



NO GREATER JOY

JAN-FEB 2018



THE PARENTAL
Root
PAGE 3



Q&A
PAGE 16

"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth" (III John 4).

NGJ ministries



For 25 years, NGJ Ministries has reached families for Christ. That has not changed. But this past year, an unusually plentiful and unexpected harvest began in areas of the world we never thought we would be able to reach. If God keeps this door open, we will reach millions—mostly

Muslims—with the Gospel this year. All this has changed the dynamics of the office in a major way. PLEASE PRAY for God's protection, and pray that a born-again, missions-minded, disciplined tech geek will come to help us.

WHY IS THIS MAGAZINE ISSUE EXTRA SPECIAL? AND HOW DID YOU GET ALL OF THOSE CUTE PHOTOS?

In November we announced a cover photo contest on No Greater Joy's Facebook page, and invited readers to submit their photos! We were overwhelmed with an abundance of AMAZING photos. As you can see, NGJ readers have the cutest kids! But we had a problem... we couldn't decide which picture to use, they were all so good! So EVERY smiling face in this magazine issue was submitted by a reader! Do you see anyone you know?

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NGJ ministries

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Ryder Polizzi, age 7, photo by Kelly Polizzi.



Carrie Hopkins with children, Ivan and Rose. Photo submitted by Greg Hopkins.

THE PARENTAL ROOT

By Michael Pearl

Letter From a Wife

Now I will convey to you the complications I seem to have with rearing my three children.

I praise our Lord for a wonderful Christian home. But with the struggles of each day, the varying differences between my husband and me seem to intensify with the delicate process of rearing our three children. They are ages 10, 6 1/2, & 4. As a result of my husband becoming a true and genuinely active Christian after the age of 36, he has contrarily

maintained a somewhat conflicting and contradictory viewpoint in specific relation to the more liberal attitude toward training and disciplining our children. This obviously creates a greater difficulty to uphold a truly consistent pattern of discipline. I believe godly principles dictate a parental enforcement and reinforcement of obedience to God and parents.

I am interested in your answer to one specific area of dispute. My husband contends that a ten-year-old little girl is

"too big" to spank, but I disagree. Could you please clarify this according to your principles of understanding.

Another specific concern might be with regard to negative attitudes from children at the time of completing an instruction to do household chores or daily routines. Please present your viewpoint on this issue. Thanks so much for the godly instruction you provide.

May God richly bless your ministries as well as you and your family.

Sincerely,

Vastly conservative mother of 3

Michael Answers

Thanks for your plain letter . I will be equally plain in my answer. You have described your family problems from your one-sided perspective, which is the way we usually hear the details of a conflict. From many years of counseling I have learned to never take at face value the interpretation of only one member of a controversy. And with no more than the contents of just one letter, it is difficult to be certain in my interpretation of the situation, but to answer, it is necessary to make some assumptions.

If there were just 100 questions with 100 answers, I could match the answer with the question. Like your question as to whether or not it is appropriate to spank a ten-year-old girl: There is no one right answer that covers all circumstances. Fathers usually cease spanking girls at an earlier age than do mothers. Perhaps for him she is too old;

for you, maybe an occasional spanking is still in order. It differs with the child and the relationship you sustain with him or her. Under normal conditions, where training started sooner, a ten-year-old would not need spanking. You had better get the job done in a hurry—she will likely be too old for a spanking by the time she is twelve.

As to your question regarding the bad attitude of children faced with unpleasant commands, again, there is not a single answer that covers all situations. I cannot say that all children with bad attitudes should be spanked until they smile, or given double workloads until they are thankful, etc. We have offered several practical solutions to this issue in our books, No Greater Joy, Volumes One, Two and Three. The main thing is to never allow the child's attitude to control your expectations, unless it is to cause you to demand more.

Understand me. Family is first a matter of relationships, not techniques and appropriate responses. If you are



Shields Family | Photo by Bethany Sams of Bethany Sams Photography



THE DRIVE TO DOMINATE HAS WORKED MORE EVIL IN THE WORLD THAN ANY OTHER FACTOR.

running a correctional facility with inmates, you could spell out the proper penalty and response to a given infraction of the rules, and by being consistent you could maintain discipline and order. But our goal in parenting is to train a soul into godliness, not just gain compliance.

From the child's perspective, training is better instituted through emulation rather than capitulation. If we lose the child's heart, we have lost the battle before we even know what the issues are. The attitude of parents—the mother in particular—is the fountain from which flow all family relationships. Mother is the morale of the family. Therefore, as counselors, until we have dealt with parental attitudes, we are wasting our time. A technique that is right for one person can be wrong for another when it is dished out with the wrong attitude. A rod can heal or destroy. A rebuke can bring repentance or communicate rejection. A warning can turn the heart of the child before it gets out of hand or it can produce rebellion. There is no technique or appropriate response that can conceal a parent's heart and produce fruit different from the

parental root.

To answer your questions—the questions of any parent where conflict is the issue—I must address the attitude of the parent; I must make some bold assumptions. I am limited to generalizations, limited to the many personal experiences I have had in hearing questions phrased and then digging deeper until I could attach a disposition to them. It helps greatly to look into the eyes and read body language, but I must know you through your words.

The general content of your letter assumes that the fault in your home is your husband's. Before you begin to discuss the issues, you say the right words: "praise the Lord for a wonderful Christian home" and for a "true and genuinely active Christian husband." Those statements are not consistent with that which follows, for in reference to your husband you say "varying differences between my husband and I seem to intensify." He has "contrarily maintained . . . conflicting and contradictory viewpoint" with an attitude that is "more liberal" than your own. Your husband creates a "greater difficulty." You have "one specific area of dispute" with him. Your husband "contends," and you "disagree." If this

is a “wonderful Christian home,” don’t expect any converts.

