

CHAPTER SIX FIVE SPECIFIC AREAS OF WISDOM AND LIFE SKILLS

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Scripture Memory Verse — Prv 22:6

Train up a child in the way he should go, Even when he is old he will not depart from it.

Chapter Six Five Specific Areas of Training in the Area of Wisdom and Life Skills—Bible Study

INTRODUCTION: TAKING BACK THE HOME

We come back to this point... to Eph 6:1
“Children, obey your parents in the Lord,
for this is right.” The mother and father,
as parents, are the head of the home,
while the husband is head of the wife.

*Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will stand before
kings; He will not stand before obscure men.*
Prv 22:29

The home is their domain. No one knows their children like they do. No one loves their children like they do. The parents, in taking back the home and returning themselves as the rightful head, have no one to blame but themselves. They are, in fact, their own worst enemy. Although you may feel the encroachment of the world upon your family, in reality, if you are not head of your home, it is because you have recanted this position and given it to your children.

Nature abhors a vacuum and there is no greater vacuum in nature than that of authority. If you do not fill the position of authority, the world will do so through its secular institutions. Satan will do so through lies, fear and deception. Most importantly, the flesh will do so. Your foolish child will step in and begin making designs that are rightfully yours. In taking back the home, the parents must first look to the home and take back the authority and decision making-powers to themselves and, if they are honest, they will admit that many of these decisions have been given over to their children.

A. RETURNING HONOR TO PARENTING.

Having done so, honor must be returned to parenting. The concept of honor is viewed as archaic in our culture. Ancient cultures and civilizations spoke of honor. In our own history, we look back to a more primitive time when things were done, sacrifices made and even blood spilt in the name of honor. The code of honor is thought of as belonging to a more chivalrous, simplistic age. In our democratic, egalitarian age we do not think of honor as something to be demanded or even as something that should be promoted. Yet, the Word of God is clear when it comes to the subject of honor. The word “honor” occurs 124 times in the New American Standard Bible. It is no small issue. As to parents and their children, the Word of God is clear.

Ex 20:12 *"Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the Lord your God gives you."*

Dt 5:16 *"Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God has commanded you, that your days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with you on the land which the Lord your God gives you."*

Mt 15:4 *"For God said, 'Honor your father and mother,' and, 'He who speaks evil of father or mother, let him be put to death.'"*

Eph 6:2 *"Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with a promise."*

Children are clearly taught to honor their parents, and any behavior by the child which is dishonoring and disrespectful is not merely a sin against the parents, but it is a sin against God. It is disobedience. It is rebellion against God and His Word. It is the parent's responsibility to protect the child from this foolish behavior and to both teach and require honor to the parents in the home and in public.

B. RETURNING THE HOME TO A REFUGE FROM A BATTLE GROUND

The home should be a refuge for the father as he returns from his battles in the world and for the mother and children as well. It cannot be a refuge, though, if the parents must continually battle and be worn down by disobedient and willful children. A father will not look forward to coming home to a place of conflict, where mother is worn out and children are fighting and bickering. Demanding children will place even more stress upon his already stressed-out system. Mom will look to him to take over so she can finally have a break. Bickering and demanding children will present him with their demands and grievances, along with those of his wife's against these same children. A father has the right to come home to a refuge, not a battle ground.

A mother will not want to forgo her career to be belittled, embarrassed and harried by disobedient and disrespectful children. She will not want to spend her day picking up after them and hoping against hope that they will take a long nap or, better yet, get sick so she can have a break. A mother has the right to live her life in her refuge, not a battleground.

What of the children? They are not happy as willful and whining children. Disrespectful children with fallen countenances are not happy children. Children whose wills are left unchecked, those from whom foolishness has not been driven out, are not happy children. Children are not happy fighting and bickering with each other, with Mom or with Dad. Children have a right to be raised in a refuge, not a battleground.

