

That It May Be Well . . . **Teaching Your Children Honor and Obedience**

The Little Church

The great puritan pastor and America's finest theologian, Jonathan Edwards, remarked in his farewell sermon to his congregation in North Hampton, Massachusetts, "Every Christian family ought to be, as it were, a little church consecrated by God's rules." This insightful statement is both supported by Biblical evidence and attested to by hundreds of years of Christian experience; yet, most Christian homes today appear to be more akin to little "pagan temples" than they do little churches. We excel in producing prodigals instead of believers. What must Christians do to restore the high ideal that Jonathan Edwards had for his congregation? What must we do to restore the high ideal that God has for the families of His Church?

The Covenant

Our God is a covenant making, covenant keeping God who makes a promise and keeps it. It is this simple. What is not so simple is for elect parents to keep their end of the agreement, the condition. Keeping the condition requires obedience and obedience requires effort and an understanding of what true Biblical parenting is all about.

God fully intends for the children of Christians to become Christians. Indeed, one of the three Biblical reasons given for the institution of marriage is for Christians to raise a "godly offspring."¹ Through the Prophet Isaiah, God says, "My chosen ones shall wear out the work of their hands. They shall not labor in vain, or bear children for calamity; for they are the offspring of those blessed by the Lord, and their descendants with them."² Peter picks up on this theme in his famous Pentecost sermon when he says of the promise of the indwelling Holy Spirit, "For the promise is for you and your children."³ Unfortunately, most Christian parents parent as if their child's spiritual life is the result of some cosmic chance, some spiritual evolutionary phenomena instead of the result of faith demonstrated through Biblical obedience.

Church fellowship halls seldom draw a crowd when the church advertises, "Come here the amazing testimony of Bill Smith who was raised in a Christian home, submitted His life to Christ when he was six-years-old and who has grown up loving Jesus and honoring his parents." However, it is standing room only when a church hawks, "Come listen to the real-life testimony of the former satanic priest, Ed Taylor, who was raised by a pack of wolves in the Amazon jungle and who was the former president of Skinheads International." We ignore the appropriate while aggrandizing the exception. The Bible expects Christian parents to raise Christian children, not skinheads. Jewish families recite the Shema to this day.

Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God the Lord is one! And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the

way and when you lie down and when you rise up. And you shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.⁴

This passage contains six “shalls”, each of which imply effort and deliberate spiritual training in the home. My prayer is that your child, niece and nephew, and/or grandchild will have the appropriately “spectacularly normal” testimony of a child reared in a Christian home to honor and obey God. My hope is that they will never remember a time when they did not love Jesus.

The Condition

So, you may be thinking, if God’s established norm for the Christian home is the raising of godly children, why are so many Christian homes characterized by rebellious, worldly children? The answer may be found in another of God’s covenant promise verses, “But the lovingkindness of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children’s children.” Sounds good, so what is the catch? The promise continues with a statement of condition, “To those who keep His covenant, and who remember His precepts to do them.”⁵ God-fearing, obedient Christian parents have every reason to hope that God will save their children. Lukewarm, shallow Christian parents who expect God to give their offspring the same “fire insurance” that they themselves possess are dangerously presumptive over the eternal destiny of their children’s souls.

The short answer to the problem of pagan children in Christian families is that Christian parents have traded God’s commandments and principles for a plastic gospel wrapped around the image of fallen man. Household after Christian household continually breaks God’s covenant and forgets His precepts. Teenage rebellion, empty pews, the decline of morality, and the rise of the paganism are only symptoms of the disease of man-worship. Unfortunately, the high priests of the man-cult of secular humanism are often the unwitting, weakling fathers and naïve, doting mothers of the American Christian home. Prodigal children are often the love child of an adulterous affair between Christian parents and the Prince of this World. “The prudent sees the evil and hides himself, but the naïve proceed, and pay the penalty.”⁶

The Solution

So what is a Christian family to do? The answer is very simple and yet will take a life time to master; the children of the Christian home have the responsibility to honor and obey God’s Word. Yes - their role in the family is to honor and obey. The parents in a Christian home have the responsibility to enforce that honor and obedience. Their role is to lead and teach. The children have the easier task.