You must understand we are all possessed with an inordinate drive to control. That one is seeking to control others in the realm of religion does not sanctify the selfish drive. **If the Devil was limited to imparting just one vice, I suspect he would choose a religious, controlling spirit.** The drive to dominate has worked more evil in the world than any other factor. Homes are destroyed and children are scarred, not by bad training techniques or by one member of the family that is “too liberal,” but by two people competing for domination. The children can survive a little liberality. They can survive too few or too many spankings, but the conflict that arises between two parents seeking to control each other, even for the greater good, creates a caustic atmosphere that rots the souls of their children.

It is a great beginning to accept the reality that there is only one person in the world we can control—ourselves. Self-control is a lifetime challenge managed only through the Lord Jesus Christ. To control others is an elusive sweetness reserved for the violent and the mesmerizing cultist. But there is hardly a marriage that is not bleeding from attempts to control and dominate. The mother cuts the father, as you have done in this letter; the father cuts the mother, and the children bleed. They ask me for medicine to give the children to

stop the bleeding, and when I tell the parents that they are the ones who need to take the medicine, they are sure I am directing my advice to the other partner, the one that will not cooperate.

Your letter implies you cannot be a good wife and mother, and you cannot train your children, because your husband will not cooperate. Understand this. You cannot wait until the world is a good place before you become good. You cannot wait until the church is revived to experience your own revival. And you cannot wait until your spouse is right before you do right. You must be the kind of person God requires despite the condition of your spouse. Your spouse is outside the limits of your control. Accept that and go forward, or stop here and dig in your heels, which will create a grave for your children. If you make your husband’s compliance a condition to the success of your parenting, you have already lost the battle. Children can survive inconsistency, but they will never survive dissension and discord.

I am not using hyperbole when I say your children would be in a better condition if you were as “liberal” as your husband, believed exactly as he does, and the two of you were joyously in sync at his lower level of “enforcement.” They would grow up with sloppy habits, possibly a bit lazy, and probably lack a high measure of self-control, but they would be emotionally secure. They would feel



Photo submitted by Kenzi Carmel

loved, valued, and, most importantly of all, they would not be bitter and rebellious as they will be if raised in a home filled with parental conflict. **You can minister life to your children by providing an atmosphere that says you are absolutely delighted with your husband, but you only minister death if they feel you are in disagreement with him.** By your rejection of your husband—the ultimate authority in the home—you erode the very concept of authority in the minds of your children. Regardless of your words, you are training them in rebellion.

This concept is the most important training principle I can give you, and it is the most common need. It reminds me of an experience I had when I was about ten years old. My parents left my eight-year-old brother and me at home. We were ordered to do the dishes, after which we could split an entire chocolate pie. I loved chocolate pie. To be able to split a whole pie into two equal pieces and eat half by myself was joy beyond description. As we washed the dishes

TO CONTROL OTHERS IS AN ELUSIVE SWEETNESS RESERVED FOR THE VIOLENT AND THE MESMERIZING CULTIST.

we began to argue over who was going to cut the pie. Neither of us trusted the other to be fair in dividing it. I was two years older and was obviously more qualified to enforce my broadly experienced will. But my brother was equally determined to make sure justice was accomplished. When the last dish was put away, we both rushed to the table. I pulled the pie over to make the cut. He pulled it back his way. We struggled until the pie landed upside down on the dirty kitchen floor. I can still feel the total sense of loss, seeing that beautiful chocolate pie splattered out in a two-foot circle, the cat lapping at the edges. Of course it was his fault for not appreciating my judgment. But he thought it was my fault for enforcing

my will. When our parents came home and heard our complaints, they only laughed, saying something about “hoping we had learned our lesson.” I’m sure he didn’t. That was 63 years ago and still he has not repented. Oh well, he just wouldn’t listen to sound advice.

Now, my slightly embellished story is certainly funny today; from time to time when we get together we laugh over it. But I hope you were able to interpret my little parable. Parents that struggle over how to raise the kids end up spilling the whole pie. It would be better to resign yourself to eating the little piece of pie, no matter the cost to your pride, than to demand your rights and end up standing over the mess. Is blame so sweet that you would risk the pie just to see that he doesn’t get away with anything? You say, “But it is different; I am fighting for the right for my kids to eat pie.” A big piece of pie eaten in tension may cause indigestion or regurgitation. A little eaten in peace with thankfulness is the good life.

I have often said, if you find that your expectations of your spouse or your children are so high that you are angry at them for failing to comply, it is far better to lower expectations to your smiling threshold than to scowl at them from your high perch. We are not asking you to compromise truth, but to resign as policeman of that truth. **We are not asking you to lay aside your convictions, but to lay aside the conviction that you are duty bound to pass those convictions**



Joshua and Lydia Bullock
Photo submitted by
Stacey Bullock

on to your husband, and that he should be obliged to follow your lead. Truth, love, discipline, justice, joy, and obedience are not well supported by criticism, blame, anger, and accusation.

You are not responsible for the actions of your husband. If he is truly less capable than you are, demonstrate your expertise by training your children in such a way that they never suspect there is any conflict. They may know that you are tougher and absolutely consistent, but they will suppose that such is just normal. “Daddy and Mama love each other dearly. He lets us get away with more than she does, but we know that when he is not around we had better walk the line.”

