

Becky Combee Ministries, Inc.



But Jesus said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 19:14



Children For God

As Wayne and I have travelled the world, one observation has often saddened us. There is seldom adequate spiritual training for the children. Over many years, we have noticed a carefree attitude, voiced by obvious neglect and lack of preparation for these very keen minds and open hearts. And no country has a "corner on the market." In many places the children are the last to be trained in God's Word. It seems the adults are running so fast to grow up in God that their children are left behind. Yet, children are wonderful!

Children are quick to learn about God when mom and dad demonstrate His lordship. A parent's behavior molds these small people and points them toward God. It is through our words and our actions that they see Jesus. The Apostle John said, "Let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth."¹ This verse warns us about pious platitudes, religious intonations and even sound doctrine that are not validated by mom and dad's conduct. Our life in Christ is so much more than "a word spoken in due season."² Our works declare, "I really do believe what I am teaching you."

Most children recognize a hypocritical parent. They are not fooled by parents who rejoice on Sunday, but frown and yell on Monday. They are not confused when mom and dad promise to help with Tuesday's meeting, yet fail to "show up." If mom commits her time to provide food for a bereaved family, they know that her continuous complaints

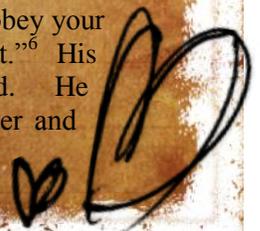
reflect her reluctance. "Our actions speak louder than our words."

We may not want to admit it, but it is a fact. If we frown, yell, and complain, they will imitate us. They will absorb our words and reflect our behavior. We cannot teach our children that "Jesus is Lord" until He is our Lord. They will not sit at Jesus' feet until our eyes "look full in His wonderful face."³ If we don't pray, they may fail to understand that God hears and answers prayer. Our behavior will make a difference.

The songwriter penned, "They will know we are Christians by our love."⁴ Certainly, this includes the children. Our children will know we are "Real Christians" by our love for God. They will see our heart for His kingdom, His church, His children, His Word, and His Spirit. They will note our desire to reach our world with His saving Word. God can change their lives because we are not half-hearted, faint of purpose, or slow to obey.

Now, I suppose someone may ask, "Can't God work in the lives of my children without my example?" I believe the answer is this: "Of course He can, but He doesn't want to." The scripture says, "Train up a child in the way he should go."⁵ Does this wonderful word "train" refer to the neighbor, a school, a teacher, a close friend, a youth director, or a pastor? Or does it primarily refer to mom and dad? The Apostle Paul said, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right."⁶ His emphasis was on mom and dad. He further declared, "Honour thy father and mother...that it may be well with

Jesus





thee.”⁷ Mom and dad’s honorable behavior leads their children to a life “full of blessing.”⁸

The role of mom and dad in the life of their children cannot be designated to others. The Apostle Paul gives us conclusive proof when he speaks to fathers saying, “Bring them up with the discipline and instruction approved by the Lord.”⁹ The writer of Proverbs agrees, “My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother.”¹⁰ In the final chapter of Proverbs, King Lemuel provides additional proof by introducing his words with this declaration, “The words of king Lemuel, the prophecy that his mother taught him.”¹¹ Mom and dad share the joyful responsibility of nurturing godly children.

Every child should expect godly advice and wisdom from his parents. Our commitment to them and to God should bring them to us when they are troubled. Years ago, a friend shared an experience with me that I can never forget. A young lady from a strong Pentecostal family had asked her for prayer. She suggested that this teenager confide in her mother and ask her to pray, but the young lady was reluctant. We might assume that this teenager wanted to keep her problem a secret from her family, but this was not the case. She did not know if they could help her. She said, “I have never seen my mother pray.”

When we do not obediently follow our God, we fail our children. Children should have great confidence in God because we walk with Him in victory. Our dedication to the Word of God and prayer should lead them to seek His presence. In times of trouble, our joyful praise and thanksgiving can establish God’s faithfulness and eliminate their fears. Through us, they know our “more than enough” God and His power. They know the truth and the truth makes them free.¹² This is our desire!

Wayne and I worked diligently to teach our children about God. We began when they were young with family devotions after supper. For some time, this was great, but the day came when they had outgrown our effort. We turned our devotional time over to them and they took turns reading, drawing pictures and praying just as we had done. This time was valuable. I believe the key to success is “pray first,” “be brief,” and “make it fun.”

God knows what will work in your family. Your responsibility is great, but He is greater! He will guide you by His Spirit. As you yield to the directions of the

Spirit of God, you will succeed. Every effort inspired by the Holy Spirit will prosper. It will not be by your own strength or ability, but by the power of the living God.

The way of the Spirit is very important. Wayne and I were adults before we understood His power. After we were baptized with the Holy Spirit, it became our hearts’ desire to present this life-changing truth to our children. We wanted to share this Pentecostal experience that had been unknown to us. I’ve known parents who have chosen to shield their kids, thinking the ways of the Spirit might confuse them. If I could urge and implore anything, it would be to teach them about the power of the Holy Spirit. It is very important to understand the magnificence of God and the work of Christ, but it is also vital to comprehend the presence of the Spirit of God in our lives!

Come, my children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD. Psalm 34:11 NIV

It is equally important to teach children to pray. One of our friends encouraged family prayer by setting the kitchen timer for ten minutes. Everybody prayed in the Spirit for ten minutes. At first, this was a long time, but eventually no one stopped at the sound of the timer. Oh, how important! Prayer is powerful. This communication with God is for adults and for children.

These hours of Bible study and prayer prepare our children for the day when they will make their own choices. The scripture says, “I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life.”¹³ It will be easier for them to choose God’s life if we have trained them. If they reject the way of God even for a short time, our heart is undisturbed because our faith is anchored in God. God declared, “I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring.”¹⁴ This is God’s promise. He is working!



¹ 1 John 3:18 ² Proverbs 15:23 ³ “Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus” Words & Music by Helen H. Lemmel, 1922 ⁴ “They Will Know We Are Christians By Our Love” Words & Music by Peter Scholtes ⁵ Proverbs 22:6 ⁶ Ephesians 6:1 ⁷ Ephesians 6:2-3 ⁸ Ephesians 6:3, NLT ©1996 ⁹ Ephesians 6:4, NLT ©1996 ¹⁰ Proverbs 1:8 ¹¹ Proverbs 31:1 ¹² John 8:32 ¹³ Deuteronomy 30:19 ¹⁴ Isaiah 44:3