Honor

The fifth commandment states, “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the Lord your God gives you.”⁷ The very nature of God is expressed in the Ten Commandments and He chose number five to emphasize the

importance of parental honor. Jewish scholars placed the fifth commandment into the first tablet of the Law, representing our relationship with God. Early Christian scholars placed the fifth commandment in the second tablet of the Law, with those commandments regulating our behavior with other people. The Jewish scholars had it right. To honor your earthly father and mother is to honor your Father in heaven. A two-year-old little girl can not grasp the concept of an invisible, all-powerful, all-knowing benevolent God any more than she can accurately complete your income tax forms. The same two-year-old can, however, fully grasp the concept of a loving and protecting human daddy. Daddies, you are God to your two-year-old until such a time as they come to the knowledge of the true God on their own. Your children kindergarten their souls at your feet. Don't blow it!

Levitical law prescribed the most severe penalty, the death penalty, for children who dishonored their parents: "anyone who curses his father or mother, he shall surely be put to death."⁸ So serious is God about the principle of parental honor that He was willing that a dishonoring brat would be removed from the midst of the congregation, through death, rather than having his or her infectious attitude plague others. Proverbs even contains a curse for the haughty child, "The eye that mocks a father . . . the ravens will pluck it out and the young eagles will eat it."⁹ Our culture parades dishonor as a right of passage into adulthood. In the early Jewish culture, the dishonoring child would have never made it to adulthood (or at a minimum he would have be blinded by a bird!). Christian parents have come to expect far too little honor from their children, to the detriment of their children, themselves, the church, and the culture at large. We chuckle at the antics of television's Bart Simpson while our Holy God fumes in righteous anger.

Conversely, the commandment to honor father and mother contains a remarkable promise for those who obey, "Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth."¹⁰ The condition of the American Christian family is generally not "well" at all because the principle of honoring parents, or anything else for that matter, is often not met. God promises both quality of life, "that it may be well" and quantity of life, "that you may live long" to those who practice honor. Which do you want for your family? Choose for yourselves this day, but as for me and my house, we will choose a long happy life over death by stoning.

Good parents are entitled honor. Bad parents are entitled honor (except in those areas that contradict the revealed will of God). God's commandments do not bow to circumstance. However, the extent to which your children honor you is largely up to you. Do not make it a challenge for them. Train them in love.

Training Honor

Parenting is deliberate. Let me say it again, parenting is deliberate. Children do not just "turn out," they are trained in either obedience or disobedience, in the values of God or the values of the world. They are trained to either love or hate. Parenting is deliberate; therefore, consider for a moment how you should be honored. Notice that I did not say

how would you LIKE to be honored because, frankly, as a fallen human subject to worldly influences, you may not really know how you SHOULD be honored.

Many of the ways we honor others are subject to our culture. In oriental cultures, they express honor by slowly bowing to one another in greeting. If you do the same in the Southern United States, we are likely to think you lost your contact lens on the ground. As a native southern-American, let me suggest some very good, and I believe very Biblical, ways children should express honor in OUR culture.

Use Appropriate Titles

Christian children should be taught to use the titles Mr., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Colonel, Elder, Pastor, Uncle, Aunt, etc.* when addressing adults. This one-time social norm has been almost completely abandoned by our culture, discarded with blue suits, neckties, please, thank you, family-friendly television, and dinners at home. Honor is publicly aborted when a fifteen-year-old refers to their pastor as “dude”. Even cowboys should not be referred to as dudes. God is “God,” not “The Big Kahuna Upstairs”! Mr. Edwards is Mr. Edwards, not Tommy. Children owe adults honor; time has not made them equal.