Mother, you spend far more time with your little ones than he does. In most homes, the mother is responsible for more than 80% of the training time, and the father for less than 20%. If you

do your job right, he will not be able to undo it in the evening, unless you set up a tension that causes the children to lose respect for the both of you and for authority in general. In that case, they will rebel against you, knowing that they are working two opposing sides. When parents are not known to be in perfect agreement and do not present a unified command, in the minds of the children it leaves an authority vacuum, and the kids will step in to fill that vacuum. You, Mother, are the only one that can communicate the concept that there is divided authority. The children will never interpret the differences between the liberal father and the strict mother as divided command unless you communicate that through open challenge in their presence or through slights you make when he is not present.

I know what you are thinking: "But I cannot just give up and resign my children to what I know is going to be very bad training. They are too important to allow my husband to spoil them." You are still assuming that you can fight a battle with your husband and change him. You are still convinced that if you just push harder and demand more, he will eventually see the error of his way and follow you in your greater wisdom. Yea, and if it happens, it will be the first time in the history of the world that a husband has bowed to pressure from his wife and matured as a result. No man ever crawled out from under the criticism of his wife to become a better man. Such

**NO MAN EVER CRAWLED
OUT FROM UNDER THE
CRITICISM OF HIS WIFE TO
BECOME A BETTER MAN.**

**SUCH IS THE ILLUSION OF
A CONTROLLING SPIRIT.**

is the illusion of a controlling spirit. I am not commanding the male ego; I am stating reality. Flow with it and prosper, or resist it and die with the satisfaction that it was your husband who destroyed your family—you stood on your principles.

If parents withhold affection from a child on the condition that he deserve it, he will never seek affection from his parents and will eventually reach a place where he will resent affection and reject it if they try to give it. Likewise, if a husband withholds love from his wife on the condition that she honor him, she will dishonor him with the zeal of a fanatic. And she will deliberately make him aware of those whom she does honor, just to show him what he is missing. And so it is that if a woman withholds honor from her husband on the condition that he become honorable, he may become honorable for others, but he will never become honorable for her. If you fail to take into account the reverse psychology of a fallen, perverted race, you are building on fanciful imaginations. ■

A Young Lady Writes...

I am courting a wonderful Godly young man, who I'm convinced is the man I will eventually marry. His parents are good, Christian people, but I have never heard him say one good thing about his parents. Anything he has ever said about his parents has been negative. It has been bothering me, and I would like to say something about it, only I don't know what I should or can say. Do you have any advice? Thanks.
~Allie

Debi Answers:

A root of bitterness defileth many. Bitterness is made known by what comes from the mouth. It is like the worst weed—hard to wipe out. It goes on for years and years continuing in its path of spoiling. Whether his parents are totally guilty is not the issue...bitterness is destructive now and always. Tell him what you see in his attitude towards his parents, and give him time to search his heart. Don't let his bitterness mess up the next generation.

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Benjamin Reeves and Melanie Nelson
are in a courtship that began in May.
Photo credit: Lauren Reeves



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BETTER LATE THAN Never

—By a lonely divorcee

WHEN MY HUSBAND left me I was shocked, hurt, and humiliated.

Now that the years have passed, I can be honest and say that the humiliation was by far the worst of my pain. I simply assumed he couldn't live without me, so I was sure he would never leave. I didn't treat him with honor all the time because he was not honorable, but I sincerely believed I was a good wife and friend to everyone. I would have used words like kind, sweet, understanding, and fun-loving to describe myself. I went out of my way for people; I was sacrificial even. Then, with his leaving, my frame of reference was suddenly shattered.

I cried for days, weeks, and then off and on for months. It is hard to explain, but at that time of my life, the extreme pain I felt seemed righteous in nature.

Maintaining this righteous high ground is what kept me a prisoner of my own hurtful thoughts; it kept me from seeing the truth, and it kept me bound to what I was. For months my thoughts were first about my ex: "How could he leave after I had invested so much in caring for him and the children?" Then I felt my righteous indignation come alive and I thought, "He will pay in dollars by supporting me." But it is hard to maintain a constant bubbling of anger toward someone who is just gone . . . so gone.

My hurt then turned to those in my life whom I thought were my closest friends and family (even my own children). I was stunned that they didn't rush in to soothe my soul. They were kind in their own distant ways, but they all had their own lives, their own families, and no one gathered me into their fold. All I knew at the time is that

their neglect exacerbated my feelings of rejection, bringing me even greater pain. I knew my friends and even my family had gatherings that I was not invited to. I felt excluded. I had always seen myself as a loving person and certainly not a person who would ever treat a friend with so little care. How could these people be so insensitive?

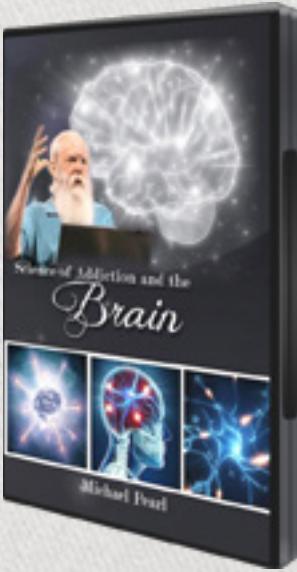
When I reflect on that time of my life, I can see I was not only full of anger and bitterness toward my ex, but I was also quick to be offended by anyone who didn't show concern for me. I know my conversation was negative and condemning of whoever was causing me pain on any given day. Who wants someone at their child's birthday who will pull them to the side to talk trash about another?

