

TOOLS FOR THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

Tools For The Christian family presents many helps for all Christian homes and for teachers as well.

Four comprehensive, yet concise sections will help you understand the Biblical functions of a Christian family, and guide you in making devotions “life.”

This book provides a scriptural resource for building Christian character and discipling your children.

Dr. Edward Watke Jr., veteran pastor, effective evangelist and personable preacher, is the author of numerous practical Bible study books. He and his wife, Joyce, have co-authored this book, *“Tools for the Christian Family.”*

Joyce Watke is known for her heart-touching poems and illustrations that delight the hearers. Her clear application of the Word of God to women’s daily life has challenged many.

Through the years of ministry, the Watkes have spoken in nearly forty states and nine foreign countries making eighteen trips out of the United States. God has expanded their ministry through the distribution of their books and cassette ministry.

Preface

For over fifteen years now my wife, Joyce, and I have ministered in churches in *Family Life Crusades*.

Countless times we have been asked for ideas for family altars, or family devotional times. Many other times concern has been shown by various Families about *how to* build character traits into the lives of their children. Some families have shared with us that for years they have been challenged about having a family altar time, but no one has told them how to do it. Seemingly they have not found the **tools** to aid them in their task. ***This is a “how to” book!***

We have both felt a burden to write a book which would help in a number of areas so this book of **tools** finally came about in about 1988. It is not our thought that this is the last work, or totally exhaustive, but we hope that the materials, suggestions and aids for various areas covered will go far in ***helping many families bring forth godly seed or godly children for God’s glory.***

This book will be of little value unless the parents study through it thoroughly and discuss together fully how they are going to implement the materials, ideas, and suggestions that are found herein. Far too often parents have some idea of what they ought to do, and then never follow through to bring it to pass. This book will give you the **“tools”** with which to work toward the goal of rearing children for the Lord.

Dr. and Mrs. Edward Watke Jr.

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Acknowledgement

You will note the absence of a bibliography in this volume. Much of the materials is the gathering together of many things gleaned over the years from many and varied sources.

Joyce and I especially desire to acknowledge the work of Mrs. Connie Moffitt (our daughter) who had labored many years researching the study of character traits for various age groups. Some years ago she had put in a great deal of time in this study. We are indebted to her for this labor of love.

For nearly ten years now (1995) Connie and her husband, Robert Alan Moffitt and their four children have lived in Austria where they are missionaries with Baptist International Missions, Inc.

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FUNCTIONS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

Introduction

What are the planned functions of the family in God's will and mind? What is it that God desires of the family? To understand the functions of a family is to be able to enter into His divine will and to build the family as He desires.

These things ought to be studied, read, and even memorized. We should be considering what we need to change in order to have our family function in every area for their good and for God's glory. Here we list with some detail God's plan for its function:

THE HOME IS A PLACE TO TEACH AND SATURATE WITH BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES:

(The purpose is that the next generation will be preserved from practicing sin.)

That They Might Understand the Doctrines

The Roman Catholics give up to seven years to mold the child in their doctrines. Communists say that a child is teachable from 1-7, can be bent from 7-12 yes old, must be broken between 12-16, and after that only death can change them.

As we read Isaiah 28:9-10 we note God desires that children receive understandable doctrine... even from the time they are weaned from the breast. It is said in Muslim countries that portions of the Koran are given to the children for them to literally swallow, probably an evidence of what they do to indoctrinate the small child. It is also to be noted that in rural Indian villages they use sticks to teach children Hindu religious precepts for they understand the need of a child knowing at a very young age the teachings of their beliefs.

If we do not saturate our child's heart and mind with the Biblical principles he so sorely needs, how will we preserve the next generation for God's glory?

That We Might Secure the Future

It is amazing how many verses speak of *"teaching our children's children"* the Scriptures, how to *"fear God, to cleave unto Him and to obey His commands."* (See Deut. 4:9-11; 4:40; 5:28,29; 31: 12, 13) In Psalms 78:5-8 we read the following: *"For He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children; that the generation to come might know them, even the children who should be born, who should arise and declare them to their children; that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments; and might not be as their fathers..."*

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Parents must have a dedicated heart to instruct the child. We can't expect the right things to just "rub off on them." We must teach: (See Deuteronomy chap. 6.)

1. The fear and love of God, (See 6:4,5);
2. Continually, daily, progressively, (See 6:6-9);
3. Reviewing the past and what God has done, and giving warning about the future, as we practice and teach obedience. (See 6:12-15,17)
4. The "full counsel" of God, as we lead a devotional life (See notes on devotions.) and as we labor to build character. (See section on character building.)

There are many ways we can see that this is done, by our family altar, by helping them have a spiritual diary, but exciting them about the things of the Lord as we build a "love for Christ" and the Word of God. We must build supreme ***love for Christ!***

THE HOME IS A PLACE OF REFUGE AND PROTECTION:

Dads must labor to make their homes a place of refuge from sin and Satan's attack. We must build a "hedge of protection" for our families' sake. This means sacrificing to have them in a Christian school (if God so leads), seeing that the TV (or not having one at all) and music in the home are fully and totally controlled, and seeing that our children have the right kind of friends.

THE HOME SHOULD BE THE PLACE WE ESTABLISH A HERITAGE:

The greatest contribution that a dad will ever make in life is establishing and maintaining a real Christian home. And the greatest contribution a man will make is in his own children. But too often the problem is that a dad is too tired, too busy, and lacks the right priorities. Mom's are often frustrated, irritated, and under such pressures that they also lack the vision of molding a child for God.

Children are an "heritage from the Lord." (See Psa. 127:4) The way to pass on our faith and affect future generations is through your children, so they must be instructed well right into the adult years. We must follow discipling principles, and pour our own lives into the child, as the discipler, for the Lord's honor. (See discipling ideas elsewhere, and also the character building section.)

THE HOME IS THE PLACE TO TEACH THE FEAR OF THE LORD

One of the greatest challenges parents face is to bring about a "*fear of the Lord*" in the lives of their children. Basically what parents fear, the children will fear. This centers around the proper idea of the greatness of God and His plan, and then properly imparting that vision to the family. This means helping the child understand and stand in "awe of" God's greatness, person, will, and plan for life.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon stated: "The loftiest speculation, the mightiest philosophy which can ever engage the attention of a child of God, is the name, the nature, the person, the work, the dealing, and the existence of God. Would you lose your sorrow? Would you dry your tears? Then go plunge yourself in the Godhead's deepest seas. Get lost in His immensity and you shall come forth as from a couch of rest, refreshed and invigorated. I know of nothing which can so comfort the soul, so calm the swelling billows of sorrow and grief, so speak peace to the winds of trial as a devout musing upon the subject of the Godhead."

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I wonder if we teach our children the immensity of our God, and the wonderment of His person? I wonder if we really work at helping them to have an awe of God and an understanding of His love, grace and mercy? (See Psa.34:9,11; Prov. 2:1-11)

THE HOME A PLACE OF REJOICING, FELLOWSHIP, AND FORGIVENESS

Home ought to be a place where love is received and given, a place for caring and developing sensitivity to others and learning to forgive and be forgiven. (See Luke 17:3.) It ought to be a place where we learn to listen, and to be honest with people, and with ourselves. (See Gen. 24:67; Titus 2:4; Col. 3:8-14; Eph. 4:30-32; Luke 15:18-24.)

What a difference between a relaxing, stimulating atmosphere and a place of tension and disorder. Note James wrote of two kinds of wisdom, that of the world (earthly, sensual, devilish) which brings confusion, strife, envy, and every evil work, and that which was of God. The wisdom which comes from God is "*first pure, peaceable, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, and the fruits of righteousness are sown in peace of them that make peace.*" (See James 3:13-18.) A relaxed, healthy atmosphere does not come without struggle, determination, dedication to the application of the Word of God and preparation to make it so.

HOME IS A PLACE FOR MOLDING OF THE CHILD'S LIFE FOR THE FUTURE

We Must Bring Correction to Do Right

We are accountable to "*train up*" a child, and to "*bring them up*" for God's glory (See Prov. 22:6,15; Eph. 6:4.) so that they have a thirst and hunger to do right as a natural desire. The most important correction or discipline that we will be engaged in is "preventive" discipline. In this we so teach the Word of God, so mold their character, so build convictions, that they want to do right... before the temptation to do wrong is there in their lives.

We Must Control and Guide Them

Eli did very poorly at guiding and controlling his sons. (See I Samuel 2,3,4.) His home became a home of ruin and loss as he neglected to influence, direct, and restrain them. In contrast Abraham was concerned about his son's need of a wife in a heathen land. (See Genesis 24.) As a father he must have sought God's will. We must prepare our children for marriage and life's occupation, that they might know God's will. Marriage instruction ought to come from parents. We ought to be praying for our child's mate from the time of their birth.

We Must Teach Them Right Human Relationships

1. **Teaching honor and respect** of one another, of both their persons and property, "*in honor preferring one another.*" (See Rom. 12:10.)
2. **Teaching "*giving of thanks... unto God.. and submitting one to another.*"**(See Eph. 5:20.) The child must be taught the need to depend upon God and each other. They must become God and people-oriented, not filled with self will and worship of self as we see so much of today. The natural tendency is to want our own way, to be independent, and to want to "break away, and push out", doing our own thing.

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3. **Teaching Biblical principles of obedience** to human authority, as this is God-given. (See Rom. 13:1-7.) Along with this, children must learn interdependence, learning to work with others in unity, in a "give and take" situation. In Nehemiah 3 we read of their laboring together in unity, submitting to one another and recognizing that they needed one another as they kept the whole picture in view of the task at hand. Children must be taught how to yield to those in authority, and yet at the same time learn to cooperate in tasks. They must yield to government, parents and school authorities as they learn to obey all God-given authority.
4. **Teaching the basics of loyalty, unity, courtesy and manners.** (See I Pet. 3:8,10; Rom. 12: 9-18.) Children will not naturally be loyal, work in unity, and show manners toward others. This is a function of teaching in the home that must not be ignored.

THE HOME IS A PLACE FOR FORMING THE FUTURE LIFESTYLE OF THE CHILD

What kind of life will the child live? How will the child respond to the pressures in life, to the demands, the obligations and the necessities of life? We are the key to his training and preparation for life itself.

Building a Servant's Heart

Since we come into this world with a selfish, self-centered view of life, serving others must be taught and also lived before the child. Most things are "more caught than taught". So often children seek to get out of work. We must teach them that in every good, worthwhile labor people are ministering to the needs of others. "...even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister..." (See Matt 20:28.). In Abraham's life we see the willingness to be a "pilgrim", for he was obedient to God's will for his life, and he had a servant's heart. (See Heb. 11:8-10.) Children must be taught the importance of "giving and not receiving." It is more blessed to give than to receive. (See Acts 20:35.) The "prodigal son" was determined to "receive" and was not changed until he lost all, spent his all, and being destitute he was willing to return to his father, and then be a slave. He said, "make me as one of the hired servants." Paul considered himself a "bond-slave" for the Lord. Do we teach our children to have a servant's heart and to live to serve?

Building Participants Not Spectators

Our TV reared children have become spectators rather than participants. They want to be entertained and pampered rather than to serve, to suffer, and to know hardships and trials. Children have far too much given to them without any price on their part. They expect life to be "dished out on a silver platter" with little effort on their part.

Today children are not taught the rigors of self-discipline; most are from the urban scene with little demands upon them that would build character traits so desperately needed. (See Philippians 1:29; 2:20,21, 29,30; 3:7,8, 13-16; II Corinthians 6:4-10) They must become competitors instead of pacifists, and have boldness, courage, and the aggressiveness to do right.