Stand, Open, Seat, and Greet

Teach your children, especially your sons, this little ditty: “stand, open, seat, and greet for the image of God is who we meet.” When we honor others, we honor God who made man in His image¹¹. Let us explore these vehicles for honor:

Stand – Children should be taught to honor age by standing when an elderly person enters the room. “You shall rise up before the gray headed, and honor the presence of an old man, and fear your God, I am the Lord.”¹² They should further be taught to honor high position by standing. Young men and boys should be instructed to stand for ladies when they enter a room and when they come to the table, especially their mother and sister(s) age 10 or over. Train your daughters to not be embarrassed by this attention, the young men are honoring the Lord and setting a standard for your daughter’s future husband to meet. Teach the young ladies to say “thank you” when they are honored. Men are God’s instruments for protecting ladies¹³; show them how safe they are with you by honoring them

Open – Ladies and the elderly should never have to open a door when there is a gentleman nearby. Feminists bristle at this act of kind respect. Let them bristle. If they had been appropriately honored as little girls and young ladies they never would have embraced the lie of feminism. Train the young ladies in your life to accept the honor with a “thank you” and a smile.

Seat – When dining, men should pull the seat out for a lady and seat her appropriately. At a large dinner, a gentleman normally seats the lady to his right. He also insures that his escort is appropriately seated. Never begin eating until the hostess has lifted her fork or you have been otherwise notified to begin the meal. Honor God by blessing Him for the food.

* The term “Ms.” is a badge of feminism and should not be used.

Greet – Children owe adults a greeting. This is not an option. They should look the adult in the eye, smile, use their name in greeting them, and give a confident handshake. Shyness is no excuse for dishonoring adults, so stop making excuses for your child; you are causing him to sin.

Smile and Glow

A child's face is a testimony to your parenting. Happy, well-adjusted children are the fruit of Biblical child rearing. They are a living, breathing sermon to God's glory. Sullen, pouting, bitter, frowning, detached children are a testimony to your failure to instill God's commandments in the hearts of your children. Discipline produces sweetness in a child. Overindulgence produces a brat and the scourge of the Sunday school class. Raise your children to be a delight to others and they will be a delight to you.

Understanding Authority and Responsibilities

You make an enemy of your child by attempting to make him your friend too soon. Ours is a generation of men-pleasers¹⁴ and, unfortunately, child-pleasers. We are so consumed with our children liking us that we raise them not to respect us. Retirement homes are full of parents who raised their children on the post WWII pop-psychology of child-centered parenting. These parents gave their children everything and now they cannot understand why their children never visit them in the home. Could it be because their children never learned to respect them as parents but viewed them as indulgent big friends?

Children must learn the power of authority before they learn the value of becoming your friend, for "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge."¹⁵ While they are infants, begin teaching your children by enforcing standards and household rules. As they grow into their middle years, lead them through the use of Biblical principles. As they become older teens and young adults, you parent them with relational influence. If you start off by being the "god" of your child's little universe, your children will learn to respect you and God. As they grow, authority will give way to relationship and they will eventually become your best friend.

Far too many Christian parents get the order reversed. They start off by trying to be little Susan's buddy and when she turns into the terror of the neighborhood, they clamp down with extreme authority, authority that Susan never learned to respect. The results are disastrous, predictable, and all around us¹⁶.

Respect Others

When asked which was the greatest commandment, Jesus answered:

The foremost is 'Hear O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this, 'you shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these.¹⁷

You should be ever vigilant to find vehicles for training your children to love others as themselves. It is impossible to honor father and mother and yet hate one's little sister because a person's character runs throughout the marrow of their soul. You cannot be a loving father and affectionate husband at home, and an unbridled jerk in the office. Our culture falsely claims that that what you do in your personal time does not affect the other areas of your life, this kind of compartmentalized character is a fantasy and an excuse for sin. Respect for others is made of the same stuff as loving God and honoring father and mother.¹⁸ Consider the following ways to train your children to honor others:

Share in their emotional life – Children should be taught to “rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep.”¹⁹ If one is hurting, the others should comfort. If one is happy, let the others celebrate! Birthdays are a great time for you to train your children to honor others. Involve your child in the purchase and/or making of the gift and card. We usurp the great pleasures of giving honor when we provide gifts to others attending the party so that “they don't feel left out.” I remember giving my first child a gift, a large toy, when my second child was born so that he would not be jealous of the attention given his little sister. Where to we get these inane ideas? My firstborn would have been far better served if I had taken some of his spending money and taken him to purchase a gift for his newborn sister.

Siblings are a child's best friends – Nothing makes birth control more attractive to a parent than sibling conflict. The first child ever born into the world murdered the second child born into the world and the conflict has raged since then.²⁰ When it comes to conflict among children in the same home, I recommend the sage advice of the Deputy Barney Fife, “You gotta nip it in the bud”! Conflict among siblings rots over time and fills the home with noxious gasses that last for a lifetime. “He who troubles his own house will inherit wind.”²¹ Sins must be forgiven quickly and completely. “Behold how good and pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity.”²² You should constantly emphasize to your children that their siblings are their best friends. One of my beefs over the current system of schooling children is how students are segregated according to age. Most children are growing up hardly knowing their siblings because they spend all day with only children their age. Brothers and sisters should be each other's number one play partners. Family memories should be the best memories of childhood. Friends come and go, parents die, but brothers and sisters last for a lifetime. Help your child to be his brother's keeper.²³

Never use force to get your way – The government is always willing to enforce order when the family refuses to do so. That is why today's public schools with their metal detectors, armed policemen, security cameras and picture I.D.s look more like prisons than they do schools. Violence among youths has escalated to unimagined proportions because parents do not properly train children to handle conflict in appropriate ways. “For all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword.”²⁴ Children should not use their hands to settle an issue. If children

reach an impasse, they should come you and you should be available and approachable.

Never say, “that is unfair” – we always define fairness by what we don’t have. Consequently, someone always has more than we do and it is “unfair.” Frivolous lawsuits start in the homes of parents who do not teach a child to control their envy. Children are born communists; if possible, they will ensure that everyone is equally miserable. Never allow your children to utter the words “unfair,” it is a self-centered challenge to your sovereignty over the home. A teaspoon of vinegar will do wonders to correct a wayward tongue that is too loose with the “unfair.” Having said that, however, it is up to you to ensure that things are indeed fair and that favoritism is not shown toward children. Treats, gifts, chores, special times with daddy, discipline, etc. should be appropriate and should be balanced in quality and quantity as much as possible. God made you the leader of the home; He also made you the judge. Judge wisely. Jacob’s children bore the emotional scars of their father’s favoritism towards Joseph with sinful results.²⁵

Discontentment comes when we focus on ourselves. Contentment comes when we focus on others. We honor God by honoring others made in His image.²⁶ We honor others by putting their interests before our own, “give preference to one another in honor.”²⁷ All children are born self-centered. If you do not believe this statement, please volunteer to keep the church nursery next week and see this truth for yourself. However, children can learn the principles of honoring others at a very early age. Make it a priority to teach them.

Respect Property and the Environment

While “God owns the cattle on a thousand hills,”²⁸ He, nonetheless, has given man the right to own property and to enjoy the fruits of his labors²⁹. This right is clearly seen even in the Ten Commandments where the eighth commandment reads, “You shall not steal.”³⁰ The sin of stealing implies that property ownership is appropriate and necessary. Children must honor the property of others because it is a tangible way of showing honor to the one who owns the property. We do not throw gum wrappers into Mr. Smith’s yard because we honor Mr. Smith, even if he has not mowed his yard in weeks. When your children visit another family, they should always leave the home in a better condition than when they found it. Toys should be put up and dishes put away. Children should ask before touching. Your goal is to home proof the child, not childproof the home. A series of gentle thumps on a toddler’s wandering hand will make your china tea cups last for generations to come.