Each Sunday I played mental games with myself regarding why I couldn't go to church: my back hurt, I was coming down with a cold, I didn't sleep well last night, etc. I imagined that everyone wondered where I was and felt guilty about their lack of being a good friend to check on me. Now that I look back, I might have had a sense that church might not be the place I would be met with sympathy but rather with hard, truthful love.

This is what happened, and it didn't come from the pulpit. When I finally went to church, I was hit hard. One of the older, fragile ladies was standing at the door greeting people. She drew me forward for a hug. It was like that soft hug

awakened that righteous indignation I had been harboring for so long. I distinctly remember feeling spiritually condescending toward the old lady, so I suspect I sounded that way too as I responded, "Well, that was a surprise. I didn't know you even remembered I existed." Her response was not the stumbling embarrassment or profuse apology for neglecting me that I expected. Instead she said in a very dry reprimanding tone, "To get hugs you must give hugs." I was stung with hurt at her lack of compassion, and I guess she saw the sudden tears in my eyes. But she was an old lady and had obviously been through all of life's ups and downs, so she didn't budge. She only smiled and said something like, "People are drawn to people full of thanksgiving, not to pity parties. You can't expect people who are carrying a thousand pounds of burdens to carry yours as well. It is time for you to get off your high horse, shake the dirt off, and start giving to other people." It was rude—a rude awakening, that is.

That was the day I slowly began to wake up from my self-induced fit of blaming everyone. I guess it was the day I finally realized that if no one loved me, if no one sought to be my friend, then it was because I was unloving and selfish. I didn't have anything to contribute; I just wanted other people to put me first. I tried to get the old lady's remark out of my mind, but I knew that I had become a hard-to-love human being; maybe I



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-Will Durant

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always was and didn't know it. People didn't avoid me because they were ungodly; they avoided me because I was a demanding, negative drain. Somewhere over the years while doing a lot of it, I learned that you can't accusingly demand or shame people into loving you, even your family or friends. Love is earned. Friendship is earned.

Someone from the local senior citizens' group called me and said they needed a lady to lead the exercise class. Begrudgingly, I took the job. I was by far the youngest of the lot, but certainly not the healthiest, so the exercise proved to be good for me physically and good for my soul. Plus, I was giving hugs.

Then a single mom from our community caught my attention. She was struggling to raise many children with a very limited income and no help. I needed her older children to do some jobs around the house that I could no longer do, so becoming friends was

good for all of us. I made a conscious effort to love her children and to win their respect. The more I loved them the more I could see how I had lost my own children. My heart grieved for the terrible loss, but I finally stopped crying over spilled milk and began to pour my life into this new, adopted family. Over the years that life and love have grown into a precious, long-term commitment.

It took a lifetime and two divorces for me to learn the lesson of where the bitterness and anger came from. I still have days when I lose sight of this knowledge and wisdom, as it seems so fleeting at times. But then I always have my circumstances there to remind me. I wake alone and spend some part of most every day trying to figure out how to make ends meet. So much in my life was lost—my health, my children, two marriages, and many friends. But this one thing I know: it is better late than never. I have found solace in seeing the good fruit from a very late harvest. ■

These ARE A FEW OF OUR **FAVORITE THINGS**



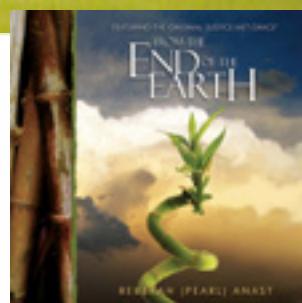
The Schauermann Family in Palmer, Alaska
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Ryder (age 7) and
Willow (age 10) Polizzi.
Photo by Kelly Polizzi

LET THERE BE Peace (NOT PIECES)

By Debi Pearl

THIS IS THE STORY of two border collies, both trying to protect my doomed chickens. Actually, the chickens and dogs illustrate a more pertinent truth about peace.

I was trying to work at the computer one fall day when I heard a terrible ruckus outside and instantly knew it was my precious chickens in distress. At the time, seven grandchildren from two different

MOST CONFLICT IS TWO PEOPLE PROTECTING THEIR RIGHTS AGAINST THE OTHER PERSON'S SELFISHNESS.



Photo submitted by
Katharina Epp

families were playing right outside my window. I was also dog sitting for another grandkid.

At the sound of chickens squawking, I jumped to my feet and took off running. The answer to the question you are asking is yes, grandmas in their late 60s can still run—fast! The garden had been harvested so I had started letting my chickens out to enjoy foraging in the mulch. It was a little like going to heaven for the chickens until the two border collies realized the chickens were out of their pen and needed to be herded. My border collie, Peleg, is mischievous; he likes to show his dominance when it comes to chickens and cats. He also feels the need to put the other border collie, Chloe, in her place. Chloe is gentle, tender, and very protective toward all animals, especially chickens since she was raised with them. She protects

them from the bossier Peleg at all cost. On several occasions Peleg has grabbed a chicken to play with it and Chloe grabbed the other end to protect it. A chicken divided cannot stand.

Such an awful noise! They were at it again. As I rounded the corner at a full grandma run, I stooped to pick up an old eight-foot cane pole we had used to stake tomatoes. Both dogs were in the open chicken pen and there was not a chicken in sight, but even with my partial deafness I could hear one chicken calling my name, “HELP! MAMA PEARL!”

The two young collies have extremely good hearing and they have both felt the sting of my wrath in previous chicken escapades. I was running, yelling, and beating the ground with the cane pole, so they took off like lightening, their tails tucked out of sight.