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It was when King David was a spectator rather than a participant that he fell into sin. (See II Sam. 11:1), For when he should have gone into battle with his men he tarried in Jerusalem and temptations came his way. It is when youth are "soft, pampered, & served" that they become prime targets for sin and destruction. They must be taught the need of hard work, faithfulness and persistence in doing right. This will necessitate teaching the child self-discipline and self-determination to do right. (See Eph. 6:10-18; II Cor. 15:58)

Building Thankfulness, not Discontent

When you think of "life-style" you also think of responses to life, attitudes, outlook, and reactions. There must be teaching of a "positive attitude" rather than the negative... which so often includes murmuring, complaining, griping and discontentment. When parents gripe, complain, etc., they can expect the same from their children. (See Phil. 2:24; 4:13; 4:11.) We must work at developing an attitude of thankfulness, contentment, joy and peace in what God gives and brings into our lives. (See Phil. 4:6,7; 4:4; I Tim. 6:6-8; Eph. 5:19,20; Rom. 8:28,29.)

THE HOME IS THE PLACE TO ESTABLISH A PERMANENT VALUE SYSTEM

I think that to a large degree the "lukewarmness, apathy and indifference" we see among the saints of God can be traced to a poor value system. We are not living by the right priorities. And we are not establishing in the lives of our children and youth the Biblical value system that they desperately need.

What is important in life? Why are we alive? What is it that God desires more than anything else? For what should I be living?

Building Values of Personal Faith

The parent's convictions must become the children's convictions. The parent's values will probably become the child's values. The parent's faith must become the child's faith. (See II Tim. 1:15; Heb. 11: 23-27.) Moses stood where he stood because without doubt the parent's convictions became his. Joseph did right for the convictions of his parents must have been his.

Building a Love for the Church

If the child is to "love Christ, and the things of the Lord" then we must build that love. This means the value that God places on His work is the value we place upon it. Christ died for souls! He gave His all! Do we place the same value on His plan, will and work? There must be loyalty and not criticism of the work of God in the local church and the things of God. This is a choice that must be made. (See II Cor. 15:58; Gal. 6:7-10.)

Building Right Values about

1. **Sex...** That there must be purity, surrender to God's will in this also. There must be an understanding of the beauty in a marriage relationship and the sinfulness of its violation. (See II Tim. 2:22; I Tim. 5:2; I Thess. 4:3,4)
2. **Honesty...** (Prov. 6:16-19) God says that "*He hates a lying tongue.*" Teaching the need of honesty in all things is very vital. (See Eph. 4:25)

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3. **Money**... Children and youth must be taught how to handle money for God's glory and honor. How to stay out of debt, how to use credit cards for credit and not debt. And to be taught to love to give.

There are many other values that must be built into the child's life. These things are dealt with in the section "Building Character Traits."

THE HOME IS THE PLACE FOR GROWTH & MATURITY

We are to "disciple" our children. Our goal must be to produce... "reproducers." We need growing, maturing youth who will become a victorious new generation.

Sanctification (or growth in Christ-likeness) is not an accident. It will be the outcome of dedication, determination and goals set in the home and for the life. The goal is progressive sanctification in a godly life. (See Titus 2:11-14.) The home ought to be the place for the accomplishment of this goal. (See section four)

Building the Atmosphere for This Goal

1. *"And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue... knowledge... temperance...patience...godliness...brotherly-kindness..charity, for if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."* (See II Pet. 1:4-10)

If we are to make the home a place of growth and maturity of our children spiritually... then it will necessitate that we labor to produce these things in their lives. We will want to build the right kind of atmosphere for these things to be put "into their lives."

2. *"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true... honest... just... pure... lovely ... good report: if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."* (See Phil. 4:8).

Again there must be a consistent effort to build an atmosphere in the home where these traits can be put into the lives of our children. If we are to grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord in our homes we must have a home of peace, joy, and thrill in the things of God.

Building Growth and Maturity

This can only be done by having a daily family altar, by building character traits, by helping the child or youth to see the need for godly living and by making the Word of God a living reality in daily living.

As you read, study and apply the many other features of this book, you will see the things that you must build into the life of your child. Paul could write to the Colossian church and say, *"Whom we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect (or mature and complete) in Christ Jesus: Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily."* (See Col. 1:28,29.) There must be a laboring to so teach and so warn that we can present our children complete, mature and full grown in Christ.

1. Teaching basic doctrines
2. Teaching how to be in and stay in fellowship with the Lord.
3. Teaching through music, Bible story books, plaques, pictures, attitudes, orderliness, consistency, nurture, etc.

We must be careful not to overprotect them but help them to walk with the Lord, knowing how to walk in His will, and knowing His plan for their lives. (See Prov. 3:5,6; Psa. 37:4,5)

HOME IS THE PLACE TO BUILD SELF-WORTH, SELF-UNDERSTANDING, AND SELF-IMAGE:

There is the right kind of self-image, and factors of self-worth that need to be taught, stressed, and established in the lives of children and youth.

In recent years there has been every form of emphasis upon self. Many Christians have put a "false and dangerous" emphasis upon self-esteem. They would say that you cannot love others unless we first love ourselves. Yet the Scriptures teach us to "*die to self*", to put ourselves last, and to serve Christ, and to serve others first. John the Baptist said, "*He must increase, but I must decrease.*" (See John 3:30; Matt. 16:23,24; Gal. 2:20; Luke 14.)

If there should be a teaching of self-worth, and a building of self-esteem, then of what does it consist? How can it be done in a way that honors God and is the correct thing for the individual?

Building Self-Understanding

Most children develop a self-concept before the age of six. There are different stages and categories of self-concept development. There is self-realization of existence through a smile and positive or negative conversation toward them. There is self-realization and the realization of others about them.

Building Self-Image or Self-Worth

We help build self-pictures into the child's mind. In this he mirrors himself, as being worth-while or of little or maybe of no worth. Self-worth is enhanced when the child understands he is important to God.

Christ died for him, and God loves him. Self esteem is a good feeling about oneself and that is best built by "doing right", and obeying God's will and way.

The only biblical self-esteem is the result of dying to ourselves and living unto Christ. You can help your child and youth by building good character traits in their lives. **True discipleship brings Christ-esteem rather than self-esteem as it is being taught today.**

HELPS FOR THE FAMILY DEVOTIONAL TIME!

Introduction:

In this section we want to deal with many aspects of family devotions, such as place, time, establishing, maintaining, necessity, ideas, suggestions, etc. We want this to be very practical and helpful to each family with regard to ages, needs, etc.

Parents must work together to cultivate spirituality, for it will not be produced without understanding the need, the rudiments, and importance of such effort.

CONSIDER THE NEED

Many sections of Scripture would prove to us the need, for the commands are there, and the Biblical directives are very clearly given. (Deuteronomy 6:2-9; 11:18-22; Ephesians 6:4) We are commanded to "*bring our children up... in the admonition of the Lord.*" In the Old Testament we are told the same thing. (See Deuteronomy chapters 6, 11.)

Put the Word of God in Our Own Hearts, (Deuteronomy 11:18; 6:6) We must "put the Word" into our own lives if we are to have something to give. Teach "*them*" to the children (the "them" being the Word of God that we have put into our own hearts) or thus to diligently teach the Word of God to our children in the home on a daily basis. (See Deut. 11:19; 6:7.)

Write Them Upon Our House, or make the Word of God so real that it effects the "life-style" of those who live there. (See Deut. 6:8,9; 11:18,20.) For the Word of God is to so affect us, so control us, so mold the home that the whole environment is affected by the "thus saith the Lord."

Diligently Keep All the Commandments. The fourth thing commanded and needed in the home is for us as parents "*to diligently keep*" the Word of God. We must live it, for they "will walk our walk, and not our talk." (See Deuteronomy 11:22.) We should want them to "love the Lord, to walk in His ways and to cleave unto Him."

We should sense the need. It is God's command, plan and will that we consistently "teach our children" the things of God daily that they might walk with Him.

CONSIDER WHO NEEDS A FAMILY ALTAR

John R. Rice said, "*The secret of perfect success of the individual is loving and obeying the Scriptures while avoiding evil men.*" (See Psalms 1:1-4.) This book (the Word of God) will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from this book. Who needs the Word of God in the home? Who needs to be in the Book?

The Elderly need the Word of God

"For whatsoever was written aforetime was written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." (See Romans 15:4.)

The elderly person may not have had the Word of God as a child and does not sense the great need. Or they may not have given the time over the years, and therefore do not have a realization of the great importance. Unless the Bible is important to us **today**, it will not be important to us when we get older. **We are becoming what we will be!**

In the latter years habits built in a life time will take over. They may be habits that make living with the person almost impossible. Or they may be habits which make the person a delight. The elderly need the comfort of the Word of God, and they still need its direction and counsel. (See II Corinthians 1:3 4.)

The Middle Aged Need the Word of God

Sometimes middle age is a difficult period of life. For it is made up of the pressures of child-rearing, money needs, college, moving, adjustments that seem to never end.

Then there are those who are going through what some call the "**mid-life crisis**". While there are those who do not feel that this exists, I think that it does for many. Life seems to have passed them by and goals of former years will never be reached. Life seems to be but a tread-mill existence with the daily grind that never changes.

1. There are those who become despondent, despairing and discouraged with life in general. Most of the time such saints have neglected the Scriptures.
2. They have failed to look up and find the answers in the Word of God and in His will for their lives.
3. They have failed to relate their lives to the Word of God. (See Heb. 13:8.) He is the same yesterday, today and forever, and our need of HIM does not change. He is rich to all who call upon HIM, who call upon Him in truth. (See Psalm 34: 27.)

The Young Parent Needs The Word of God

If anyone needs wisdom it is the young parent. (See James 1:5.) We can get wisdom from experience, through painful trial and error which is indeed the hard way, or we can get what we need from the sweet entreaty of the Word of God. This would save us from a lot of hard, difficult and fretful times.

The young mother needs to find the joy of simply obeying and submitting to her husband by allowing him to lead and make the final decisions.

In reading of Psalm 119 we would note that every verse but one speaks of the Scriptures, as they are called the statutes, laws, precepts, commands, testimonies, word, etc. If we would meditate much on this Psalm we would see the great need of the Word of God in our youth and the need of its dominion in our lives. (See Psalm 119:133, 130, 105, 97, 103, 176.)

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How will the parent, the spouse choose right and lead right without the wisdom that comes from a daily time in God's Word?

Wife, you must cooperate with your husband, allow him to lead. Learn to walk together, as you both seek to obey God.

Teens Need the Word of God

"The Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil." (See II Thess. 3:3.) "Thy Word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against Thee." (See Psalm 119:11.)

Dr. Monroe Parker has said, *"I believe that God gave teenagers strong drives, so that they can learn the mastery of them."*

Teens need to be taught the Word of God at home, to have their faith established and to learn to meet God in His Word to prepare for life ahead. They need to see the relevance of the Word of God, and need to be encouraged and led in establishing a habit of a personal devotional life. (See Heb. 4:12; II Tim. 2:15; 3:16,17.)

"But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and has been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them. And that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." (See II Tim. 3:14,15.)

Yes, youth need to be taught to read the Word of God for themselves in the home from day to day that they might be "wise" in the things of God.

Children Need to Know the Word of God

They need to know that God is worth following. They need to have their lives molded before it is too late, for it must take place before they are conformed to this world. **Convictions must be built early** to keep them from the worldliness and sin that is seen so often among God's people.

Juniors need to know that God is real. They admire champions, heroes, and want to be like them. They must see that Bible heroes are real people and worth following. Now they are at the age they need to begin to read for themselves and to meditate upon what God is saying. **They need to see** that Mom and Dad are daily in love with the Word of God, as it is read, shared, considered together, and discussed together around the family circle.

Beginners are ready for simple principles... like "God loves me, Jesus died for me, the Bible is the Word of God." Dr. Jack Hyles often tells of setting on his mother's lap repeating the phrase ten times, *"The Bible is the Word of God."* They can **early fall in love with the Word of God**. They need to know early "to obey is better than to be sorry."

Toddlers need the first memories to be the Word of God. **First impressions** are so important, and loving God's Word must become theirs early in life. We must read to them, tell them about Jesus, and sing songs like "Jesus Loves Me" from the cradle. They can understand God's love and Christ's death.

We have 168 hours in a week, and Sunday School for 30 minutes a week is not enough. If the child is with you in every service (he needs to hear the Word of God from God's man, in the power of the Holy Spirit) it still is not enough--they must get it at home. God commands this clearly in His Word. As parents we

must obey.