Honoring property also helps children to learn the value of labor and work. When your child has earned \$20 by mowing the yard or baby-sitting, they are much less likely to spend it frivolously on an impulse purchase than if you just hand your son a \$20 bill and say, “enjoy yourself.” We need to teach our children, our sons in particular, to value hard work and saving money. Our goal is that each of our three sons will be able to pay cash for a home prior to being married. Our goal for our daughter is that she would be able to fully furnish her home without going into debt. These goals are obtainable with some

good hard work and a lot of direction from mom and dad. What financial goals do you have for your children?

This same principle of honoring another's property can be demonstrated in our respect for the environment. When a timber man sees a redwood tree, he sees a profit. When a socialist-environmentalist sees a redwood tree, he sees a political opportunity. When a Christian sees a redwood tree, he sees the glory of God revealed in His creation.³¹ Of the three, who should be the most motivated to the faithful stewardship of the redwood tree? The Christian, of course! We share our planet with six billion other people. By the time your baby reaches your age the number will be closer to eight billion. The church should be leading the way in showing the world how to take care of the earth. It starts by you explaining to your daughter why we do not just pour our used motor oil into the local pond.

Obedience

Perhaps the greatest way to demonstrate honor towards parents (and God) is through obedience. Honor and obedience are two edges of the same sword. One cannot claim to honor a parent or God while disobeying their revealed will. The Bible strongly condemns disobedience as dishonor, for "a child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother."³² Many of today's Christian families experience the shame of a wayward child. Let us explore some ways we can train children to obedient actions and attitudes.

Obedient Actions

The proper working of the home requires cooperation among all the members of the household. Consequently, there are numerous daily opportunities for parents to place expectations upon their children. Remember, you are not raising children; you are raising adults. Your children are going to "parenting school" in your home and you are the professor. Your children are responsible to obey and you are responsible for ensuring that they do so. You can make it very difficult for them to obey or you can train them in obedience depending on how YOU handle the situation. Some basic guidance on how to do your part is in order.

Immediately – When you give a command to a child such as, "Johnny, please take out the garbage," you should expect Johnny to stop what he is doing and immediately comply with your command. If he does not do so, he has disobeyed. If you did not mean that he had to take out the garbage immediately, be specific, "Johnny, please take out the garbage before you go outside to play." You set the rules of the game; set them well. Be specific, otherwise you confuse the expectation and provide needless "wobble room" for Johnny to get out of a task, "you did not say I had to take out the garbage NOW, Mom."

Here is a useful tool for helping your children transition from one activity to another. **Provide a five-minute warning.** Children, especially boys, tend to become engrossed in their activities. You may be unnecessarily tempting your child to disobedience by requiring immediate action on a command that can wait. For example, your children have been watching a video for 30 minutes and it is

reaching the climatic ending when you give a command to set the table for dinner. If possible, enter the room, get the children's attention and say, "after the video is over I want you to please set the table." If they are playing outside say, "In five minutes I am going to call y'all in to wash up for lunch." This will help your children to transition to the new expectation without tempting them to react emotionally due to shock and disappointment. Help your children obey without compromising your command. This habit will also build credibility when you really do need them to stop what they are doing to perform immediate tasks.

Another helpful tool is the use of an **appeal process**. We sometimes give our children conflicting commands and it unnecessarily frustrates them. For example, you ask your son to move his bike from the driveway immediately, not knowing that his father told him to put his bike in the driveway so that they can pump up the tire. Rather than arguing with you, he can say, "yes ma'am, may I please appeal?" He has shown submission to your authority but wants to provide new information in a non-confrontational manner. "Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates reproof is stupid."³³ The appeal process should only be used for children mature enough to use it properly and should only be used to provide new information in a humble manner*.