The key then is to return this home from its foolish state to that which God had in mind. To make the home a refuge, the parents must first accept it as their duty to discipline and train their children in such a way that they appreciate and cooperate with the home as a refuge. There is nothing more foolish than for a child to change his home from a refuge to a battleground by his own willful actions. The Word of God has the answer— Prv 22:15 *“Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; The rod of discipline will remove it far from him.”*

C. RETURNING AUTHORITY TO THE PARENTS

This, then, returns authority to the parents. *The parent*— not the child, begins making the decisions concerning the home. *The parent*— not the child, decides the atmosphere of the home... how clean it is, how many conflicts there are and over what, the noise level, the activities the family can or cannot engage in, what the family does and where the family goes. The parents have authority and exercise this authority. The home then becomes a refuge, a place of peace and a place of family love. The foolishness that is passed off as family life in the media, in the market place and in the homes of the secular world is discarded to the junk heap of failed philosophies which have preceded it in all the failed societies which have gone before. *“Children obey their parents in the Lord for this is right, honoring their father and mother which is the first commandment with a promise, that it may be well with them and that they may live long on the earth.”*

What follows is:

First: a brief study from the Word of God to aid you in understanding the subject matter of this chapter.

Second: a manuscript is provided for you to read together and discuss.

Third: practical projects for discussion and application are provided to aid you in implementing those areas of the seminar which meet your needs as a parent.

The Parents as Head of The Home

Read each passage or verse and answer any questions. Then, in one or two short sentences, relate how it expresses or establishes the principle that the parents are the head of the home.

Rom 1:28–32 “*And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; and, although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.*”

What was the relationship these people had with God?

What does God say such people are worthy of?

What are some of the activities that they engaged in?

What characterized their relationship with their parents?

How does this passage express the principle that parents are the head of the home?

Eph 6:1– 3 “*Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.*”

How does this passage express the principle that parents are the head of the home?

Col 3:20 *Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord.*

How does this passage express the principle that parents are the head of the home?

Parents: Deserving of Honor

Read the passages or verses below and write a short statement on what they teach about children honoring their parents.

Ex 20:12 *“Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the Lord your God gives you.”*

Dt 5:16 *“Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God has commanded you, that your days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with you on the land which the Lord your God gives you.”*

Mt 15:4 *“For God said, ‘Honor your father and mother,’ and, ‘He who speaks evil of father or mother, let him be put to death.’*

Mt 19:17–19 *“And He said to him, “Why are you asking Me about what is good? There is only One who is good; but if you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments.” He said to Him, “Which ones?” And Jesus said, “You shall not commit murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; Honor your father and mother; and You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”*

Mk 7:10 *“For Moses said, “Honor your father and your mother;” and, “He who speaks evil of father or mother, let him be put to death;”*

Eph 6:2 *“Honor your father and mother—which is the first commandment with a promise...”*

Eph 6:3 *“... that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth.”*

Obedient Children

Read the passages or verses below and write a short statement on what they teach about children obeying their parents.

Eph 6:1 “*Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.*”

Rom 1:30 “*...slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents,*”

2 Tm 3:2 “*For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy,*”

Dt 21:18–19 “*If any man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey his father or his mother, and when they chastise him, he will not even listen to them, then his father and mother shall seize him, and bring him out to the elders of his city at the gateway of his home town.*”

Col 3:20 “*Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord.*”

Chapter Six

Five Specific Areas of Training in the Area of Wisdom and Life Skills—Lecture

INTRODUCTION:

Chapter six picks up right where five left off— continuing to evaluate and discuss wisdom and life skills. As parents, we are seeking to develop in our children those wisdom and life skills which will help them to be successful in life. We want them, ultimately, to leave the home and live both a fruitful and fulfilled life, apart from their parents, while remaining in a loving relationship with their parents.

I. Five Specific Invaluable Life-Skills

In this chapter, Eleanor and I share with you those wisdom and life skills which we found, through our own experience of raising four wonderful children, to be crucial and indispensable in their success while at home, and in preparing them to live successfully apart from us.

I. EATING

Nothing highlights the honor or lack of it from children in the home more than actions at the dinner table. It is here that the family is most like itself. (If at this point you realize that your family does not share sit-down dinners together, then that tells you more about your family, or lack of it, than anything else) **It is**

never O.K. to throw food. From the earliest age, we disciplined in this area— not at Mommy, not on the floor, not on the tray. Children do not throw food. It is disrespectful to the person who made it. It is disobedient to the parents who forbid it. And, it lays the groundwork for all sorts of problems later on.