I took the grandkids and hunted for chickens all day long. We found the trembling, hiding hens one by one, and finally all eleven were back in the fold, with two missing the entire end of their tails—and not just feathers.

Later in the day two of my perfect grandkids got into a conflict, leaving both of them crying. One was upset at the other for supposed abuse of his walkie-talkie. I thought his rebuke was a little overboard, but it wasn't THAT bad, so I let the girl cousin cry it out. Later she got hurt with a rope the boy cousin had tied between two objects, creating some kind of an obstacle course to be run by the daring. When she got hurt, being bossy and controlling, she demanded he take the rope down. He didn't. Then the girl cousin's younger brother ran into the rope and was hurt. This really elevated the drama. Girl cousin was very

offended that boy cousin was so irresponsible. I thought he was too, but it wasn't THAT bad, so I told him to be more careful, and that if it was inherently dangerous he should remove the rope. But girl cousin was quite offended, not just from the rope incident but from the previous accusation of walkie-talkie abuse. So I hugged the offended girl and put her on the couch to read a book. Boy cousin walked through the house a while later and made a remark to the already offended girl, laying the blame on her. It was now a question of "who done it the WORST."

I did what any good grandma does: I asked if anyone was hungry. Food is a great distractor and defuser. I knew I would have to deal with the issue sooner or later... but later seemed like a good idea. In the meantime, I went out to check how many chickens had made it back to the pen. Offended boy cousin



Photo credit: Netty Falk

A ROD CAN HEAL OR DESTROY. A REBUKE CAN BRING REPENTANCE OR COMMUNICATE REJECTION. A WARNING CAN TURN THE HEART OF THE CHILD BEFORE IT GETS OUT OF HAND OR IT CAN PRODUCE REBELLION.

Emma age 9, Brac age 8, and Maggie age 5, with Paulie the dog. Photo by Tiffany Keeton



“BOTH MAY BE RIGHT, BUT BOTH ARE CERTAINLY WRONG.”

came and walked on my left side (my hearing side), and offended girl cousin came to join me on my deaf side. They were no longer offended and were enjoying our comradery, so I chose that time to bring up the issue.

We saw the collies come running to join us, but when they realized we were at the chicken pen, they both did a mid-air turnaround that looked like one of those acts you see in a dog show. No doubt the memory of Granny and her cane pole flashed through their minds. We laughed at the dogs. I reminded the cousins that my dog, Peleg, never tries to pull my hens apart unless Chloe, my granddaughter’s dog, is here to protect them—pulling back on the other end. It is only when one dog is trying to compensate for the possible harm of the other dog that the chickens get hurt. About that time we heard the hawk’s loud screech. It had been circling overhead all day—no doubt looking for an opportunity to have chicken nuggets. I told them that the real enemy Peleg and Chloe should focus on was not each other but that menacing hawk.

As we walked along I said, “You two are about like the collies, both trying to do the responsible

thing and both pulling peace apart when you think things are not going correctly.” We watched the sibling collies tumbling over in the grass, biting and playing. Both kids laughed and said, “Yeah.”

The next day we were at church when someone quoted Romans 12:18 and 21. *“If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men... Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.”*

Most conflict is two people protecting their rights against the other person’s selfishness. There is no resolution as long as attitudes remain. Adults as well as kids compete like the farm dogs over chickens. One dominant person lays down the law as he sees fit. Both may be right, but both are certainly wrong. And children are torn asunder as each tries to save them from the other.

God says, *“If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.”* Sometimes we can just give up our rights and suddenly peace descends. Sometimes no matter how much we give up, we just can’t make it happen. But as believers, we need to be ready to overcome evil with good. ■

I am THAT WOMAN WHO IS PERFECTLY SUITED FOR HIM.

Dear Debi Pearl,

A few months after my husband and I married, I found myself in the pit of emotional distress and feeling like maybe my marriage wasn't going to make it. About that time I received your book, CREATED TO BE HIS HELP MEET



from my mom.

I grew up in a hostile environment where tempers flared and men were idiots who got angry and were less than reliable. If mom needed

something done, mom fixed it. If mom needed something moved, she did it. We didn't wait for dad. We didn't ask dad. We didn't include dad. So, all that I've ever learned, even after becoming a Christian (at the age of 13yrs.) still rattled around in my mind as truth. So, there I sat looking at your book. In the front of the book mom wrote this inscription, "May you learn some God-given wisdom from Debi that I never got to model for you."

Debi, I've read this book every year of my marriage. (That's 8 years) I have continued to find

more and more wisdom through reading the scriptures and your life examples. It has also helped to destroy the lies Satan filled my mind with while growing up. The biggest example of this is page 21, toward the bottom you ask a question that God used to move my life in such huge ways. The question is, "If God created a special woman, perfectly suited to be your husband's helper, would you be that woman?" Year after year I was plagued with this question. My answer was always, "No I'm not her, I have to many flaws. I'm too broken. I never do anything right. I'm always feeling angry and slighted." Slowly, year after year these lies peeled away. But that question kept haunting me. When I read Proverbs 31, I just felt like I've not changed enough to answer yes. I'd read scriptures about how the older women are to train the younger in Titus. Nothing moved my mind. But 2 years ago, God pressed on me as I read the book again. I

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couldn't get past that question. Finally it hit me. I AM. I AM HIS WIFE, I AM THAT WOMAN WHO IS PERFECTLY SUITED FOR HIM. Then God pressed this question on me, if I am her, now am I willing to fill that position? My eyes went wide and filled with tears, my heart burned. Yes!