CONSIDER GETTING STARTED

Choose the Best Time

If we are going to be consistent, then we must make a choice of the best time for our family and then DO IT. That might be bed-time or meal time. We must have the "Bible on the table." Plan carefully, eat earlier if that is the key. Plan to make it work. If at supper time you may have to take the phone off the hook or if at bed time, you may need to start earlier than usual so you can have devotions. If father won't lead them, maybe the best is to have it quietly in their bedrooms, just prior to their going to sleep. If Dad is on swing shifts maybe you will have to change the time from week to week. Do so, just as you plan for meals.

Choose to Mold a Life

What is the task before us? What are we setting out to do? Should not our goal be to **mold and shape a life for Christ?** It should be our desire to mold the life of that child whom God brings into our lives. (See Isaiah 28:9,10.) "It is here a little, there a little", as we daily seek to instill the Word of God into the heart.

1. Teach them the Word of God (Deut. 6:6,7)
2. Teach to memorize, write it on the heart.
3. Teach principles of right and wrong... looking for the **teachable moment** in life, when they are ready to learn the given lesson.
4. Take opportunities to influence others as we come in contact with them in our homes and lives.

Conclusions:

We should never allow a child to go to bed without praying with him. These can be choice counseling times as a child is prayed with at the bedside. Often, this is when a child is the most reflective, and will share the thoughts of his heart, and the concern of his life. This is when we can do the most molding of a life for the Lord.

Maybe we will need to start earlier in getting them to bed so we can unhurriedly spend time with each child. Often when our son was small he would talk about *"the pictures that he had in his mind"*, as he would visualize things. He called them *"pictures in his eyes"*, as it seemed to him. These were times of molding of his life and character as he spoke of things that were meaningful to him... as his mother was there to pray with him, sharing a verse, etc. We need to sense the opportunities God gives us to build convictions in the lives of our children.

One mother spoke of how she *"whispered a verse in her child's ear"*... the same verse nightly for some time. The verses were learned in this manner, and also a great impact was made on the child's life.

CONSIDER VARIETY IN DEVOTIONS

It is said that "variety is the spice of life." That is true about many things in daily living, and especially we ought to make our family devotional time a wonderful time. Too often family devotions are a bore, a dull, drab, uninteresting time that no one especially appreciates. It should not be that way. We can make it exciting.

The **VIP'S** of family devotions are **Variety, Individual Interest, and**

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Participation. There must be individual participation, but we must also work for variety. The father should lead devotions if at all possible. If the dad will not do so, then of course mother must lead it. All can have some part in planning. Possibly mother may plan for variety and for participation of the family members. Or some child may plan out what the family is going to do from time to time. Someone should work on the list of ideas for variety, and plan many things into their own family devotional time. Here is a list of ideas for variety.

1. Each member of the family should have a part.
2. Each may read a verse or two within the portion, or read around the circle.
3. Each, or one, may tell what the verses mean, or what it means to them as the family seeks to meditate upon the Word of God together.
(Considering: What is God saying, what do we need to change, how do we apply this?)
4. One may want to choose the missionary to pray for. See further ideas under section about missions.
5. Each may share a prayer request of something important to the family or to him.
6. Someone may have something to share in praise.
7. Someone may have an answer to prayer to share with the family.
8. One or two could pray besides the parent.
9. Someone may recite a memory verse. Others may say it with them.
Rewarding the child for memorizing verses and references by the end of the week with the use of a chart with stars would be good.
10. A child may choose a chorus or song to sing.
11. Keep a calendar handy, A child may draw a line through the date when you have devotions to encourage regularity. Seek to have a better record, commend consistency.
12. Older children could plan for family devotions and lead it occasionally, having them take turns. (One could look up every verse on some subject, like sin. After finding all of the verses on the subject, divide the number of days of the month into the number of verses, and make a list of verses to be covered each day... thus covering the subject of the doctrine of SIN that month. By doing this many doctrines could be dealt with over the years, and the child has a part in it all, too.)
13. We must keep in mind the need for variety and plan for the various ages of the children. Challenge the older ones, but involve the little ones as well.
14. Use variety, but always use the Bible. One could use Bible verse cards, a memory verse for the week, or teaching the plan of salvation, verse by verse. Review the memory verses from Sunday School.

READ THE BIBLE. Read what the children can understand and explain hard words and difficult concepts, etc. (Use, at times, a Bible story book... like

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Egermier's, Moody Bible Story Book, John R. Rice's Child's Story Book or Bible Pictures for Little Eyes. Provided these could be secured at a Christian Book store)

Discuss applications, discuss what may be the "key verse" of the portion. From each passage consider important truths to live by. Admit when you don't understand, searching out the meaning.

Conclusions:

Other suggestions include:

- Keep the atmosphere relaxed.
- Keep discipline at a minimum and separate from the devotional time.
- Let the Bible speak for itself, to the whole family.
- Don't make it a time of preaching at the children.
- Be honest in all discussions.
- Admit sins and failures, and seek God's forgiveness and victory.
- BE FLEXIBLE to meet daily schedules.
- Challenge each family member, junior age and older, to have their own devotions daily. And then share what they have learned from God and His Word.
- We need to memorize the Books of the Bible, and help them to fall in love with the Word of God.

CONSIDER PRAYER TIME IN DEVOTIONS

We must teach the children to PRAY THOUGHTFULLY, **as prayer should include...**

1. **adoration**--("Dear Jesus, we love you..." spend time in adoration, worship of WHOM GOD IS.)
2. **thanksgiving**-- ("Thank you for dying on the cross for me"... spend time in things about which we are thankful in daily life and living.)
3. **confession**-- ("Please forgive me..." as we teach the children to deal with sin, how, when, etc.)
- 4, **intercession**-- (For others and their needs.)
5. **petition**-- (For ourselves and our daily needs.)

We need to ask for prayer requests and then be sure that someone does pray for each request. We must expect God to answer pray, and thank Him for each answer, teaching praise, and thankfulness.

We need to pray for the **lost** we are seeking to win. Children feel a part when they pray, and when that one gets saved part of the reward will be theirs. Pray for the **pastor** and the church. It is good to have a "prayer list" to which we refer, and teach the children to have a list of specifics for their prayer life.

CONSIDER MISSIONS IN DEVOTIONAL TIMES

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There are many things that could be done to emphasize missions in the family devotional time. One could collect prayer cards and place them in a napkin holder, box, etc., at the table. We could have a child choose which one to pray for each day or go through them daily... each praying for someone each day, or use them in order, one a day.

It would be good to learn about the countries, having a child look up as much as he or she can about that country, and reporting on it at the next devotional time.

We ought to read the prayer letters and pray specifically for their requests. Reading a short portion of a missionary story book from day to day until it is finished would be a good idea.

CONSIDERING MUSIC AT DEVOTIONAL TIMES

While we won't share a lot at this point, for many music can be a great teaching tool. The more a family is musically inclined the more this can be a blessing.

You could include a chorus each time, or a hymn or a gospel song. Children could choose which song to sing. We ought to **plant a song** in the hearts of the children to take with them. We need to give them a love for music and an understanding of the message of the song and what it means to the life. Along with the song or songs you plan to use, you could purchase a book that gives the background of the writing of many of the hymns and gospel songs. Children would benefit greatly from hearing these stories.

Additional Thoughts and Ideas:

We must make it an enjoyable, precious time that may help them to **fall in love** with Christ. We must teach the family that we are going to live by the authority of the Word of God. Let them know that it is the authority for your own life.

We must build a respect for and confidence in the Word of God. Our children need to know that it is the source for guidance in life's decisions and day to day living.

The Bible should be the bridge between generations as the children grow older. (If they grow up with it and it's authority, they will not argue with the Bible like they might argue with you.)

We must **create** in their hearts a **love** for the Word of God by our attitude towards having devotions. We need to make it a very special time that is looked forward to, not just a hurried routine. If we always hurry it means that it is not very worthwhile.

We must get started right, and start again when interrupted so we can reap the blessings of family devotions.

"A MOMENT IN THE MORNING, A MOMENT, IF NO MORE, IS BETTER THAN A THOUSAND, WHEN THE TRYING DAY IS O'ER." -- unknown

"O GOD, Thou art my GOD, EARLY WILL I SEEK THEE." Psalm 63:1

Make the Bible real..loved..lived!!

Part III

DEVELOPING CHARACTER TRAITS!

Introduction:

Character development must become a most important, and prominent goal in our homes if we are to mold our children for the Lord. We must prepare ourselves as parents to build the character traits of our children. This means we must SATURATE our own lives with these things. Then by instruction, teaching, and laboring consistently we will be able to develop these characteristics in the lives of our children and youth. These traits will not develop overnight! It will take consistent and persistent continued instruction and the setting of a good example. The purpose will be to have these traits so "embedded" in the heart and life of the child that they will become in every sense their very own. This takes a building of convictions in the life of our youth.

We want to consider a list of character areas or traits for development into their lives, and of course our own life. We should work on one a month... daily teaching in some way, bringing it into the family devotional time. Make a poster of that trait and post it in a prominent place. It will necessitate a daily, consistent application for a month to bring any amount of impression into the life.

We must teach these traits as foundational to life, and then reinforce them in day by day application.

God's Word must be applied for problem solving and direction in life decisions. Biblical traits can only be produced by building conviction in the life.

CHOOSING BASIC CHARACTER TRAITS TO TEACH TO OUR CHILDREN

PARTICULARLY FROM BIRTH TO AGE SIX

Character may be defined as *"permanent beliefs which result in consistent behavior."* Dr. W. Fremont.

Many psychiatrists estimate, based on their studies, that approximately 85% of the adult personality is already formed by the time the child is six years old. (Meier) How parents train the child in these first years will determine how he enjoys and succeeds in life during the other 70 or 80 years!

From birth to six years of age, it is mother's job to train the child, along with the dad's assistance. They must teach (inform), impress and train them to do the following until they become habits of life.

In our pressurized age, we must stop, look, listen, to what God says is essential for training at this age. This compilation can be helpful for you to know where to begin and what to diligently work at. (See Deut 6:7.) Choose one or two principles at a time, work on them for a month at a time, then add one or two more. (Also watch for opportunities to remind and reinforce lessons already learned..."lest they slip" from them.)

To Be Attentive:

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Defined: To pay attention to the voice of the parent. To show the worth of the person by giving sincere attention to his words. (See Hebrews 2:1)

Scripture to guide you, and to teach the child:

(Proverbs 1:8; 5:1,1,13; 13:1,18; 15:31; 18:13; Heb. 2:1)

"My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother." "He that hath ears to hear, LET HIM HEAR"

(Matthew 11:15; Proverbs 6:20)

Applied: Train him to notice the difference in the tone of your voice, to watch your facial expressions and to read your eyes. Speak firmly but quietly in making commands. Reserve a loud voice for emergencies ONLY. (See Eccl. 9:17.) Speak quietly, firmly and avoid interruptions. If such emergencies occur, wait until you have his full attention so that the child has no misunderstanding and then repeat the instructions.

Opposite: To be unconcerned, inattentive.

To Be Obedient

Defined: Accepting authority, submitting to control, without protest.

Scripture: (Hebrews 5:8; 13:17; I Sam. 15:22; I Peter 1:22; Luke 17:9, 10; Ephesians 6:1; Colossians 3:20)

Applied: "To obey is better than to be sorry." Paraphrase by Mrs. Watke (See I Samuel 15:22.) Learning limitations, the meaning of "no"; learning the pleasure of doing the little things right, (small commands, but the parents must be alongside to help carry it out.) Orders should be simple and singular and the time span for carrying out the instructions should be short.

The "why" of the order need not always be given to smaller children. The older they get, the more the necessity of giving reasons for the order.

Do not provoke a child by a frivolous, unnecessary order, or just to fulfill one's own satisfaction, or demand that which places a hardship on the child.

Punishment should be appropriate to the disobedience. The child should be taught that obedience to parents and those in authority is a principle that God has established and there can be no deviation.

Opposite: Willfulness, resistance of God given authority.