During the early stages of the eating process, while the child is moving from the breast, to the bottle, to the cup, to solid foods there will be discovery process that takes place. The child will want to know which orifices work best—ear, eyes, nose, hair, mouth... The experiments will take place and the muscle coordination will slowly come about. This learning process need not be confused with violent outbursts, temper tantrums or

Patty, a five year old, was staying with us for the weekend while her parents went out. They were friends and we were glad to do it. Certain foods were off limits to Patty and her mother gave us strict instructions to feed her the lunch she had prepared. Patty announced she did not want it. When we told her she had to eat it, she stuffed it in her mouth until she gagged it up. She wasn't my child and I wasn't going to fight this or send her to her nap early, so we fed her, keeping to her mothers requests the best we could.

The afternoon her parents were to return, Patty decided she did not want to take a nap and started crying. We left her in the bed and I could hear it coming. Patty was going to make herself throw up. I went in the bedroom, took Patty firmly by the shoulders and looked her in the face and said, "Patty, I know what you are going to do. You are going to make yourself throw up. But I want you to know something. You are going to stay right here in your throw up until your nap is over. I am not kidding you, Patty. I will not clean up the puke. When your nap is over you can come out and clean up and when your parents return to pick you up I will take your mother up to this room and have her clean it up." (Which is exactly what I would have done. I might also add that Eleanor and I have found more and more that the threat, "If you do not behave I will tell your parents..." is only met with a shrug.)

Patty calmed down immediately, and I gave her a cup of water. I don't know if she went to sleep or not, but she was quiet. I learned later from her father that this is common with Patty. "She has a tender stomach and nerves and you have to be careful or she will throw up" Her father was a little distressed at what I said to Patty. We remained good friends, but we never kept her again. This was fine with me, as I am a great believer in parents who let their children puke every time they get mad having to clean up the stuff. I certainly am not about to do it.

refusal to cooperate after the skill is learned. This drift into antisocial and rebellious tendencies should be checked and disciplined early in the child’s training.

Actions such as throwing food at Mommy, throwing food or bowl on the floor, yanking food or spoon away from Mommy, screaming or saying "no" to Mommy, shutting down, clinching jaw, refusing to eat or to swallow, gagging or making self sick are forbidden. None of these behaviors are acceptable, and all should be disciplined.

At an early stage, expect the children to behave and to eat their food. As their social/behavioral skills increase, so will positive reinforcement by those around them as ever-widening opportunities for social involvement increase. This upward spiral feeds on itself. Conversely, poor social/behavioral skills decrease the social sphere, which is also is a self-perpetuating spiral.

“Hey, help that kid over there. See what he wants. He’s with the family that picks up after themselves.”

This statement was made by the manager of McDonald’s when Sam, as a preschooler, was trying to get some ketchup from a worker at McDonald’s. Even when the children were young, we would send them to the counter to get ketchup, drink refills or orders for seconds. This built up their self-esteem and confidence, though on a busy day they would get overlooked because most parents would rather do it themselves before entrusting it to their child. The manager had long since noticed that our kids did not make a mess and always cleared their table before leaving, thus the praise and extra attention.

It was not uncommon, when our children were young, for them to receive unsolicited praise for their table manners in public. This only heightens their desire to be well-mannered. Be it a stranger in the next table, a waitress or a dinner guest. A well-behaved child at the dinner table does not go unnoticed.

A. EARLY TRAINING: BY ONE YEAR OF AGE, YOUR CHILD SHOULD...

1. Be able to sit in a high chair at the table at the father’s side and behave. The child should be able to have a meal with the family without completely disrupting the meal, screaming, crying, throwing things off the tray, etc.
2. Bow head and be quiet during prayer (if this is your tradition,) or participate in whatever tradition of prayer the family follows before eating together.
3. Say “thank you “ to Mommy for the meal when it is placed before him. Although a small child can be given crackers, etc. to keep him happy, by one, he should be able to wait for the meal and dessert if you want him to.
4. After the meal, the child should be able to sit in your lap and be part of the family, and when told to, excuse himself and go play quietly. By year one, you should be able to expect this of him.
5. While in your lap, or in the high chair, the child should be able to amuse himself with a cracker, toy or spoon without touching the “no’s” on the table, pulling place mats off, turning over glasses and cups, etc.