This book has encouraged me. Your life examples have encouraged me. Thank you, Debi, for being that mother to me through this book, to teach me how

a wife should be. God used your life to minister to me, He used your passion to bring my hardening heart back to Him, to fill that role of wife that He called me to. The last few years God has pulled many scales from my eyes.

Anyway, I just wanted to encourage you that this ministry, God is using you in Mighty ways. Thank you for your obedience to Christ and your husband.

Your sister in Christ, Jessie



QUESTIONS & Answers

By Debi Pearl

1

Did you keep your baby in the same room with you when cooking or cleaning, or did you leave her to play alone?

Debi Answers

I enjoyed my baby being a part of my life, so from the beginning I would move her from room to room so she could watch me and hear my voice as I sang or talked to her. When she was 8 or 10 months old and was playing

on the floor I would come and go as needed from kitchen to living room, but I always kept up a flow of joyful, cheerful singing or talk. If I finished cleaning a bedroom and knew I would be in the kitchen for a while I carried her to where I would be working. I tried not to let her develop fear or anxiety over being left alone. Fear is hard to eradicate once it takes root. If I was out of sight and heard her make a noise that indicated fear, I would call

out cheerfully, "Here I am. Come find Mama!"—while laughing and playing. When she made it around the corner, I would swoop her up in a happy tone to break the cycle immediately and put her fears to rest in the joy of the moment.

Everything you do or don't do is training. It is far better to anticipate your child's needs and take steps to make all experiences productive. Your calm, happy voice—be it talking or singing—is the greatest element in training. The next effective tool you have is the child's participation, even if it is just watching as you cook or clean. Training is like basting. It is a slow process of soaking up the atmosphere of the home until it permeates the child. By the time your little one can walk, she should be participating in all your activities. It will slow you down having little helpers, but it is what being a parent is all about. The Scripture says, "...but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame" (*Proverbs 29:15*).

2 My little guy panics and screams when he notices he is alone. Should I spank him?

No, don't spank. Spanking is for rebellion, not fear, confusion, distress, pain, or weariness. Never force a small child to endure emotions they cannot handle. You cause a child to learn self-control by meting out the trials in increments the child can manage. If you increase the stress level

daily, but never beyond the child's ability to cope, the child will soon become a seasoned veteran while remaining emotionally secure.

The unknown is scary. Parents need to learn to talk to their children—a LOT. Even a baby should hear mother saying, "Mama is washing the dishes so they will be clean. The water is warm; feel the warm water." Knowledge and understanding



Nate and Ellie
Photo by Mary Colwell

bring peace. Think of children as immigrants to a strange land with an unidentifiable language, where bizarre things are always popping up in front of them.

If a child came into my care who was already full of anxiousness and fear, I could break him of it in less than six months by creating absolutely secure situations in which I allowed a very small amount of stress to enter—never enough to destroy his security, but enough to test it. For example, if a child screamed when left alone,

I would not leave him alone until I could do so without him screaming. Now I am assuming we are dealing with a child who is genuinely fearful, not one who pretends fear in order to control others. A mother knows the difference.

Each day, in an atmosphere of great security and fellowship, I would play games of hide and seek, in the same room. Duck behind a chair where the child cannot see you but knows where you are, laughing all the while. When the child learns to endure one level of being alone, take it further. Tell the child that you are going to step around the corner and come right back. Go only as far and stay only as long as the child can

endure without losing it—even if it is just two feet and three seconds. You want him to feel just a little stress or fear and then immediately discover that there is no reason to fear. Over a period of days or weeks, increase the distance and time the child is left alone until he can manage isolation without fear. That is training. And there are many variations of this technique that can be applied to all training needs.

3

Both of my small children are overly loud when they cry or ask for something. It doesn't matter if they are hurt, scared, mad, hungry, or just wanting attention. How can I train them to tone it down?

This usually becomes a problem when very laid-back parents ignore their small children's cries until their irritation turns to vocal protests and then screaming. It is an effective voice for a language-less child. Babies develop this habit quickly, and it takes a lot of time and immediate attention to conquer it.

First, always respond to the first sound of need. Look straight at your child to show them that they have your attention, and then put your index finger over their lips while whispering, "Shhhh." Even if they are as young as 8 months old, they will quickly get the idea. If the LOUD habit is already established, it will take hundreds of times for them to re-



Delmar Schrock, age 7
Photo by Galina Schrock

Annalee Hope Barnett



establish a more moderated tone.

They developed this mode of communication (screaming) because it worked. When they discover a more effective means, they will switch. Furthermore, when the screaming becomes counterproductive, they will cease doing it.

If they are out of control and you cannot get their attention, a thump or one swat with a switch will communicate that their behavior is unacceptable and unproductive. Don't rely upon the physical discipline alone. Employ it as part of your comprehensive training.

4 My daughter is totally uninterested in crawling. She likes walking by holding our fingers. If I put her down on all fours, she cries like she is in pain. Should we put her down anyway and let her cry until she stops, or should I spank her for crying?

Don't spank her for doing what you have trained her to do. Have you been down on all fours lately? It hurts! But babies seem to build a set of tough hands and knees after a few days. Put her on a quilt on the floor and give her toys to play with. When she wants to come to you, encourage her to make it on her own. Get down on the floor and play, and then encourage her to crawl to you. It sounds like you are carrying her around or assisting her in walking. She needs to develop independence in getting around, and crawling is an important part of her physical and mental development. When you stop being her legs, she will learn to use her knees.