To Be Content

Defined: Being able to entertain themselves with the THINGS they have, and not needing to be entertained by people. Being happy with what they have!

Scripture: (Hebrews 13:5; Luke 3:14; I Timothy 6:6,8; Philippians 4:11; 2:14; Matthew 6:25-33) *"Godliness with contentment is great gain!"*
Be content with such things as ye have.

Application: Discontentment is seen in Eve's sin, David's sin, Achan's sin and the sin of Judas. (See Genesis 3:6; II Samuel 11:1-5; 12:7-11) The opposite of contentment is covetousness. Being content means accepting what you have and using it to the maximum.

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When instructing contentment, it is important to be an example of contentment. (Avoid wish books and window shopping if you'd have victory yourself.)

Teach the child to eat all that is provided for him and not to be constantly wishing for something else. Watch out for the kind of playmate your child has lest he develop a covetous attitude. Teach that if we love God, He will provide for all we need but not necessarily all we want. (See I Timothy 6:6.)

Opposite: Covetousness, selfishness, having materialistic attitudes.

To Be Neat

Defined: In good order, or clean conditions, tidy. **Scripture:** (I Corinthians 14:40; 14:33;) *"Let all things be done decently and in order."*

Applied: Provide a place for everything. Help the child to put everything in its place. Help him to see the need to wash his face and hands; to value clean clothing (look in the mirror), to be careful, not messy. This is a process; by the time he is 4 or 5 the most progress can be expected, but begin early by helping him do it. To pick up after the child is to nullify the teaching. We must set an example by our own garages, desks, etc. Start with a few things at a time, be sure that all toys and items of play are put back before they get anything else out.

Opposite: Lack of orderliness, disorganization.

To Be Reverent

Defined: The act of showing respect and honor.

Scripture:

Honor of parents: (Ephesians 6:1-3; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16; Matthew 15:4; 19:19) *"Honor thy father and thy mother...that it may be well with thee and thou mayest live long on the earth."* (See Ephesians 6:2,3.) *"I honor my Father,"* said Jesus. (See John 8:49.)

Honor God: (I Peter 2:17; Psalm 111:10; 34:11) (See FEAR of the LORD in a concordance.)

Honor the Bible: (Psalm 119:11,89, 105; 138:2; Romans 10:17; I Peter 1:23; Proverbs 30:5) *"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my Word shall not pass away." "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the Word of our God shall stand forever."* (See Isaiah 40:8.)

Applied: Teach respect for parents' responsibility to God for the child; make "father" special; teach the favor of God, "God is pleased..." Handle the Bible in a special way, carefully, as a valued possession. Create an attitude that the church is God's house, where God's people come to meet God. Guard them from uproarious behavior there. A lack of reverence for parents, property,

government, teachers and even our own body has deep-seated effects on the child. *"The fear of the Lord"* is the first step of gaining wisdom. (Proverbs 1:7) There must be respect for life. Parents must respect the child as well as demand

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that he respect others. Implementing reverence would include being respectful of the Church, polite to those who are elders, praying before meals and trips, showing dependency upon the Lord, and being thankful for what He does.

Opposite: Disrespect, self-will, self-interest.

To Be Forgiving

Defined: Not to hold a grudge against another, to be quick to "make up".

Scripture:

Forgiving Others (Eph. 4:32; Colossians 3:13; Luke 17:3,4; Mark 11:25; Matthew 6:14,15) *"Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another..."* (See Ephesians 4:32.)

God's Forgiveness (I John 1:9; Proverbs 28:13; Psalm 51; Psalm 32)

Applied: Forgive and forget and do something nice for that person instead. Parents should require the child to "make up" with the other person and do something special for him. If the child feels he is not truly forgiven, there will be a wedge built between the parent and child. A lack of the sense of being forgiven is known to lead to the use of alcohol, drug abuse, adultery on the part of adults, etc.

It is important to realize that we have been forgiven by Christ's death for us, and on that basis we are to forgive others. We are to combine our seeking forgiveness with confession and repentance.

We are to forgive others, because God's Word commands us to. This will enable us to have victory over hurt feelings toward others. The child needs to understand these things. We must put the act out of our mind so we don't hold on to unforgiveness. (Psalms 103:12) We could see others healed by our using their offenses as a means of expressing love to them by forgiving them.

Opposite: Rejection, bitterness and desire for revenge.

To Be Grateful

Defined: To be thankful, appreciative of benefits received. Making known to others and to God the ways they have benefited my life. (See I Corinthians 4:7.)

Scriptures: (Ephesians 5:20; I Thessalonians 5:18; Psalms 34:1; 136:1-26)

Applied: Insist upon "thank you's"; train them to express appreciation, provide opportunities and require them to give thanks and appreciation while encouraging them to do so without prompting.

Opposite: Unthankfulness, lack of appreciation and being indifferent.

To Have Faith

Defined: To have faith in God, His Word and for personal salvation; to have confidence, trust in the daily walk. For the adult, it would also mean to visualize

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what God intends to do in a given situation and to act in harmony with it. (See Hebrew chapter 11.) To walk by faith and trusting God in all the abundance of life's experiences.

Scriptures: (Rom. 10:17; Heb. 11:1,6; II Cor 5:7; I John 3:23; Heb. 13:5,6; Phil. 1:6; Rom. 4:20,21)

Applied: In a day by day life resting in God's care, by example and talk of the parents, etc. Showing the child a peace and rest in the Lord by our life and responses.

Opposite: Presumption; unbelief; (See Hebrews 3, 4.) having an "evil heart of unbelief" by the hardening of the heart. Allowing sin in our lives that brings unbelief, and a resistance of a walk by faith. Doubting God and what He wants to do in our lives. A walk by sight, by what we can see. (Compared to Hebrews 11.)

To Be Truthful

Defined: To be honest, consistently telling the truth, even if it puts them in a "bad light"; willing to accept the results that may come from telling the truth. In this we "learn future trust by accurately reporting past facts."

Scriptures: (**lying**) (Exodus 20:16; Psa 120:2; Proverbs 12:19,22; Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:9) (**false witness**)(Proverbs 24:28; 14:5,25; Exodus 20:16) (**dishonesty**) (Proverbs 11:1; 24:28; 14:5; 6:16,17) God hates a lying tongue!

Applied: There are two reasons children lie: fear of punishment and desire for praise. Deal seriously with lying. They need to recognize a lie and face it!! Don't ask, "Did you say that?" when you know they did, you are asking for a lie. Ask "Why did you say or do that?" They must confess it as a sin and must be taught to make it right.

Opposite: To deceive, to practice deception, as Jacob of old.

To Have Right Values

Defined: Doing what is RIGHT, according to the parent's standards and those of the Word of God. It is to know and do what both God and others are expecting from me.

Scriptures: (Isaiah 1:17; Philippians 4:8 right thoughts) (Deuteronomy 6:18 right actions) (James 4:17)

Applied: Establishing right priorities, what is important; teaching "*it is never right to do wrong.*" We must help the child or youth to see what God wants, and to desire to please the Lord because of love and joy of obedience. We must emphasize the necessity of obedience. (Romans 6:16,17; 5:19; John 14:15, 21, 23,24)

Opposite: Being unreliable; rebellion, and rejection of the right! (Romans 14:12)

To Be Meek

Defined: To be humble, manageable, patient. To be patient under pressure. For us adults, it means to yield my personal rights and expectations to God. (We can help the child understand this too, as he grows older.)

Scriptures: (Titus 3:2; Colossians 3:12; Psalms 25:9; Isaiah 29:19; Matthew 5:5; Psalms 22:26)

Applied: Learning to yield right of their toys to others, to be willing to share, to wait turns.

Opposite: It is seen in angry responses, self-willed action and determination to have their own way.

To Be Unselfish

Defined: Denying self, generosity, forgetting self, giving and being self-sacrificing. It will mean love in action as I give to others' needs without having as my motive personal reward. (See I Corinthians 13:3.)

Scriptures: (Luke 6:38; II Corinthians 9:6; John 3:30; Matthew 20:26; I Samuel 2:11; I Peter 4:10,11; Luke 12:15; Acts 20:35)

Applied: Tell the child that we "love them" and so we "do for them." Help them learn the joy of unselfishness, praise them, hug them, let them know you and God are pleased with them when they practice unselfish acts. Help them practice generosity with others; provide opportunities to share.

Opposite is selfish actions, motives and responses to life and individuals around us and toward God.

To Be Cautious

Defined: Practicing carefulness, being discreet, being watchful over life and responses. Watching for the "*weakness of the flesh*". It also means knowing how important right timing is in accomplishing right actions.

Scriptures: (Proverbs 25:8; 29:20; 14:29; Eccl. 5:2; 7:9; II Timothy 2:7; James 4:17; Deuteronomy 32:29; (See the word - consider.)

Applied: We must teach them to "stop and think about it" before doing it, especially in new situations. They need to learn safety, impressing on them, "*If you doubt, don't do it.*"

Opposite: rash, careless decisions, sinful inclinations and desires.

Conclusions: In working with children from birth through the age of six or seven all the foregoing are very, very important. We must help them memorize verses that will aid them in building these traits in their lives. It is our

responsibility to help them! (Luke 8:21; John 2:5; 13:17; 15:4; I Corinthians 10:31)

Count on the Holy Spirit's work in their hearts to do what is being taught them. Pray earnestly that the Spirit will create these characteristics in their lives as you teach them. (Remember Philippians 2:13; claim 4:13.)

PARTICULARLY FOR CHILDREN FROM AGES SIX THROUGH TWELVE:

Remember, consistent behavior will only come from building consistent habits and deep convictions.

To train in Christian character traits, first of all, the parents must minimize worldly influences.

1. Cut TV to a bare minimum, if at all.
2. Eliminate all rock music.
3. Provide positive influences.
4. Get them into a Christian school if you can.
5. Analyze everything in the home for worldly influences, conformity to the world and its pressures.

The concerned parent can take definite steps to effective training:

6. First decide on a list of principles to follow.
7. Be a positive example to your child.
8. Provide Christian books that will influence him in the traits you are working on; use slogans and mottos around the house.
9. Help them continue the principles shared in the section above for earlier ages.
10. Do right; quitters never win; finish the job; make up your mind; keep on keeping on, "*do all things without murmurings and disputings*" are all good mottos!
11. Plan activities, work projects, etc., for carrying out principles. Inspect and make them accountable for it will teach responsibility.

Building Patience

Defined: Forbearing, long suffering, tolerant, understanding, having a capacity of calm endurance. "It is accepting a difficult situation from God (as adults) without giving Him a deadline to remove it." (See Romans 5:3,4)

Scriptures: (I Peter 2:20; Romans 5:3; I Peter 1:6,7; Eccl. 7:8,9; James 5:8; Hebrews 10:36; Colossians 1:11; I Timothy 6:11; I Thessalonians 5:14; James 1:4)

Applied: Learning to take turns kindly, without being upset. Holding one's self back from impulsive action. Learning to accept one another as they are, rather than having angry competition. We are to be patient toward all men.

Opposite: A spirit of restlessness, contentiousness, and callousness toward others. We must labor to help the child have a tolerant, forbearing attitude toward those around him. He must be taught to accept a situation contrary to his liking and do so with a peaceful attitude.

Bringing About Dependability

Defined: reliability, responsible, stable, trustworthy, unfailing, persistent.

Scriptures: (I Corinthians 15:58; Genesis 42:33,34; John 19:25; Proverbs 25:19; II Corinthians 8:22) See also the following words: true, faithful, trusteth, steadfast, and confidence in a concordance.

Applied: We must teach the child to take responsibility for his actions, for obeying commands. It is knowing and doing what both God and others are expecting from me that is needed. (Romans 14:12; Proverbs 25:19) "Confidence in an unfaithful man...is like a broken tooth and a foot out of joint." So there must be a willingness to fulfill what I consented to do even if it means unexpected sacrifice.

Opposite: To be inconsistent, changeable, unreliable, not to be trusted, seldom caring for responsibilities without outside pressure.

Effecting Determination

Defined: The act of making or arriving at a decision, a strong resolve; firm in purpose.