Completely – Never give a command that you do not expect to be obeyed. Say what you mean and mean what you say. This seems rather obvious but, in practice, it is not so to many parents. Children have an amazing ability to sense if you really mean what you say. They know how to "work the system" to further their own interests. Bad parenting creates bad children. Let's explore four all too common ways in which parents undermine true obedience.

- **Threatening & Repeating** – Many parents enter into a continuous cycle of coaxing, threatening, bargaining, pretending to punish, and then really punishing (a little bit). The parent lacks the moral fortitude and resolution to really see their command carried out. Children of the threatening & repeating parent learn to obey only at the last moment of the parent's exasperation. They consequently have contempt for standards, both the home and God's. This situation is ripe for abuse by frustrated and overwhelmed parents who allow the child to manage the home³⁴.
- **Bribing** – these parents use bribes or threats to gain temporary control of a child's behavior. Children growing up in bribing homes develop self-oriented tendencies and learn to manipulate others for "a bribe corrupts the heart."³⁵ They enter adulthood with a "what is in it for me" type attitude.
- **Negotiating in Conflict** – These parents set a standard and insist on compliance but then negotiate in the midst of the conflict for something less than the original instructions. Here, there is no surrender of the

* For more information on the five-minute warning, appeal process and other valuable parenting tools, consider taking Gary and Ann Marie Ezzo's *Growing Kids God's Way* parenting course.

child's will, only a "cease fire." The child determines that everything is negotiable. The home becomes a "Turkish Bazaar" of disorder and the child learns to reject absolutes.

- Behaviorally "blind" – Slothful, exhausted, or depressed parents often simply ignore a child's lack of compliance. They pretend that the circumstance will just go away and they end up baptizing the sin by their moral abdication. Contrary to scripture, these children growing up believing the God just "winks" at sin.³⁶

When giving instructions, you should always require eye contact and a verbal response such as, "yes sir." This ensures that your child understands and submits to your command. It also gives opportunity for questions and further clarification if necessary. Instructing children to say "thank you" to those who correct them trains them in the wisdom of accepting direction. "Let the righteous smite me in kindness and reprove me; it is oil upon the head; do not let my head refuse it."³⁷

You should ensure that your commands and their enforcement are never arbitrary or unkind. Paul warns fathers not to exasperate their children so that they do not lose heart.³⁸ Inconsistent, unkind, moody, unreasonable instructions will crush your child's will rather than mold it in godliness.

Obedient Attitudes

When we give our children instructions we are training them in obedience. There is more to the goal than just getting the room cleaned up or the dishes washed. "For the commandment is a lamp, and the teaching is light; and the reproofs for discipline are the way of life."³⁹ We are training our children's hearts for service to God. This is why attitudes are so important. Children should comply with your command without challenge and without complaint every time.

Without Challenge – In the home, the husband is the King (Ruler),⁴⁰ The wife is the Prime Minister (the King's helpmate),⁴¹ and the children are the princes and princesses who will, one day, leave the castle to colonize kingdoms of their own. When the children have their own castles they will make the rules. Until then, your rule is law. The American love affair with democracy has done serious damage to family order. In many homes, the children run the family or at least have an "equal voice" in family affairs. It is one thing to ask your teenager if he prefers to go to the beach or to the mountains for vacation - that is soliciting input. It is an entirely different matter to allow your six-year to old decide what she wants for supper every night – that is anarchy. Be gentle and loving and decisive and you will find that your children will learn to love compliance.