5 Please write down a typical schedule of your days when you had young children—the times you got up and went to bed and generally what you did each day. Also, did you put your infant to bed before you came to bed, even though it was sleeping with you?

I would lie down and nurse the baby to sleep and then get up to spend the evening with my husband. My baby slept fine whether I was there or not. My husband worked at home and I often worked with him doing whatever he was doing at the time, so our schedule revolved around him. When I finally had too many children to be with him all the time we developed more of a routine. Each night I tried to

put on a slow-cooker of beans or stew to cook for the next day. This would serve as lunch. This is a habit all young women should consider developing, as it saves money and last-minute panic, and your family eats healthier.

Babies and small children tend to wake you up earlier than nature does. In the morning, I nursed the baby in bed while the other children piled into bed to visit Daddy. After ten minutes we would get up, dress, do light clean-up of the bedrooms, and head to the kitchen for breakfast.

After breakfast Mike and the boys headed to the workshop. Beka, my oldest daughter, would help clean the house and get the baby girls cleaned up and dressed. I never finished before Mike and the boys were back for a big lunch, which I had mostly prepared the night before.

We all laid down for an afternoon rest. Beka read quietly in her room. My two little boys listened to Bible story tapes and read along in the picture book. All my children learned Bible and some reading while listening to those tapes. Nathan totally learned to read while reading along with the tapes, but Gabe needed a bit more help, and the tapes greatly improved his reading. It all happened while I took a nap with Daddy.

After a nap, Beka and the boys sat down to do a few workbook pages while the small children colored or played. I helped them with school as I washed clothes, sewed, canned,

gardened, cleaned house, and worked in the kitchen getting dinner ready.

When the children tired of school they went out to play or spend time with Daddy, and I got supper on the table. After supper the children took turns doing the dishes and cleaning the kitchen, from the time they were 6 years old. Now Gabe says it was almost too much for him at that age, so I would consider putting an 8-year-old with a 6-year-old if there is a lot of cleaning up to do.

While the children cleaned the kitchen, Mike and I often took a stroll, usually to the garden to work or down to the shop to see what he had done during the day. He spent most evenings away from home teaching or witnessing on the streets. I spent the evening sitting in the car with the kids (reading to them), watching Mike and praying, or at home reading and doing art projects with the children.

Of course, every day included more phone calls than you would believe, visits from people Mike had ministered to over the years, and running to the store. This is a tiny slice of what life was like back when we had a house full of children.

6

Did you allow your children to go to sleepovers or play outings at a friend's house? If so, how did you assure yourself that they would not be subjected to abuse of any kind—especially sexual? I have

**always heard that most molestation
is perpetrated by a family friend or
relative who is trusted.**

You heard right. If you read our mail you would be so paranoid about sleepovers that you would never let your child participate in them. When our porn article came out (on the NGJ website), we received a flood of letters from adults who were exposed to porn while sleeping over with a good friend or relative, or had friends over to their house who brought it with them.

These adults say that from the age of 6 or 7 when they first saw the pictures, they were addicted and have been all their lives. We also receive many letters from people who for years were molested by their brother's friends while the family slept. The little girls were always too sleepy and confused to be able to tell what was happening

to them every Friday night when big brother had his friends over. Parents never knew why little Suzy was such a problem when she turned 13 years old. I will repeat: anyone who has ever counseled or read as many letters as we do would NEVER open their children up to this possibility. It is too common and too terrible.

You really need to be reading our **Yell and Tell** books to your children regularly. I say this: Those prepared are usually SPARED.

I will never forget when I was writing the **Yell and Tell** books, a mother said to me in a very self-righteous huff after seeing a proof of my first book, "I would never want my child to think people wanted to do things to her." That SAME mama wrote back shamed and full of regret a few months later. She said her young daughter was

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Gigi Peachey | Photo credit: Katherine Peachey

sending naked pictures of herself to young teen boys. A 12-year-old boy at church had taught her how to use the phone to do it. Sexting... at age 8.

I apologize for some of these questions being very personal, but we young mothers desperately need guidance from a mature, spiritual woman in how to nurture our children. On every side we are bombarded with one group saying we should carry our baby around in a sling and keep him with us constantly, sleep with our child, and don't spank. On the other side there are those that say, "Never let the child fall asleep while you are holding him, and don't rock him to sleep. Don't sleep with him because he will be too dependent on you, and let him cry during the night when he wakes up so he can learn to sleep through the night without eating."

Of course, there are others somewhere along the swinging pendulum, but you are the first I have heard that matches my gut instincts, that says the baby needs much nurturing and fellowship but also training and discipline. I am in desperate need of guidance so that I don't reinforce bad habits my daughter may have already developed. Thank you for all you do to help our families!

A. P.



Photo submitted by Hillary Hedrick

Dear young mothers, I would suggest you seek out advice from older grandmothers in your community. I would not look for "spiritual" type women, but just some plain, old lady who has a sense of humor and has maintained a respect and reverence for her husband, and who has grown children who like her to babysit the grandkids. Don't ask her to babysit, and don't take your children over to her house. Just call her and ask, "How do you cook dried black beans and rice?" While you are talking, ask her a simple question about how she handled a certain problem when her daughter was a baby.