“You’re a minister aren’t you?” The store manager put out his hand to introduce himself. “Yes I am, and if you don’t mind my asking, what made you say so?” I am always curious as to what makes men stand out as Christians when it is undeclared, and I thought this would be a good chance to find out. I met in this restaurant regularly for both breakfasts and lunches for discipleship appointments with students and businessmen, Was it the fact that we could be seen praying? Perhaps it was our Bibles, open and in plain view? I was curious to hear his response. “I have been in the restaurant business for over 15 years. I spend my whole life picking up after people. I notice whenever you get up, you clean your table up. I figured there must be something different about you, so I thought you might be a minister or something really religious.”

Cleaning up after yourself is a wisdom and life skill that will open the doors for the gospel for your children for years to come.

B. HELPING WITH THE MEAL

1. By the time the child is three he can begin learning how to set the table. The process we used was a step-by-step procedure which not only taught the child how to set the table but how to learn a skill as well.
 - a. Child sits on chair or counter, etc. and talks with father, observing him do it.
 - b. Child does with father, who gives the child small tasks to help him. Father still gets access to table utensils etc.
 - c. Father does with child, as child assumes bulk of the task and father helps the child, teaching the child where things are kept and how to get them.
 - d. Child does, without help of father who supervises the process, placing everything down at child's reach.
 - e. Child does without help or supervision, needing only the items to be placed out for him. As child grows, even this becomes unnecessary.
 - f. Child is told to go and set the table and he does so
2. By the age of five the child should be clearing the table as well. He can start at three bringing things to Mommy. By the time he is five, he should be able to do this completely by himself.
3. By the age of seven, the child should be doing the dishes by himself.

C. HONORING THE PARENTS AT MEAL TIME

I have certain things I require of my children to honor their mother and father with regard to the meal. Parents may choose whatever skills in this that they decide. I have friends who required their children to "dress for dinner." They felt like this was a lost skill and wanted their children to retain it as a way of showing respect to their parents. Personally, I did not want to go to the trouble. For me, mealtime is a fun time of casual interaction and discourse. We did come up with some things, though. The reason for this is that no matter the culture, no matter the family background, parents are still responsible to God for ensuring that the children honor both the father and the mother.

Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God has commanded you, that your days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with you in the land which the Lord your God gives you. (This command is repeated nine times in the Bible, in the Old Testament, by Jesus Christ and then again in the writings of the Apostles)

Dt 5:16

Let your father and your mother be glad, And let her rejoice who gave birth to you.

Prv 23:25

Her children rise up and bless her; Her husband also, and he praises her...

Prv 31:28

As a result, God gives the parents the responsibility of training their children in some basic areas of behavior and skills which demonstrate honor to both the father and the mother. As you read the verses provided and reflect on our traditions, it might be well to consider your own family background and traditions. Was the honor of parents a consideration at your dinner table? Are actions and behavior which you take for granted, due to your parents acceptance of this behavior in your childhood, truly honoring to parents? Are Biblical principles concerning the honoring of both father and mother being transferred to your children in such a way that they develop these important wisdom and life skills?

In some homes, the parents never consider their honor as it relates to their children. If their children honor them, well, good and fine, just so long as the dishonoring behavior does not reach an intolerable level. Yet, the Bible commands children to honor their father and mother. Thus parents who do not require this, who do not proactively train their children in this wisdom and life skill, allow their children to live in sin against God and to experience the discipline of God in their lives.

Similarly, fathers who require their children to show them honor but do not aggressively create family traditions and behavior patterns which honor the mother do themselves a double disservice. Not only do their children live in sin against God in their behavior towards their mother, but the husband as well comes under the scrutiny of God. 1 Pt 3:7 commands husbands, *“You husbands likewise, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman; and grant her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.”* God gives the husband a direct command here to *“grant her honor.”* It is the man’s responsibility, both as husband and father, to see that the woman is honored both as wife and mother. This is his responsibility. Failure to do so impacts his prayer life, which impacts his ability to function as spiritual head of the home.

No matter your culture, no matter your family background, no matter your feelings on the issue, the Bible commands the husband to honor his wife and to see that the children honor their mother. I do not know what traditions you have in your home to insure honor. I do not know what traditions and skills you are developing in your children to insure the mother is honored by you and the children. God commands it and you are responsible. What follows are those traditions and skills which I sought to instill in our children to fulfill the command in the Word of God concerning the honor due the wife and mother.