Scriptures: (I Corinthians 15:58; Psalm 17:3; Isaiah 14:24; Daniel 1:8; II Corinthians 9:7; Acts 11:23) Daniel purposed in his heart to not sin.

Applied: Carrying the task through to the end. Being determined to do right with all one's might. It is being willing to purpose to accomplish God's goal (and others given to me) in God's time regardless of the opposition. (See I Tim. 4:7,8.) It is a steadfastness in determination as Paul exhibited, doing the command of God, even if death might come. "*For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*" (See Philippians 1:21.)

Opposite: Is to be faith hearted, lacking resolve and personal fortitude in carrying out given tasks.

Bringing About Punctuality

Defined: Promptness, being on time, doing things when they should be done, being where one is suppose to be, when they are to be there.

Scriptures: (Eccl. 3:1; 3:2; Psalm 89:47; Eccl. 8:5; Eph. 5:16; Colossians 4:5; James 4:14; II Corinthians 6:2)

Applied: "It is better to be early than late; be an early bird" are good mottos to put up around the home in teaching this character trait. "*To everything there is a season, a time to every purpose under heaven.*" We must labor to build punctuality in the lives of our children, or all of their life they will be hindered in relationships with others. Punctuality reflects high esteem for other people and their time and goals. (Eccl. 3:1)

Opposite: What we see so often in other's lives is tardiness. It is always being late in deeds, responses, etc.

Building Self Control

Defined: The controlling of one's person, self-discipline, self-restraint. It can be seen as instant obedience to the initial promptings of God's Spirit in the life. (Samson's life exhibited a great lack of self-control in the midst of God's call upon his life.) (Galatians 5:24,25)

Scriptures: (by areas of need)

- * ANGER: (Proverbs 14:29; 15:1, 18; 16:32; 25:28; 14:17; Eccl. 7:9; Psalms 37:8)
- * TONGUE: (Proverbs 15:1,2,4,23; I Peter 3:10; Prov. 16:1; 17:27, 28; Psalms 141:3; James 3:8)
- * THOUGHTS: (Philippians 4:8; Luke 6:45; II Corinthians 10:5)
- * BODY: (II Corinthians 6:19,20; 9:27; Romans 6:12-14)
- * HEART ATTITUDE: (Merry heart- Proverbs 15:13; Proverbs 15:15; 17:22; complaining- Philippians 2:14; clean heart- Psalm 51:10)

Applied: We must teach the child to say "no" to impulses, and to learn to control temper, thoughts and responses. We must help them to bring the sinful flesh under the control of the Lord, to cooperate with the Holy Spirit's promptings and conviction.

Opposite: is self-indulgence! It is through self-indulgence that so many Christians fall into sin, even deep sins of the flesh thereby ruining their marriages, testimonies and service.

Producing Loyalty

Defined: Devotion, dedication to, to stand by, to abide by, to support, to stick up for, to be faithful

Scriptures: (John 15:13; Proverbs 17:17; 18:24; 27:6; 27:10; Job 42:10; John 15:14; I Samuel 18:1-4; 20:4; Revelation 2:10; Proverbs 28:20; Luke 19:17; I Corinthians 4:2)

Applied: If a child is not loyal by age twelve, he will have problems the rest of his life. For an adult it could also mean using adversity to confirm my commitment to those whom God has called me to serve. (John 15:13) The child must learn to practice loyalty to God's institutions of home, government, Church, etc. We must labor to build faithfulness in the child's life.

Opposite: Unfaithfulness, indifference to people and institutions that should be important. There is no such thing as a-loyalty, for people are either loyal or disloyal.

Bringing About Compassion

Defined: To have pity for others, to have mercy upon, to put yourself in another's place, to be tenderhearted; *"The deep feeling of sharing the suffering of*

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another with the intent to give aid or support, or to show mercy."

Scriptures: (Romans 12:15; I John 3:17; I Peter 3:8; Ephesians 4:32...see also love & tenderhearted in a concordance.)

Applied: We must help the child to "put on" the traits so needed, (See Colossians 3:8-12.) and among those is compassion. The parent must live the example, which is true of all the characteristics we need to bring about in their lives. (Cf I Peter 3:1-11, note verse 8,9) We must teach the child how to be "touched" with other's needs. We must invest whatever is necessary to heal the hurts of others. (See I John 3:17.)

Opposite: Is seen in indifference and unresponsiveness to others and their needs.

Bringing About Alertness

Defined: Being mentally responsive and perceptive, attentive, watchful, quick to respond and aware. The ability to anticipate right responses to that which is taking place around me. (See Mark 14:38.)

Scriptures: ("*Watch and pray*" Mark 14:38; to guard against Satan, I Peter 5:8,9; "*...Walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise*", Ephesians 5:15)

Applied: We must encourage the child to make a habit of being aware of those around him, and not be so totally absorbed with his own thoughts. They must learn to be alert to temptations, Satan's work and the pull of the world toward sin. Also the child must be taught to be alert toward parent's directives and leadership. The opposite is unawareness and the lack of ability to sense important things, events, etc., around the person.

Effecting Thriftiness

Defined: To teach the value of money, to be frugal, careful, industrious and thrifty. It is to not allow myself or others to spend that which is not necessary. (See Luke 16:11.)

Scriptures: (Luke 16:11; I Corinthians 4:2; ..see money, talents, stewards, faithful, etc. in a concordance) "*He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much.*"

Applied: We must teach the child to save and not to spend it all, how to give what belongs to God, and more, how to deny immediate wants for the more important goals. Parents must exhibit a thrifty, frugal life and teach a child to live for the important priorities of life... "*to serve God, and love Him and not live for things.*" (Study Matthew 6:25-34.)

Opposite: It is living an extravagant life, indulging self and selfish interests.

Building a Sense of Responsibility

Defined: Being accountable, stable, reliable, responsible in action, deed, word,

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etc. It is knowing and doing what both God and others are expecting from me.

Scriptures: (Romans 14:12; Matt. 12:36; Galatians 6:7-10 in sowing and reaping. Colossians 3:22-25; 2:10; 3:1,2; Hebrews 2:1)

Applied: There can be no responsibility without accountability. The child must be held accountable, and learn that this is a part of life. We must give them regular jobs around the house, seeing that they learn to finish the job and fulfill their responsibility. We must make them responsible in use of time and in their whereabouts, setting limitations, and living with the sense of accountability to actions, deeds, words, etc.

Opposite: Is seen so often in unreliability in words, actions, etc.

Bringing About Tolerance

Defined: Allowing or respecting the nature, beliefs, or behavior of others; ability to overlook.

Scriptures: (Galatians 6:10; Philippians 2:3,4; I Peter 4:8; Ephesians 4:32; Acts. 20:35; Romans 13:7)

Applied: *"Let each esteem others better than them-selves."* We must build a right attitude in the lives of our children and youth toward other's property, person, etc. There must be an acceptance of others as unique expressions of specific character qualities in varying degrees of maturity. (an adult approach). (Cf Philippians 2:2)

Opposite: We so often witness prejudice and obvious intolerance of the opinions of others. Of course the Bible must be our standard of truth, and while being tolerant we must stand for truth, and help the child and youth to also do so in love.

Building Virtue in the Life

Defined: This speaks of integrity, goodness, honesty, purity; having a positive influence on others about us in these areas.

Scriptures: (Proverbs 20:7; 28:6; 21:3; 28:20; Prov. 31; Psalm 18:20; II Peter 1:4, 5-8)

Applied: *"To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice."* (See Proverbs 21:3.) When a child has virtue... it will be seen in a life of honesty, dependability, a yearning to do right, and to please the parent and the Lord. Such a person is upright, keeping themselves pure, and have an aversion to sin, hating the evil.

Opposite: We will see a child who is careless about many things, dishonest, making light of sinful matters and building a desire for the things of the flesh; IMPURITY. (cf I Peter 1:4; Ephesians 4:22, 24)

Bringing About Fairness

Defined: Walking in reasonableness; courteous, agree- able, in justice, consistent with rules.

Scriptures: (Genesis 18:18,19, Luke 6:31; Micah 6:8: Psalms 15)

Applied: We must help the child to be fair with his peers and his brothers and sisters. Teach them to treat others fairly as they would like to be treated. Help the child to understand that conflict often comes from being unfair and from taking advantage of another.

Building Joyfulness in Children's Lives

Defined: Manifesting happiness; enjoyable, overjoyed, rejoicing.

Scriptures: (Nehemiah 8:10b, Psalm 16:11; John 15:11; 13:17; Proverbs 15:13; 16:20; Philippians 4:4; James 1:1-3; I Peter 3:14)

Applied: Inner happiness comes from obedience! We must teach the child to be joyful by accepting God's will for their lives, receiving their state in life as God's best and gift to them. They must have a heart that "receives" parents, siblings, etc., as God's gift to them. They must be taught to rejoice in the little things of life, like the sunshine, sunset, rain, animals, birds, flowers, etc. Joy and satisfaction can become a way of life rather than discontentment.

Opposite: To be sullen, self-centered, indifferent to God's goodness, to be unthankful for God's gifts and His Person. To complain, gripe and grumble about things in the home and life.

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This age group are in the training stage! We must emphasize learning and getting information. Tell the children or child "You are going to learn many things that most children don't learn and when you are older you will be the wiser because of it." **Knowledge** comes first, then **wisdom** (putting it to use) come afterwards.

Train them to use what they are learning and have already learned. APPLY EACH PRINCIPLE! It is necessary for it to bring about wisdom in their lives.

Pray earnestly for the Holy Spirit to make these principles real in the life of the child. Review and remind them of past lessons learned so they will retain them.

Never underestimate the pull that habit can exert. It takes from three to five weeks to build a new habit! We must labor with our children to bring these characteristics into their lives. It will necessitate consistent, constant labor to help them get these traits built into their lives. God help you!

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PARTICULARLY FOR YOUTH TO STRENGTHEN THEM IN THEIR TEENS YEARS:

We need to understand our teens. They are evaluating and forming opinions in every area. They need answers to their questions. They need Bible based reasons for their convictions. They are forming convictions to live by. They need to have the following character traits put into their lives, as well as the earlier section.

Remember, *character may be defined to mean: Permanent beliefs which result in consistent behavior.* These convictions become the foundations for life's decisions.

Adolescence (12-20 years) is the time for practicing self-control and making that important in their lives, but they need our example as well as our help in attaining it. So we will be choosing basic character traits to strengthen them during teen years.

Practicing Wisdom

Defined: Having an understanding of what is true, right or lasting; using good judgment. It is seeing and responding to life situations from God's frame of reference. (Proverbs 9:10)

Scriptures: (Proverbs 4:7; 16:16; 1:5; 28:16; Eccl. 7:12; James 3:17; 1:5; Colossians 1:9; I Corinthians 4:10) *"Wisdom is the principal thing...therefore get wisdom."*

Applied: Characteristics of wisdom are: Not to do desperate things, or thoughtless, impulsive acts. We must help the youth apply knowledge in a practical useful, God-honoring way. (Proverbs 2:1-11)

Opposite: It is to walk according to our own inclinations, our natural sinful, selfish desires taking control of the daily life. (The child must be taught to walk biblically, applying the Word of God to their daily living.)

Using Discernment

Defined: To be perceptive, having a sharpness of understanding; to perceive differences; to make distinctions between differing things. It is also the ability to see through a surface problem to root causes. (See I Samuel 16:7.)

Scriptures: (Proverbs 16:20; I Samuel 16:7b; I Kings 3:9; Eccl. 8:5; Hebrews 5:14) Which comes by reason of use. "He that handleth a thing wisely shall find good."

Applied: Youth must learn to be alert to temptations. They must be helped to perceive effects or results of things, events, decisions, etc., in which they have a part or are engaged. To discern is to make good judgment. They need to be able to detect temptation, and make discernment about it as well as many other things in life.

Opposite: It is to have a lack of perceiving the right, making wrong judgments,

having little understanding of important things.

Practicing Discretion

Defined: Using caution, being prudent; having or showing a judicious reserve in one's speech or behavior; respectful or propriety. It is the ability to avoid words, actions and attitudes which could result in undesirable consequences or sin. (See Proverbs 22:3.)