We do the same thing. We often go to the country store here in our area and talk to the old men who hang around during the day. We ask them questions about child training, and they have loud, funny stories to tell and much wisdom that comes from just living a long, long time. My children always enjoyed listening to their tales. ■

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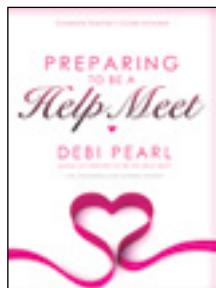
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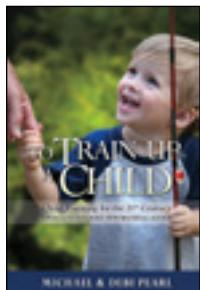
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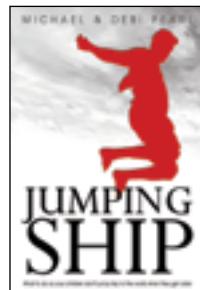
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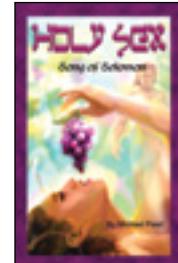
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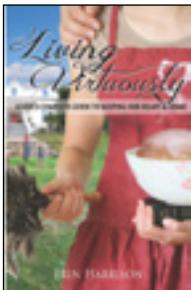
FAMILY BOOKS

Living Virtuously

A Wife's Complete Guide to Keeping Her Heart and Home

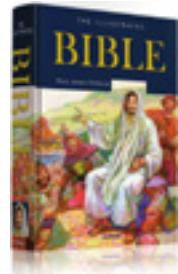
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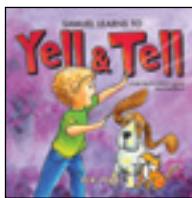
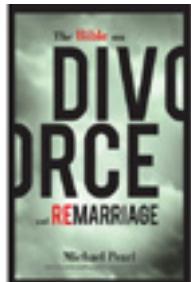


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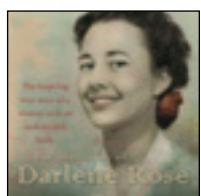
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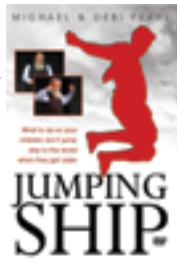
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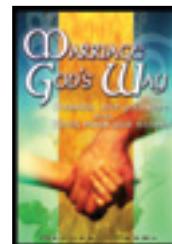


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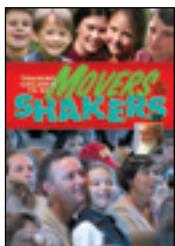


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Movers & Shakers

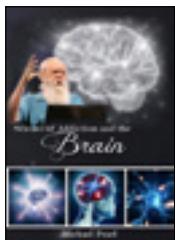
Michael encourages parents to train their children to be tomorrow's movers and shakers. Teach them to become leaders, entrepreneurs, statesmen—framers of tomorrow. 50 min.



6113-75 1 DVD \$12.95

Science of Addiction and the Brain

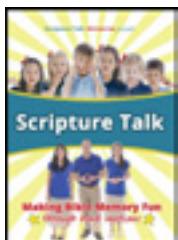
Addiction is the state of being enslaved to a substance or habit. At the 2014 Smoky Mountains Shindig, Michael delivered five packed messages supported by 185 animated PowerPoint™ slides on this subject.



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Scripture Talk

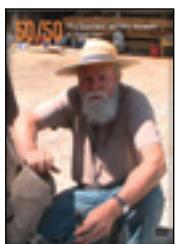
Scripture Talk combines hand motions, visual aids, and creative teaching to equip children of all ages to hide Scripture in their hearts, and apply it to their lives! Each of the 10 passages on the DVD includes a group of children demonstrating the passage, verse-by-verse teaching of the words and motions, and an engaging lesson explaining the passage and how the children can apply it to their lives. All Scripture is from the King James version.



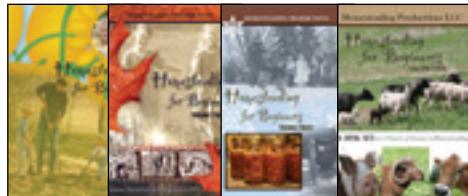
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Unscripted and spontaneous, follow Mike around the farm as he answers your Bible questions. Varied questions and answers in a changing context makes this series captivating. 270 min.



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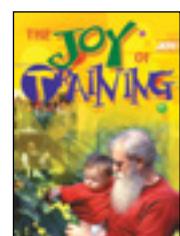
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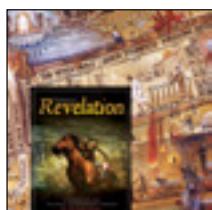
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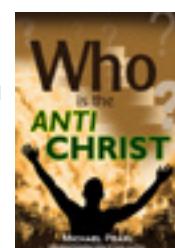


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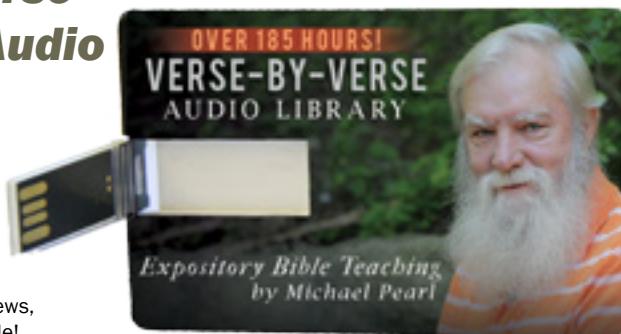


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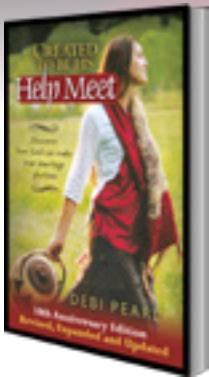
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