1. The men stand behind their chairs until the mother is seated.
2. All children wait until mother is seated, served, the prayer has been said and Mom has taken the first bite before beginning. No one rushes Mom. No one complains. Everyone is honoring and appreciative of the work she has put into the meal.
3. All children should be required to say, “Please,” and “Thank you,” “May I be excused?” and talk without interrupting others.
4. Food is passed without reaching over or across others.
5. Children can eat what is set before them without asking for substitutes. They can eat without needing to add something that is not on the table and they can eat everything that is on their plate.
6. Children wait until all have finished eating and all have been served dessert, before eating their dessert. It is only after mother begins that they may start.
7. Children participate in dinner conversations, answering questions in complete sentences. Dinner conversation is pleasant and includes compliments to mother on the meal.
8. Children, when finished eating, ask “May I please be excused?” and wait for their parents decision and accept a “No, not now,” without whining or arguing.

9. While Mom and Dad enjoy after-dinner conversation, the children clear the table and do the dishes. If they are too young for this, they play quietly so the parents can enjoy the after dinner break.

D. EATING OUT

This should be a special time for the family. If at an early age (by one), the child has learned to behave and obey, a whole new world opens up for both the child and the parents. Places and experiences that are closed to most children will be open to yours. Pleasant family experiences that are denied most families will be afforded to you. You, and not your child, will be the deciding factor in when, where and if you eat out.

Your child should not make a mess or scene when eating out. Although there are now many fun places for a family to go to eat that allow the child to run and play in a play area provided, it is not cruel and unusual punishment to expect a child to sit quietly at the dinner table and behave himself in public. The family should never need to restrict its social activities due to the behavioral whims of an ill-mannered or anti-social child. There are some places you cannot go with your dog, but with your child, the entire world should be open to you due to the discipline and training he has received. We have tried to restore honor to these events by developing in our family certain traditions and wisdom and life skills. Examples include...

- 1. Honor in the Cafeteria:** Your child should be able to wait in line without making a scene, whining, pulling on you, pulling on the dividers, wandering off, needing to be held to keep them out of trouble or from whining, climbing on rails and furniture, and, in

When we were first married and our children were young, eating out was a treat. We were able to go out after church to a few select and inexpensive places in town. It was nice, though, to not have to limit our choices to ones that had play areas or were conducive to loud, messy children. In fact, we learned to avoid these places. We enjoyed our children and the conversation and time together. Even when they were hardly able to speak, it was pleasant to be with them and to interact at their level. Our children actually grew to resent the noise and chaos of these other fast food establishments, choosing them on occasion but not as a rule.

Mothers day was special in our family, as was our anniversary. On these occasions, and when special out-of-town guests or family were in, it was nice to be able to go to a really nice place to eat. When I think of a neat, quiet restaurant, a Chinese restaurant comes to mind. It was nice to be able to go without being relegated to the back table, to be met by cringing waiter, to be able to leave the table with my self-respect intact and to be invited back. It is nice for the family to be able to truly honor Mother on Mother's day without it being a burden.

Most families still try to carry out the tradition of a special family meal at Mother's day or birthdays to honor the mother or family member. For many, this is just an empty tradition. The social and moral discipline, which at one time allowed this to be done, is gone and instead a type of "honoring," the parent almost dreads takes place. In reality, Mother is dishonored by her children on this and other such occasions. It is only the parents disassociation of these events with honor that makes them bearable. Parents, thinking they have the moral authority to excuse their children from honoring their mother or can make exceptions for them, do both themselves and their children a great disservice in their relationship with God. Disciplining in the area of wisdom and life skills can make true honor once again possible in public places.

Cafeterias were a good place for us to eat because of the variety of food, given the ages of our children and the inexpensive nature of the food. When in line with the children, we simply got a high chair supplied by the cafeteria, some crackers and pushed them along. Since they knew "no" and "hush," this was a pleasant enough experience.

Once old enough to walk, they stood by us in line. When I got my tray, I would ask each child to put their hands in one of my pockets, while El asked another to hold on to the side of the highchair as she wheels it to the table.

Later, they were old enough to walk by my side.

general, making himself a nuisance. He should be able to quietly cooperate in a well-behaved manner.

2. Honor by serving: By age three, the children should be trusted to run simple errands and return. We might ask them to get a booster chair, bottle of ketchup, some creamer or what not. They should be able to go straight there and come straight back. This is a great booster for their self-confidence and prepares them for school responsibilities.

