metro region. Many came with at most a suitcase or two. I don't recall how we were contacted to become involved, but I do know we were thankful to be a part of those families' lives while they adjusted to America.

Sometimes we passed on furniture that we located from friends who were refurbishing their homes. One time we carried along a large "welcome" basket of fresh fruit. The girls were astounded to watch the Russian children eat the oranges as though they were apples. They rarely had had fresh fruit and never had oranges. Even after explaining how to peel oranges, they continued to chew the rinds like gum. They were so thankful and didn't want to waste anything. It was a great lesson for us all. Another time, we took a family to a store to buy a pair of shoes for each of them. It was fun to watch them excitedly trying on new shoes and to watch the girls gleefully getting caught up in their excitement.

Although we didn't expect to receive anything for helping, the families often insisted on cooking something or singing for us. All three of the girls ate their first liver in the form of stuffed potato shells (Russian piroghis). They even liked them! After delivering wrapped Christmas gifts, which the girls had chosen to give to one of the families, the family sang Russian hymns for us. The evening ended with prayer and the

singing of Hallelujah (no language barrier with that song). By being a part of these families' lives, we received far more than we ever gave.

Over the years, Dad and I have viewed "giving" as passing along what was really God's to someone else. We never questioned whether or not to tithe (or even give more) because we did not consider that money to be our own. God has blessed us incredibly, and we are thankful to be able to be used in that way.

Choose to use your money as though it belongs to God and not you. It really is His.

### ***On Prayer***

Pray continually. Pray for yourself as a parent. Pray for each individual child. Pray for your family as a unit. Pray specifically. Pray for daily concerns for each child - for safety, for hurt relationships, for academic concerns, for emotional needs, and for the "little" things that can be very big to a child. Praying for the details brings recognition of God working in your life and the life of the child for whom you are praying. Seeing Him answer prayer increases the faith of both you and your child. It brings peace to a concerned parent to know that a child's cares have been put into our all-loving, all-powerful, heavenly Father's hands.

Pray especially for the spiritual growth and character development of each child. (Pray for your own growth, too. Parenting can be, in many ways, a mirror which reflects our own weaknesses requiring a deeper dependence on God's help.) I have often used Scripture to pray for our family. For years I have prayed Ephesians 3:14-21 for each girl as well as for John and myself. I replace the "you" with individual names.

*(Eph 3:14-21 NASB) For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, 16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man; 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fulness of God. 20 Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, 21 to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.*

New verses were added to my Scriptural prayer list for the girls as they grew and faced new experiences. Proverbs 22:12 became a daily prayer when the girls entered high school. May "the eyes of the Lord preserve knowledge" at Tualatin High, but "overthrow the words of the treacherous man."

*(Psa 127:1-2 NASB) (A Song of Ascents, of Solomon.) Unless the LORD builds the house, They labor in vain who build it; Unless the LORD*

*guards the city, The watchman keeps awake in vain. 2 It is vain for you to rise up early, To retire late, To eat the bread of painful labors; For He gives to His beloved even in his sleep.*

Since it is the Lord who builds real homes and families, talk to Him about every aspect of your own.

### ***On weaknesses and struggles***

I could easily list my weaknesses for you, although you girls could probably do a more thorough and accurate job than I. As a parent, the natural desire is to see your strengths and not your weaknesses passed on to your children. Usually, unless God intervenes and the child is aware of the tendency, both the strengths and weaknesses continue to the next generation. Many times I have prayed for God's grace and mercy to cover my sins, to protect you from the destructive consequences of my sin, and to keep that sin from being reproduced in you.

Take care to avoid my biggest weakness – the sin of not trusting God in all situations, commonly called worry. When I lose sight of God's sovereignty and goodness, I can become fearful. Peace comes when I talk to God about everything that is bothering me and about all that I am feeling. Sometimes I need to pray again and again about the same things. The peace isn't always immediate. Often, God brings to mind memorized Scripture to remind me about Himself and His ways. Then peace follows.

I am a people-pleaser by nature. In itself, that isn't sinful. But, when I am more concerned about what someone thinks about me rather than the needs of that person, I am being selfish and unloving. When I fill my schedule with things others ask me or expect me to do because I want them to like me or think highly of me, then I am being prideful. Sometimes God may want me to do the very things that someone else has asked me to do. The difference is my motivation. Am I doing this for God to please Him and to show His character to others, or am I doing it to promote me? I am learning to distinguish between the two and to organize my time accordingly.

The positive side of the subject of generational sinful tendencies is God's amazing grace – grace that allows you to choose to not carry on the familial sins, grace that continues to teach us and help us to grow, and grace that gives forgiveness.

### ***On being diligent parents***

Proverbs 10:1 speaks of the joy that wise children bring to their parents. I cannot describe the depth of joy that each of our girls brings. We delight to be with them, and are unspeakably thankful for the wise choices that they are now making as godly women of character. Work toward that goal with your own children. Be diligent and consistent.

## Concluding Remarks

Paul Harvey had some interesting things to say about raising kids in society today. Our tendency is to want to make things very easy for our children.

*Paul Harvey writes:*

*We tried so hard to make things better for our kids that we made them worse. For my grandchildren, I'd like better. I'd really like for them to know about hand me down clothes and homemade ice cream and leftover meat loaf sandwiches. I really would.*

*I hope you learn humility by being humiliated, and that you learn honesty by being cheated. I hope you learn to make your own bed and mow the lawn and wash the car. And I really hope nobody gives you a brand new car when you are sixteen.*

*It will be good if at least one time you can see puppies born and your old dog put to sleep. I hope you get a black eye fighting for something you believe in. I hope you have to share a bedroom with your younger brother.*

*And it's all right if you have to draw a line down the middle of the room, but when he wants to crawl under the covers with you, let him.*

*When you want to see a movie and your little brother wants to tag along, I hope you'll let him.*

*I hope you have to walk uphill to school with your friends and that you live in a town where you can do it safely. On rainy days when you have to catch a ride, I hope you don't ask your driver to drop you two blocks away so you won't be seen riding with someone as uncool as your Mom.*

*If you want a slingshot, I hope your Dad teaches you how to make one instead of buying one. I hope you learn to dig in the dirt and read books.*

*When you learn to use computers, I hope you also learn to add and subtract in your head. I hope you get teased by your friends when you have your first crush on a girl, and when you talk back to your mother that you learn what ivory soap tastes like.*

*May you skin your knee climbing a mountain, burn your hand on a stove and stick your tongue on a frozen flagpole.*

*I sure hope you make time to sit on a porch with your Granddad and go fishing with your Uncle. May you feel sorrow at a funeral and joy during the holidays. I hope your mother punishes you when you throw a baseball through your neighbor's window and that she hugs you and kisses you at Christmas time when you give her a plaster mold of your hand.*

*These things I wish for you-tough times and disappointment, hard work and happiness. To me, it is the only way to appreciate life.*



*Send this to all of your friends who mean the most to you. We secure our friends not by accepting favors but by doing them.*

While Paul Harvey is not scripture, he understands that raising children is not always intuitive. You can be cruel by being kind. You can make it hard on them by being easy on them.

There are not very many examples of raising godly children in the Bible, but there are numerous principles for life that apply to this task. Perhaps God wants us to be in constant prayer about these matters to discern how the Biblical principles can be applied to your unique children. Look for godly children in other families and find out their techniques and secrets.

*For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family (including the Cherry family) in heaven and on earth derives its name, that He would grant to John, Yvonne, Jamie, Jodie, and Julie, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man; so that Christ may dwell in our hearts through faith; and that each of us, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that our family may be filled up to all the fulness of God. Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.*