Scriptures: (Proverbs 12:16; 16:21; 22:3; 3:21; 11:22; Isaiah 28:26; I Thessalonians 5:22; Eccl. 10:1; Proverbs 3:22-26) Modesty is always in style.

Applied: The parent must help the youth to grow in the ability to use caution, to be prudent in word, action and deed. This would apply to personal dress and manners, actions, and responses to the opposite sex. We must help them to understand the need of modesty and correct behavior.

Opposite: We often see carelessness, simple-mindedness and improper actions and conduct toward others.

Practicing Diligence

Defined: Persistent effort, attentive care; steady application of one's self to a particular task, etc. Good mottos would be "KEEP ON KEEPING ON," or "NEVER GIVE UP," or "QUITTERS NEVER WIN." It is visualizing each task as a special assignment from the Lord and using all my energies to accomplish it. (See Colossians 3:23.)

Scriptures: (Proverbs 4:23; 22:29; 13:4; Joshua 22:5; Psalm 119:4; I Corinthians 15:58; Galatians 6:7-10; Colossians 3:23-25; Eccl. 9:10)

Applied: Help your youth to do at least one thing every day that they don't want to do, or don't like to do, and do it well, right and on time. Our teens must understand that much of life is made up of doing things maybe we'd rather not do! They must understand that having the right attitude is so important, and that work is a "gift from God." It will necessitate personal self discipline and determination to do right. They must be taught to be "on time, finish tasks, and learn to say no to self."

Opposite: Is to be slothful, a sluggard, of which we read much in the book of Proverbs. Take heed!

Building Endurance

Defined: To withstand hardship or stress; to bear up, to forego, to undergo, to withstand, to practice tolerance. Motto: "DON'T GIVE UP!" It is the inward strength to withstand stress and accomplish God's best. (See Galatians 6:9.) Don't give in.

Scriptures: (II Thessalonians 3:13 "... be not weary in well-doing." Galatians 6:9; I Corinthians 15:58; 13:7)

II Timothy 2:3; Matthew 10:22)

Applied: We must help them *"to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."* God says that it is good for a man, *"that he bear the yoke in his youth."* (See Lamentations 3:27.) If we are to help them be steadfast and enduring, they must be taught to push themselves, increasing their abilities by giving themselves to the maximum. Many Christians do not endure. They are like a "yo-yo", up and down, because they do not have character to endure. We must build character when young.

Opposite: It is shown in "giving up, vacillating, seeking ease and pleasure instead of satisfaction in completing a task." Endurance in the physical realm is increased by exercise; often pushing one's self to the limit is good in building character.

Giving Deference to Others

Defined: Preference given to someone else; especially to an adult; being considerate; showing esteem for, or giving honor or respect. (It means limiting my freedom in order not to offend the tastes of those whom God has called me to serve.)

Scriptures: (Romans 12:10; Philippians 2:3; Exodus 20:12; Ephesians 6:1-3; Leviticus 19:32; Romans 13:7; *"be kindly affectioned in honor preferring one another."*)

Applied: Youth must be taught to submit to and appreciate the wishes of others in the home, giving consideration to the rights and desires of others. This needs to be applied to the use of material possessions, desires, etc., of others.

Opposite: It is seen in "rudeness, selfishness, thoughtlessness and indifference to other's persons, wishes or things."

Developing Sincerity

Defined: Having right motives, wholehearted, heart-felt; a sincere feeling or expression. It is an eagerness to do what is right with transparent motives. (I Peter 1:22)

Scriptures: (I Peter 1:22b; Joshua 24:14 *"serve Him in sincerity and truth"*; Ephesians 6:24; see I Peter 2:2; (Word is sincere) I Tim. 1:5; Titus 2:6-8; II Cor. 1:12 (in believer's life); Judges 6:19).

Applied: Young men are commanded in Titus 2:7 to *"be sober minded, showing themselves a pattern of good works, in doctrine incorruptness, gravity, sincerity"*. Our manner of life is to be in simplicity and godly sincerity according to I Corinthians 1:12. It is the responsibility of the parents to help youth develop a walk in sincerity, and it must be "patterned before them by the parent's lives."

Opposite: We see deceitfulness, a show of spirituality without reality. It is living the life of a hypocrite.

Becoming a Generous Person

Defined: Willing to give or to share; unselfish; having a big heart; giving out of heart desire. It is realizing that all I have belongs to God and using it for His purposes. (II Corinthians 9:6)

Scriptures: (Luke 6:38; Eccl. 11:1; Proverbs 11:24,25; Matthew 10:8; 5:42; II Corinthians 9:6-8; Acts 20:35)

Applied: If young people are going to serve the Lord, give to missions and support God's work, they must be taught this from the time they are small. They must see a generous parent, giving sacrificially, giving to help send a missionary. Most people are "living to GET and not living to GIVE."

Opposite: It is often seen in selfishness, stinginess; and grabbing for one's self.

Learning Humility

Defined: Lack of pride, modesty, submission, unassuming, unpretending. It is a recognition that God and others are responsible for achievements in my life. (See I Corinthians 4:7; II Chronicles 29:14.)

Scriptures: (I Peter 5:6,7; Gal. 6:1,2; Phil. 2:1-11; James 4:6,10; Proverbs 15:33; 16:5, 18,19; 22:4; 11:2; 13:10; 29:23; Matthew 23:12; Psalm 138:6) *"PRIDE GOETH BEFORE DESTRUCTION, and a haughty spirit before a fall."*

Applied: Youth need desperately to know that pride destroys. God literally resists the proud! We must help them to sense when they are falling into prideful boasting. Pride of person, possessions and pride of accomplishments can be serious! Our youth must understand the importance of praising the Lord for all that they are or hope to be.

Opposite: To live with prideful actions and attitudes. It would be wise to study the verses above with youth in the home and discuss what God says in His Word about the sin of pride.

Becoming Enthusiastic

Defined: Fervor, fervent, having zeal, wholehearted-ness; excitement, eagerness. It could be called "expressing with my spirit the joy of my soul." I Thessalonians 5:16,19) It is having a spirit of intense zeal.

Scriptures: (Galatians 4:18; I Corinthians 15:58; Romans 12:11; seen in Caleb---Number 13:30-33; seen in David--- II Samuel 6:12-22; seen in Paul--- Acts 9:1,2; Philippians 3:7-14)

Applied: Our youth must be taught the importance of doing small tasks well and that excellence is always better than the good. They must be taught to do things with fervency, finishing what they start and doing it with zeal. We must show them the value of putting their heart into all they do with eagerness and

excitement of an obedient life.

Opposite: Is seen so often in apathy and a "no care attitude". Many of God's people today are full of "I don't care." They are lukewarm and indifferent. Maybe much of this comes from younger years when apathy became a way of life.

Showing Initiative in Life

Defined: The power or ability to begin or to follow through with a task or plan, being self-motivated. It is recognizing and doing what needs to be done before I am asked to do it. (See Romans 12:21.)

Scriptures: (Eccl. 9:10a) There are a number of illustrations of various ones taking the initiative to get things done, both good and bad. That includes Samson, Nehemiah, Daniel, David, Jacob, Paul, Elijah, Samuel etc. If we study the lives of many Bible characters we will see the practice of initiative in life and living.

Applied: Our children and youth must see the importance of seeing things that need to be done, taking the initiative to get homework done, tasks completed, and doing so without being reminded, urged and commanded. Many of our youth are unresponsive to things which are their responsibility. Far too often it takes pressure to get them just to do the necessary. Maybe we should check our example.

Walking in Biblical Love

Defined: The unselfish, self-sacrificing of yourself to meet the needs of the cherished object; an act of the will followed by the emotion of love. "Love is an act of the will," and Biblical love is "love in action," ministering to the object of that love. It is giving to others' basic needs without having as my motive personal reward. (See I Corinthians 13:3) Qualities of love are seen in long suffering, kindness, bearing all things, believing, prudent, not proud, etc. (See Corinthians 13:1-8.)

Scriptures: (I Corinthians 13; Romans 13:10; I Peter 1:22; I John 4:10, 19; 5:2,3; III John 5,6; Matthew 5:55; 22:39,40; Proverbs 10:12; 17:19)

Applied: Biblical love, or God's kind of love, is a love that "gives and gives" and gives again. It will be seen in action, in meeting needs. Youth will not give that kind of love without it being taught them, by precept and by our example. Often our youth must be encouraged to manifest love in response to others in word, action and deed. Maybe we ought to read and discuss* I John 3, & 4 from time to time.

Opposite: It is seen in selfishness which will be manifested in many ways.

Manifesting Creativity

Defined: Imaginative, productive, ability to create something, being original, inventive.

Scriptures: (Eccl. 9:10; Ephesians 6:6; I Thessalonians 4:11; I Corinthians 10:31)

Applied Creativity is taught by giving problems to the child or youth and helping him solve them. It will probably include encouragement toward music, drawing, doing construction projects, etc. Hobbies need to be encouraged in each child.

Building Decisiveness

Defined: Being firm, unbending, conclusive, having resolve, ability to reach a conclusion or making up one's mind. It will include the ability to finalize difficult decisions based on the will and ways of God. (James 1:5)

Scriptures: (II Timothy 3:15-18; Hebrews 11:23-27; James 1:8)

Applied: The lack is seen in double-mindedness, as noted in James 1:6-8. Often youth are "laid back," unwilling to be involved and showing little excellence. They must build self-discipline and determination.

Building Consistent Obedience

Defined: Accepting authority; submitting to control without protest.

Scriptures: (Hebrews 5:8; I Samuel 15:22; I Peter 1:22; Ephesians 6:1; Hebrews 13:17)

Applied: Orders must be clear, giving the why. Our teens need to know the "why", and be taught the Biblical instruction, giving reasons, and what God's will is in the matter. We must be careful that we do not provoke the teen by frivolous, unnecessary orders, or an order that is totally for our own satisfaction and places an unnecessary hardship in the youth. (See Eph. 6:4, Colossians 3:21.) Teens must understand that obedience to parents and those in authority is a Divine principle established in the Word, and there can be no deviation. (See I Samuel 15:22,23.)

How To Forgive...and To Be Forgiven

Defined: Not to hold a grudge against anyone, to be quick to "make up." When we forgive we will love the offender, pray for them, do good for them and bless them. Forgiveness is an act of the will whereby we release the other person from their offense. And it is a change of attitude whereby we cease being resentful. (See Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13; Matthew 5:44.)

Scriptures: "... Forgive as I have forgiven you," as a continued action. (Ephesians 4:32; Psalms 25:18; Isaiah 55:6,7 pardon; 44:22; Luke 23:34; Psalm 103:13; 78:37,39; Romans 4:7 means forgiven; to be remembered no more, this is used 55 times in the New Testament. Matt 18:27 means to cancel the debt. In Luke 24:45, 47, we see remission of sin, or the paying of a price.

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Matthew 6:12; Mark 11:25, and Luke 11:4; 6:37 all speak of our willingness to forgive others.)

Applied: In the above references we see many aspects of forgiving and being forgiven. For God forgives fully through the merits of the redemption in Christ. We are commanded to forgive. Parents must forgive their teens when they have done wrong. The lack of the sense of being forgiven is known to lead to the use of alcohol and drug abuse. We are commanded to forgive on the basis of the blood of Christ. We must do so, and teach our teens to forgive, even to seventy times seven. (See Matt. 18:22). We can forgive! God commands us to do so! Regular prayer for the offender will help us to give forgiveness freely. We must put the act of the offender out of our mind, and truly set that person free by our forgiveness.

Building Sensitivity In The Life

Defined: Being sensitive to God, to the Holy Spirit and to others about me. Being responsive to, impressionable to God's leadership, and sensitive to sin and/or sinful actions. It is being responsive to another in attitudes, feelings or circumstances. It is exercising my senses so that I can perceive the true spirit and emotions of those around me. (See Romans 12:15.)

Scriptures: (Proverbs 15:1; 22:17; 27:19 Isaiah 30:21; Luke 24:32; Acts 4:32; Daniel 7:28; Colossians 3:15; Luke 2:19) See in a concordance, the words.. "consider, ponder, oneness, hear, harken."