3. Honor through cheerfulness: They should be able to accept what is placed before them without whining or complaining. It is a privilege to go out to eat with the family, rather than to be left at home with a baby sitter. They can make requests, but they cannot show ingratitude, dishonor or disrespect.

4. Honor by deference: The children should honor the mother in allowing her to freely choose the restaurant of treat. There should be no whining, fighting or bickering about the selection.

5. Honor by behavior before friends and family: The children should show honor to the parents when they are eating with friends and family. The children should: be polite; not embarrass the parents; and allow the parents to have meaningful adult table conversation without having to rush through the meal and make excuses for the children. When considering eating with friends, the selection of the restaurant should not be determined by the behavior of the children.

Darryl was a professional man in our ministry and an accomplished evangelist. He had long wanted to accompany me on a mission trip. I had noticed some eccentricities of Darryl at our social gatherings in terms of food but it did not really come to light until we were on the mission field together in China. On several occasions Darryl just declined to eat what was being served and, on others, he ate only what seemed appealing or safe.

On the last night the hosting missionaries took us out to dinner at a nice restaurant in the center of town. Darryl declined to order or eat at all. Darryl had never been made to show respect or honor to his parents at the dinner table and now as an adult this skill was lost to him. He was completely oblivious to the way this came across to the nationals and to the missionaries.

Although Darryl would love to go back again with me, this will be impossible without a willingness on Darryl's part to show honor and respect to those who serve him meals.

6. Honor in special situations: Parents should be able to freely plan picnics, spontaneous events and fun outings without being dishonored by their children's behavior. A cranky, ill-mannered child should not be able to ruin or prevent a fun outing for the couple or for the family. It is the height of foolishness for a child to spoil such an outing, but how many times, with an embarrassed laugh or smile, have I seen a mother or couple, excuse themselves early from a fun outing because of a whining, ill-mannered child.

II. BABY-SITTERS

We have always emphasized our personal relationship in our marriage. Many parents lose sight of the fact that children are just passing through. You will no doubt be together without children, far longer than with them. Unfortunately, when the children leave, many parents find they have nothing in common. To avoid this, El and I took weekly dates almost from the beginning, as soon as the baby could be left for an hour or two. In addition, from the first year on, we took an extended weekend away from the children each year. In both cases, the children learn that Mom and Dad leave and come back. They learn that they have a life of their own, and that the children are not the center of the universe. These three realizations on the part of the children are essential for their emotional health and for the emotional health of the home.

Specific

The Davises were friends from church, and they had asked Megan to baby-sit. Megan, always ready to make a quick buck for new clothes or makeup, readily agreed.

A. Year One: By one year you should be able to leave the child with a sitter without the child crying, clinging, or throwing a temper tantrum.

When the parents left, she found the children completely uncooperative in every area. Not only this but the mother, as she went out the door, said to Megan, "Oh, by the way, I did not have time to do the dinner dishes or straighten the living room before I left, please get the kids to do this or you do it yourself."

B. Obedience: The child should be obedient to his baby-sitters. When asked, he should be expected to clean up the toys, cooperate with the bath time, and go to bed on command.

Of course the kids would not do it, and Megan ended up doing the mother's chores, the kid's chores, picking up after the kids, as well as baby-sitting.

It is no wonder that the kids were selfish and uncooperative. They had been trained by their mother and seen her many times get an unsuspecting baby-sitter to do her work. Why shouldn't they do the same?

C. Training for the future: Being well-behaved when entrusted to the authority of another extends beyond baby-sitters. Be it Sunday School, School, the Church Nursery, Children's Church, relatives or friends, children should be able to enter a new environment without causing a scene, punishing Mommy or insulting their hosts by publicly announcing their distaste for being there. Church and school officials put a lot of work into their teaching and serving. No child should be allowed to publicly insult them by their actions and desires to not be there, or by indicating that they find them distasteful. Friends and family make a great sacrifice to host a child. No child should be able to publicly show disdain and ingratitude for this sacrifice.

We never let Megan baby-sit for the Davises again. How sad that they were training their children at an early age to be lazy and manipulative of the good intentions of others. We worked with Megan from then on. Bill and Connie's lister die up to my husband and not little Cynthia. by others. Megan gave her this experience but sadly, the Davises did not. so traumatic to little Cynthia that they had abandoned the idea before even getting out the door. El and I were newly married and close to the family. Since we knew Cynthia well, we volunteered to come over and baby-sit for them. As soon as little Cynthia saw Mommy dressed up, and us coming through the door, she burst into hysterics. This continued, along with clinging and begging until Mommy and Daddy were out the door and the car door slammed. Then, little Cynthia immediately stopped crying and began to amuse herself.