Without Complaint – It is not enough to obey; children must submit. "Be obedient . . . in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ; not by way of eye service, as men pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart."⁴² If a child does what you ask him to do, but grumbles while going out the door or

gives you a haughty look, he is obeying with his hands but not his heart. Many homes would accept this as victory, but not the Christian home. “There are six things which the Lord hates, yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that run rapidly to evil, a false witness who utters lies, and one who spreads strife among brothers.”⁴³ God’s disdain for evil attitudes was demonstrated when He punished Israel with death in the wilderness for murmuring against Him.⁴⁴ Teach your children that whatever they do, they do in the name of the Lord.⁴⁵

The goal of Biblical parental instruction is to train your child to achieve self-generated initiative. Here the child observes needs and responds without being prompted. We achieve this goal by making obedience attractive. By helping them meet a high, established standard, which receives parental approval, and acceptance, we are training our children in righteous conduct that will serve them throughout their lives.

The Seriousness of it All

You might ask yourself, “Why is honoring and obeying parents so important to God”? As the Prophet Samuel rebukes the reckless King Saul, Samuel, under the inspiration of God, remarks, “Rebellion is as the sin of divination (witchcraft).”⁴⁶ Rebellion is witchcraft? In God’s economy, there is no room for “boys will be boys” or “they will grow out of it.” To dishonor a parent is akin to demon worship. To disregard a parent’s instruction is to cast a spell. Do you want your children to grow up to be like Harry Potter or Jesus Christ? If you say Jesus Christ, then why has your home become a school for budding sorcerers? Do you want your daughter to become like the Witch of Endor⁴⁷ or Mary of Nazareth? Mary, you say, of course. Then why are you training her in the dark magic of divination by condoning her rebellion? Many Christian parents are leading their little ones aground on a reef of rebellion because they fail to love them enough to hate their sin. They would rather “sink the ship” than to “rock the boat.” Don’t you be counted in their number.

God has chosen you to lead, judge, and teach the children in your home. It is a daunting task, yet it is a task God has equipped you to accomplish in His strength. “The horse is prepared for battle, but the victory belongs to the Lord.”⁴⁸ Make no mistake about it, you are in war and the battlefield is your home. To the victor belong the spoils of war – your children. Train you children in honor and obedience, “that it may be well.”⁴⁹

¹ Malachi 2:15 (The other two Biblical reasons for marriage are companionship, Gen. 2:18, and protection from sexual immorality, 1 Cor. 7:8-9)

² Isaiah 65:22b-23

³ Acts 2:39a

⁴ Deuteronomy 6:4-9

⁵ Psalm 103:17-18

⁶ Proverbs 22:3

⁷ Exodus 20:12

⁸ Leviticus 20:9

⁹ Proverbs 30:17

¹⁰ Ephesians 6:2-3

¹¹ Genesis 1:27

¹² Leviticus 19:32

¹³ 1 Peter 3:7

¹⁴ John 12:43

¹⁵ Proverbs 1:7a

¹⁶ Proverbs 9:7

¹⁷ Mark 12:28-31 (Quoting Deut. 6:4-5 and Lev. 19:18)

¹⁸ James 3:9-10

¹⁹ Romans 12:15

²⁰ Genesis 4

²¹ Proverbs 11:29

²² Psalm 133:1

²³ Genesis 4:9

²⁴ Matthew 26:52

²⁵ Genesis 37

²⁶ Genesis 1:26

²⁷ Romans 12:10

²⁸ Psalm 50:10

²⁹ Genesis 4:3-4 & Ecclesiastes 5:18-19

³⁰ Genesis 20:15

³¹ Psalm 19:1-2

³² Proverbs 29:15b

³³ Proverbs 12:1

³⁴ Proverbs 14:29

³⁵ Ecclesiastes 7:7

³⁶ Psalm 139:1-12

³⁷ Psalm 141:5

³⁸ Colossians 3:21

³⁹ Psalm 6:23

⁴⁰ Genesis 3:16

⁴¹ Genesis 2:18

⁴² Ephesians 6:5-8

⁴³ Psalm 6:16-19

⁴⁴ Numbers 14:26-37

⁴⁵ Colossians 3:17

⁴⁶ 1 Samuel 15:23

⁴⁷ 1 Samuel 28:7

⁴⁸ Proverbs 21:31

⁴⁹ Ephesians 6:3