Applied: Sensitivity to the Lord, to His Word and to the Holy Spirit's leading is a tremendous need in the lives of our youth. They also must have a sensitivity to sin, and to many aspects in life. In fact few if any of the foregoing character traits will be built in the life without sensitivity to the needs that are there in their lives.

Opposite: The manifestation of a callousness, and indifference which we see in many adults. Parents must be willing to build into their own lives the very traits they want to see in their youth.

PART IV

AIDS FOR DISCIPLING OUR CHILDREN!

We ought to be concerned about discipling our own children and youth! Their future does depend upon our consistency in molding their lives for Christ. In Matthew 28:19-21 we are commanded to win people to Christ, and that they be baptized, but also we are under command to "instruct them or to teach them" all things. This is the Greek word which means "to teach, or to disciple them!"

It is not my intent to go into great detail in this section, but to give some suggestions and helps toward the building up of our youth and children in doctrine, so they will be "established in the faith." Paul taught much about "follow-up" as we may call it today, and he also practiced such a labor in the lives of converts. (II Timothy 2:2; Colossians 1:28,29; I Thessalonians 2:7-12; Galatians 4:17; II Thessalonians 3:8)

We have two books available for follow-up or for the purpose of discipling our children and youth. These are books that I have authored some years ago and are also available through our office or in meetings. They are listed at the end of this section (they are excellent), along with other suggestions of materials that you might use.

The following materials are given as a guide in areas of truth that should be covered in helping your youth or children in "maturing them, developing them and giving doctrine for the establishing of their lives."

DEFINING THE TASK OF DISCIPLESHIP

Before we get into the areas of truth, suggestions and materials that we want to share in this section, possibly we need to define what the task of discipling really is so that we will approach it correctly as parents.

In so sense is this material the "last word" on discipling We present this as suggestive.

This section is a compilation of ideas, doctrines, etc., that should be included in biblical discipleship.

Why It is So Needed Today

Young people today are lacking stability. Christian youth heed something solid and stable to build their lives upon. Many things contribute to the instability of their lives such as:

- **A lack of trust.** We have taught our young people not to trust anyone or anything. They basically do not trust the establishment, government, adults, or institutions about them. Government has made grandiose promises that it cannot fulfill. Parents make pledges that they do not keep. Our youth are constantly disappointed and brought to the distrust of everything.

- **A lack of commitment.** All around them our youth see parents and people quitting in every walk of life when the going gets tough. Instead of weathering the storm, finding answers and doing right out of commitment our young people see adults take the path of least resistance, and least demand upon themselves.

- **A lack of submission to authority.** Students rebel against teachers,

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parents and law enforcement. Men do not walk to submit to authority. Women do not wish to submit to their husbands. Liberty without restraints has become the goal of many.

Many people (including parents) are engaged in every activity imaginable as they seek their own fulfillment. In this state of affairs youth are seeking for someone who cares, someone whom they can trust and respect.

- **Why it must begin at home.** Many Churches have discipleship programs today, and in some cases have full-time assistant pastors who labor in this ministry. Often the burden for the outsider or new convert is very evident while we neglect our own children who are growing up in the church. Before we go looking for people to disciple, we need to start with our own families. We have them but a few short years, we cannot depend upon the Christian School, and the local church to fulfill the task that God has given us as parents. (See Ephesians 6:4; Proverbs 6:20-23; 22:6; 4:1,2; 4:10-13; 7:1-3.)

- **What is involved in this task.** A disciple in the earliest use of the word, (in the Greek language) did not mean someone who was trained by a tutor or who paid for training. A disciple was a person whose life was molded by another who gave himself to the one being molded or training. (Note carefully II Timothy 3:10-12.) Paul and Timothy experienced a togetherness in the totality of life. Timothy was not only taught, and was learning, but was molded by the very life that the Apostle Paul lived in front of Timothy. Timothy was a co-laborer, a friend in intimate relationship with Paul.

To disciple our own children means more than just completing a course of study, though that is involved, but is also means sharing, and ***living the life together of dedication, love and application of biblical truths.*** (See John 3:30.)

We cannot force our youth people to live for Christ. This must become a decision of their own hearts. The Lord Jesus expected voluntary commitment. (See Luke 9:23, 24; 14:27-33.) In discipling our children, the initiative must remain with them. To force such upon them without the presence of an inner conviction causes our children to live a lie.

Discipleship is designed by God with our best interest in mind. We do God no favor by committing ourselves to Him. It is He who does us the favor by offering us discipleship. It is the only way to have the blessed, overflowing life that He wants us to have. (See John 10:10.) Discipleship is a commitment to the Person of Christ.

It is the discipler and disciple bound together in a mutual love and fellowship found in Christ. It is an allegiance together to HIM that brings the strength in the relationship between the two that makes possible the molding of the life of the disciple. This is a basic key to success in the work of discipling another.

The parent discipling his own child is confronted with the task of fulfilling his obligation as a parent as well as the commitment to the person of Christ in such a task.

Discipleship deals first with the **inner quality of life** and then **the outward performance** as both are involved. (See John 11:34, 35; 14:15, 21, 23; 15:9.)

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The word, ***disciple***, is used about 250 times in the gospels and the Book of Acts. It usually means someone who is attached to the Person of Christ as Master of their life. ***The word never means something someone does to another person!*** As parents we do not convert our child to Christ, all of it is the work of the Holy Spirit. I can influence my child for Christ, and guide that one, but only God can do the work in the heart and life.

So to disciple our children is to work with them, in cooperation with the Holy Spirit, using the Word of God to help mold their lives and bring surrender to the Savior as Lord of their lives.

We must make our youth accountable in the effort we put forth to disciple them. We as parents can only expect what we inspect. And it is our responsibility to go through the materials with them, holding them accountable to study, and complete the materials given them. This is why it is imperative that we secure good materials, or courses of study and then monitor their work in it. Also we could study through the materials given below, looking up each verse together which would help immeasurably.

THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO THE LORD

In Salvation

(Romans 3:12-24; Romans 5:6-10; John 1:11-13; Romans 6:23; John 3:16-18) Children and youth need to thoroughly understand God's plan of Salvation. *We must be careful that we do not take it for granted that they know HIM, just because they have made a profession.* We have many in our churches who have made their profession but their lives do not show that they have Christ. Where there is birth, there will be life!! Do they have life? We need to have them go through a good course or use materials that will aid them in understanding. That is another reason why discipling materials are so important, and need to be used in the home with and for that child and youth.

In Assurance of Salvation

(I John 5:11-13; John 5:24 hath; I Peter 1:5 kept; Ephesians 2:8,9; John 10:26-27; 6:37) Many times young folk have a real struggle about being sure they are saved. They must be directed to a good course of study that will get them into the Word of God by which they can make it positive about their relationship to Christ.

In Submission, Dedication to Christ

(Romans 14:9; Romans 12:1,2; 6:13; John 15:10,14)

It is a great strengthening for youth in their daily lives to come to the place of totally yielding their lives, bodies, their all to the Lord. They must see this in our lives, and be encouraged to yield to HIM. It would be very wise to direct them through some course of study or materials to aid such a dedication.

If we are to have strong, victorious youth, we must give them direction and help. (I John 2:12-14)

In a vital Prayer Life

(Matthew 7:7; John 14:13,14; 16:23,24; John 15:7; I Thessalonians 5:17; Luke 11; Luke 18) We must help them build a vital prayer life where they "know they are in God's presence", know how to get answers to prayer, and know the joy of a walk with God. This is not learned by accident nor can we presume that they

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will easily come to this on their own. They need to see a Dad and Mom pray, and enter into a prayer life with the parent. Kneeling together, praying unhurriedly is so important, as well as the study of some course that will help to build them in this area of their lives.

In Study of the Word, a Quiet Time

(Mark 1:35; John 8:31; 5:37; Jeremiah 15:16; I Timothy 2:15; II Timothy 3:16,17) It is so vital that youth and child learn early the dire necessity of the Word of God in their lives for victory, growth, and service. (II Peter 3:18; I Peter 2:2; Psalm 119:9,11) We must aid them in this by having a good study course that will excite them in the blessing of it all.

In a Walk In His Will

(Psalm 37:23; Colossians 4:12; 1:9; Ephesians 5:17; 6:6; Psalm 119:105; I Timothy 4:12; Romans 12:1,2) If they are to be in God's will, "that good, acceptable, and perfect will of God," then we must build that desire in their lives. Also as parents we must walk in God's will, seeking it, and helping the child and youth to understand the importance of knowing and doing God's will. *The verses with all these sections are for your study and consideration.*

In Worship and Praise

(Psalm 1; Psalm 145; Psalm 89; Ephesians 5:19,20; John 4:2-24; Revelation 4:9-11; 5:9-14) We must instill in the lives of our youth the need to worship God, to rejoice in Him and to learn to praise Him for all things.

To Practice Stewardship, to Give

(Malachi 3:10; II Corinthians 9:6-8; Luke 6:38) As our youth and children are taught to tithe, and to give above it in offerings, they must first see our example and consistent giving.

THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO HIS WORD

To Study It

(II Timothy 3:16,17; Acts 17:11) A good follow-up course or discipling course could get them started on a lifetime pursuit of the study of God's Word. Few things would benefit them more than that. We must assist, encourage and excite them in this!

To Memorize It

(Colossians 3:16; Psalm 119:9,11) To have the Word of God hidden in the heart is of great necessity if we would have strong, victorious youth who overcome sin and Satan. Families must memorize the Word of God together. The verses used in the character trait section, or those with this part of the book (and what is suggested in follow-up books) could give a good beginning.

To Meditate In It

(Psalm 1; Joshua 1:8; Philippians 4:8; Proverbs 4:23; Psalm 119:105; 130) To meditate means "to roll over in the mind, to give extended thought to, to deliberate over." Meditation is the "touch-stone" of life. What we meditate upon, or give our thoughts to we are becoming! Our values, interests and priorities are largely controlled or built by what we think upon.

THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO HIS CHURCH

Understanding the New Testament Church

(Acts 2:41-47; 14:21-28; 13:1-3; 12:1; 16:5) All these portions should be studied and meditated on. They all speak of the local Church. The Church is a group of saved, called out ones, baptized and serving the Lord. It is made of members who are called out from the world to serve the Lord. The word "Church" is used over 100 times in the New Testament and means "separated, called out ones". It usually (over 100 times) is speaking of a local church, in a local place, doing God's will, with God's power, for God's glory.

The Importance of Service There

Our children need to understand the importance of the local church, and their labor and service there, as God's appointed institution to reach the world. (Hebrews 10:24,25; I John 1:3; Acts 14; 16, 18) In the three chapters just listed, Paul was laboring in each place to reach people, and to plant a New Testament church. It was when the leaders (Acts 13) were in prayer in the local church, ministering to the Lord that God called Paul and Barnabas.

The Blessing of Christian Fellowship There

(I John 1:3; Acts 2:42; Heb. 10:24,25; Psalms 122:1) Parents must excite their own about the blessing of fellowship with fellow believers.

The Importance of Baptism There

(Acts 2; Acts 8; Acts 10) In each of these portions people were baptized because of their faith. God sets forth the order of faith in Christ, or salvation, and then baptism. Again a good follow-up course of study will have a chapter of study in this area. We need to go through such a course with our youth.

THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO THE GREAT COMMISSION

To Be An Active, Vital Witness

(II Timothy 4:1,2; Psalm 126:5,6; Luke 24:44-47; John 20:21; Matthew 28:18-20) This can only be done by carrying tracts, taking the gospel to those around us, sharing what Christ has done for us, and giving witness to the resurrection, that HE is ALIVE and can SAVE to the uttermost those who come to God by Him. (Hebrews 7:25; Acts 4:12; I Corinthians 15:1-4; Acts 4:33) We must be the example to our youth, and aid them in an active, vital witness.

To Testify With Power

(Acts 1:8; Acts 4:31-33) They must be taught as youth the importance of having the power of the Holy Spirit upon their lives, and therefore the "boldness to witness for HIM."