She had a nice evening when about bedtime her mother called to check. As soon as little Cynthia realized it was her mother, she began to scream and cry. After we hung up, she stopped. Based on the phone call, Bill and Connie cut their date short and came home, despite our protests that all was well. Little Cynthia was playing with El as they picked up her toys and got ready for bed. She was really a delight and having lots of fun. That is, until she heard the car pull up and her parents' voices outside. As soon as they got to the door, she began crying again and ran to her mother sobbing.

Cynthia had trained her parents well. To my knowledge, they did not go out again until Cynthia was well into elementary school and had decided she wanted to go to sleepovers. Cynthia remains a manipulative person. Having been allowed by her parents to develop this skill, using them as guinea pigs, she now has broadened her scope. How unfortunate for Cynthia that her parents did not discipline and train her in self-control, to not be manipulative with emotions and to not use them to punish others.

D. Grandparents and relatives: Because of their good behavior, your children should be a joy for your parents or relatives not only to have over, but to take care of as well. It should not be a labor of love for your parents and relatives to keep your children. They should not have to "child proof" their home, except where the safety of the child is at stake. They should not return your children and then go home themselves exhausted because your children were disobedient or uncooperative. You do your children a great disservice if you do not pry from your parents a true account of their behavior. Nipping unmannerly and disobedient behavior in the bud assures the child of a close relationship with their grandparents and an ever-widening life experience.

III. GROCERY STORE/SHOPPING

The scene is played out a hundred times with a hundred different mothers in a hundred different stores each shopping day. Whining children... children who will not come... children who want something... children who touch and break things... children who want to eat something... children who don't want to come in... children who don't want to leave... unmannerly and disrespectful children whose behavior has become so much a part of the norm that it no longer draws attention. In fact, it is just the opposite. It is the well behaved, polite obedient child that draws the look, the compliment or the stare.

A. HONORING ON THE WAY TO SHOPPING

It is a privilege for a child to be included in a shopping trip. It is a privilege to have the freedom to go shopping, to have the resources to shop, to have the blessing of being able to buy your material needs, to be able to safely accompany a parent on an errand, and should be appreciated as such. Children should honor the parents in their behavior on the way to the store, market or mall. Sullen, uncooperative, whining behavior is not honoring. Dragging feet, dawdling, complaining, stalling and demanding behavior is not honoring. It is foolish for a child not to appreciate this opportunity, and foolishness should be dealt with in a decisive manner.

B. HONORING DURING THE SHOPPING

1. Your child should be able to stay by your side or sit in the cart without doing damage while you are shopping.
2. The child should be able to keep his hands off items on the shelf, and not whine, beg or make life miserable.
3. The child should not be allowed to punish or manipulate you while you shop.
4. When you are shopping, you should be able to tell your child to put his hand on the cart and expect him to do so. The shopping should actually be more pleasant than if you were by yourself.
5. By age seven, children should be able to go retrieve items for Mom without disappearing, running up and down the aisles, knocking over things or bringing back unsolicited items.

Betsy had it all figured out. Mommy was the quiet type and particularly hated to be the center of things. Little Betsy knew this was especially true in a crowded store or super market. Mommy was already tired, in a hurry and a little gun-shy, knowing what a scene Betsy could make. As a result, she could have just about anything she wanted within reason. (Sometimes, though, she would demand unreasonable things and throw a fit just to remind Mom of what it was like and to keep her in line.)

For Mom, it was easier just to give in. She had not thought through on the precedent she was setting, or that when Betsy was a 5'8" teenager, the kind of battles she would be losing and the cost of that in the life of her daughter.

C. HONORING AFTER THE SHOPPING

1. The child, even though tired, should cooperate in returning to the car.
2. The child should not have to be bribed with a treat to allow the parent to get the car loaded and ready to return home. If old enough, the child should be helping with this.
3. The child should not have to be bribed to allow the parent to have a pleasant trip home.