To Put the GO in the GOSpel

(Matthew 28:19-21; Acts 8:4; Acts 5:42) As parents we must GO if we expect our youth to GO. We must labor with them, taking the gospel to our communities, and using every opportunity to reach the lost.

To Work At Discipling Others

(II Timothy 2:2) Paul labored to bring others to the place of "producing reproducers". That ought to be our goal as well. Parents must help their youth,

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and children to bring others to salvation and then help that person whom they have won until they have "won others to Christ". Then we must help that new convert to also win yet others. This will necessitate a "follow-up" ministry of building others in the faith.

THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

To Be Filled With The Holy Spirit

(Ephesians 5:18; the word Holy Spirit, or Spirit is used over 60 times in the book of Acts. Acts 6:3,5; Acts 1:1,5,8; Acts 4:31) We are under command to yield to His Person and work in our lives. Again youth need to study this subject until they understand this important truth and it is real, and vital in the life.

To Not Grieve Or Quench The Holy Spirit

(Ephesians 4:30; I Thessalonians 5:19)

To Walk In The Spirit

(Galatians 5:16-17, 24,25; Romans chap 8) Again parents are accountable to help their youth to know how to yield to the Holy Spirit, to walk in His guidance, and to not grieve Him or quench His work in their lives. A good study of the ministry, person and work of the Holy Spirit is very vital... (we have such a book, entitled, "*Do You Know the Holy Spirit*" and a set of tapes of eight messages on this subject.) They can be ordered from our office. A good follow up ministry will also include this subject and help us to apply Biblical truth.

THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO THE WORLD, SIN AND SATAN

Having Victory Over Temptation & Satan

(I Corinthians 10:13; I John 4:4; 5:4; Romans 8:37; Ephesians 6:10-18) It is imperative that parents help their children and youth to be overcomers, for they must know how to deal with temptations, and defeat sin and Satan in their lives. A good follow-up course of study (like we have in print) would help you to help them know how to stay in fellowship with the Lord and to have victory in daily living.

Having Victory Over the World

(Romans 12:1,2; John 16:33; I John 2:15,16) The world's enticements is what Satan is using more than anything else today! He is using the medium of TV more than anything to bring compromise and to destroy the "keen edge" of desire after spiritual things on the part of God's people. It is imperative that we help our youth to be overcomers! We must take the stand against worldliness for our homes and direct their lives toward godliness. (Titus 2:11-15; Galatians 1:4) "*These things teach, and rebuke!*"

Bringing About Separation From Sin

(Romans 6:12-14, 16,17; John 8:31-36; Romans 8:1-16) God has called us to separation, and parents must help their youth to have a hatred of sin, and a love of righteousness. It is said of Christ that He hates iniquity and loves righteousness. (Hebrews 1:9) The Greek word translated iniquity means literally, "lawlessness". God expects us to help our children and youth to embrace godly living! (See Titus 2:11-14.) Again a good study of discipleship materials will give them direction to this end, as they apply the Word of God with a yielded

heart and life.

Being Consistent in Confession of Sin

(I John 1:7,9; Proverbs 28:13; Psalm 66:18) Without a consistent walk with the Lord we all fail. So often youth do not sense the loss of fellowship with the Lord, nor the tremendous need of maintaining a clear heart. We need to help our youth "to walk in the light, as He is in the Light", which means to walk in transparency, openness, honesty about our needs. To have a clear conscience, a good conscience (Acts 24:16) necessitates having "*short accounts*" with the Lord by daily cleansing, through daily confession of sin. Our youth and children must see our example in all these aspects of daily living.

Putting On the Whole Armour

(Ephesians 6:10-18) We need to study this portion with our youth, in detail, and help them to constructively put on the "whole armour of God." A good detailed study of this would help them to know how to be an overcomer against Satan's wiles, and darts, and how to walk in daily victory. (See I Peter 5:8,9.) Far too often we assume that our children will turn out right just because we all attend services, read our Bibles and they attend a Christian school. The question is do they know how to walk with God in a victorious life?

Practicing Submitting to God and Resisting Satan.

(James 4:7) They must see us submitting to God, and resisting satan's work in our lives. It must become a practice of daily life and living!

We must teach our youth to fully submit and learn to "**say no**" to sin, and Satan's enticements which come to us through the world, and through the sinful nature within. We need to make Galatians 5:16-24 and 2:20 a practical truth and reality to them and in our own lives. (Study also Romans 8:1-18.)

Willingly Fleeing Sin, and a Life Filled With the Lord (II Timothy 2:22)

Parents must help their youth to flee youthful lusts, and to have a life that is God-filled. This will mean memorizing the Word, strengthening the resolve by daily surrender of the will in obedience and positively doing the things listed in the former points that will build the life. We must have a good study course with them that will set forth the "*old nature and new nature*", and how to walk in the new nature God has given us, as they learn to surrender and yield to the Holy Spirit.

We can give our youth no greater heritage than the heritage of a godly life. If they know how to walk in God's will, do His bidding, and have a heart after righteousness we will have achieved the goal that ought to be the determination of our lives as the parent. Every effort and expense in time and money is worth it all! May God help us to do it!

When we consider motivating our children and youth we must always consider the following:

A. It is the Holy Spirit who reaches inside the person and motivates him to action. He alone is able to change this person's sense of values, purposes and perspective. We cannot force someone to do something. Only the Holy Spirit can give that young person the conviction and ideals that will mold the life. We must cooperate with His ministry in the life. Sometimes we think that our child's blindness to truth is rebellion, but maybe not so at all, but just a lack of spiritual

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perception. (Cf I Corinthians 2:9-3:2.) The Holy Spirit's work, the Word of God, and the example of committed Christians is crucial in motivating our youth to follow the Lord.

B. Secondly, it is exposure to the Word of God that brings changes in lives. God wants His Word to have a profound impact on the life. (Hebrews 4:12) As you counsel your child refer constantly to the Word of God. When you correct or rebuke your child, refer him to the Word of God. Help him ask, "What does God say?" "What does God want?" "What am I to do?" "What is His will for my life?"

Help the youth through the Word of God to see the greatness of God, His power and the importance of giving his life totally to the Lord. Challenge him or her to memorize and meditate upon the Word of God. We must emphasize the importance of a life that is saturated with the Word of God.

It is God who works in us *"to will and to do of His good pleasure."* (See Philippians 2:13.) He has saved us and called us, for His own purpose. (II Timothy 1:9) We as parents must function in cooperation with Him in the process of molding the lives of our own. ***It is a team effort with us functioning as coaches. May God help us!***

As you refer to the appendix you will find a list of suggested books, and materials for use in discipling your child and youth. It is imperative that we obey God in this and do our utmost to mold their lives. Their future lives and service could be greatly enhanced by a thorough follow up course. It fact it would be good to study through more than one course over a period of years so that our youth will be fully grounded in the Word of God.

Some of these books may be out of print since we put this list together. And some in this list are books we have had in our personal possession for some years and may not be available at this time except through some source of used Christian books.

The spiritual heritage we leave with our children will be the greatest gift of a lifetime.

APPENDIX

Aids, Materials, Helps, For Family Altar

In this section we are concerned with sharing various- materials with you for use with different age groups during your family devotional times. If these can be purchased they will be very good aids for use in home life.

* **To use with little ones--** (preschoolers)

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"Little Visits With God" by Allan Jahsmann and Martin Simon.

"More Little Visits With God" by authors above.

"Happy Moments With God" (Devotions for Families with little children) by Margaret Anderson.

"The Bible in Pictures for Little Eyes" by Kenneth Taylor

"Muffin Family Picture Bible Series" (There are nine in this series such as Along Thimbleland Trails, Out of the Treasure Chest, Captains' Maxi's Secret Island, Toyland With Maxi and Mini in Muffin-land, From Castles In the Clouds, Through Golden Windows, Under the Tagalong Tree, With Sails to the Wind, and Over Buttonwood Bridge)

"Vos's Bible Story Book" and also others available in the next section.

* For use with younger elementary

"A Hive of Bees" (Christian trait stories) Published by Ministry of Life, Rt 2, Box 74, Cloverdale, IN. 46120

"Another Hives of Bees" (see above source)

"The Book of Life" (a large set usually sold by sales men going to the homes) Zondervan Publications

"Devotions for the Christian's Hour" Kenneth Taylor

"Stories for the Children's Hour" Kenneth Taylor

"First Steps" by Charles Foster (The life of Christ for Beginners)

"Moody Bible Story Book" Published by Moody Press

"Keys For Kids" Children's Bible Hour,

P.O. Box 1, Grand Rapids, MI. 49501

"They Call Me Mama" By Margaret Nicholl Laird, Baptist Mid-Missions, (missionary stories).

* Older elementary ages

"Book of Life" (sold by salesmen) Zondervan Pub.

"Hurlburt's Story of the Bible" (Bible Stories to be read) Zondervan Pub.

"Egermeier's Bible Story Book" Moody Press

"Keys For Kids" Children's Bible Hour, Grand Rapids MI. (are \$1.00 per issue)

"Family Time With God" (Devotional guide for family use, in outline form)

Family Time Ministries, 34 Nilsson St. Brockton, MA 02401

"Living Thoughts for the Children's Hour" Kenneth Taylor

"The Storyteller" V. Ben Kendrick, Published by Baptist Mid-Missions, (missionary stories) P.O. Box 308011 Cleveland, Ohio. 44103

"Flight From Death", "Buried Alive for Christ", "A World of Treasure", all by V. Ben Kendrick, Baptist Mid-Missions (missionary stories)

* Junior-Hi, and older

"Family Devotions With School-age Children" by Lois E. LeBar, Fleming Revell Co.

"Youth Time With God" (devotional materials in outline form) Family Time Devotions, 34 Nilsson St. Brockton, MA. 02401

"Pilgrims Progress" (good book for this age to read, could be used personal devotional time)

"Know Why You Believe" By Dr. Paul Little, Inter-Varsity Press (good book on basic doctrines, and why we believe)

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"*Three Loves*" , (missionary story) by Edward D. Hughes, published by Baptist Mid-Missions.

"*Burning Wicks*", (collection of missionary stories) by Polly Strong, Baptist Mid-Missions

"*Battle For Yanga*", (missionary story) by V. Ben Kendrick, Baptist Mid-Missions, also

"*Yanga, The Miracle Village*" by V. Ben Kendrick

For older children there ought to be a variety of things done for family devotions: like considering doctrine together, 1) by assigning an older child to look up all the verses possibly on any subject like SIN, SATAN, HOLY SPIRIT, etc., and then consider a number of these each day for a month, 2) by using a Torrey's Topical Text Book for such, and/or a Nave's Topical Bible, and the use of a concordance to accomplish this.

Another means of variety would be to go through various books of the Bible, considering

- 1) what is God saying to us?,
- 2) what do we need to change?,
- 3) how do we apply this to daily living?,
- 4) what are the promises to claim, sins to avoid, and commands to obey, etc.
- 5) How do we see Christ in the portion, how do we see God, or the Holy Spirit?

Aids, Materials for Discipling Children & Youth

* *For Younger Children (grade-school age)*

"*Bible Handbook for Boys and Girls*" by Dr. Ed. Watke Jr., order from our office.

"*This New Life of Yours*" (children's addition, and also available in adult and youth editions, correlated to use together) Accent Press, Denver, CO.
(used to be Baptist Publications)

Some of the materials listed in the section for devotional life in the home could also be used to help build character traits in young lives, and also for discipling.

* **For Youth, (Jr-Hi and Sr-Hi) Adults also**

"*This New Life of Yours*" Accent Press, Denver, Co.

"*Basic Bible Truths For New Believers*" By Dr. Ed. Watke Jr., order from our office.

"*Growing In Grace*" By Dr. Ed Nelson, South Sheridan Baptist Church, 875 South Sheridan Blvd. Denver, Co. 80226 (excellent, very detailed)

"*Won By One*" By Melvin T. Lacock, Bible Press Inc. 6595 N.W. Sixth Dr., Des Moines, Iowa 50313 (A 24 lesson book, also can be used with unsaved to win them to Christ. Excellent!)