4. The child should be able to either help, or if too young, to play quietly as the shopping is put up.

IV. BEDTIME

When the baby is first brought home, you concentrate on the relationship with the baby. Feel free to nurse on demand and to get used to the nursing processes, healing from your episiotomy, getting back on your feet emotionally and physically, and enjoying the delightful experience of the new baby. In fact, innumerable studies have shown that the first 20 weeks are crucial to a baby's development. The more cuddling, the more holding, the more "baby talk," the more stimulation the baby receives from the family, the more developed will be his speech, motor and intellectual skills later in life. *(This might be a good time to add that babies who are carried in front, near the mother's breasts, in the arms or in a sling or "front pack" show a much more rapid development of speech and intellect than those babies who are carried in back packs).* At about two to three months, Mom begins to need her own schedule and rest. You may decide at this time to determine your child's bed time and feeding schedule, if you so desire.

It should be stressed that the Bible is silent in this area, and studies are inconclusive. This is a personal decision on the part of the mother and no one should be allowed to make you feel guilty for going one way or the other. With two of our children, Eleanor put them very quickly on a sleep and feeding schedule. With the other two, she did not bother with this until it became an issue. Many factors came in to play—Eleanor's physical and emotional condition, the baby's personality and the cycle of life our family was in. The babies all developed and were loved. It is purely a Mom decision.

However, at about six to nine months, the discipline process begins. From this time through adolescence, the primary rule to follow is that you decide the bedtime, not the child.

It seemed to Gary that he had no life of his own and that he never got to see his wife anymore. Gary had three children—one in the third grade, one in Kindergarten, and one, a pre-schooler. From birth, they had decided their own nap times and bedtimes. As a result, the kids were sometimes up until 10 or 11 p.m., which was sometimes past when Gary was ready for bed.

Getting the kids to go to bed was always a challenge. "They are so tired yet they won't go to sleep and I don't get any time to myself or with Nancy," Gary complained.

Little did Gary realize that children can easily be put on a schedule and that he and Nancy could indeed have a life together. In our home, Sunday through Thursday, the kids were in bed by 7:30, with lights out by 8:30 through the third grade. El and I always had several hours to ourselves and with each other each evening. After the third grade, we upped it a little each year as school and extracurricular activities demanded it, but at no time did the child have the final say. We made what we felt was the best decision on the part of the child.

What Gary does not realize is that when little Gary is a 6', 185 lb. teenager, how is he going to safely set a curfew, when he is too intimidated by his son's wishes at six years old, to do so?

A. A FEW TIPS IN GETTING THE KIDS TO BED BY 7:30 EACH EVENING...

1. Set a schedule and stick to it. As soon as the children realize you can be manipulated, they will do it. As soon as they realize that a schedule is only kept under ideal situations, they will see to it that the situations are never ideal. Similarly, no child, once he realizes that to get out of bed or cry means to be disciplined for rebellion, will trade off the luxury for long. Soon foolishness will be driven out and the nights will be peaceful.

2. Use the training spank and then go straight to rebellion. No child will consistently trade a delayed bedtime for a session with the rod, no matter how strong-willed he is. The term "strong willed" is not in the Bible, the term, "foolish" is. If your

child is so foolish as to question the judgment of the person on earth who loves him the most, the one person on earth who is consumed with his happiness and well-being, the one person on earth who would die for him, not just for his life but for his happiness—his mother— then he is indeed a foolish child and is in dire need of the rod.

3. No caffeine in the house. You probably can't insure they don't get some outside the house, but inside the house we are decaffeinated. Do not expect that little body to get revved up by caffeine and then lie quietly in bed and go to sleep. A note to parents of teenage boys: the best thing that can happen to a teenage boy is that he gets sleepy and goes to bed at night. I have a saying, "Nothing good happens to a teenager after midnight." Be it watching TV, playing on the computer or just restless in the house, a teenager does not need to be up past his parents. The best way to assure this is to not have caffeine in the house. Without this stimulant, most teenagers, drained by all the growth taking place in their body, will plop down to sleep by 10 p.m. or so.

4. Get them up and going in the morning. If you have young children you may think I have lost my mind, but believe me, the time will come when your preteen will sleep until 11 in the morning, if you let them. Don't expect a young person or teen who is allowed to sleep until noon on Saturday to be sleepy at midnight. If you find your teen up late at night on the weekends, then roll them out of bed Saturday morning for their chores.

5. Limit fluid intake. For the little ones, limit fluids after dinner and go easy on salt at dinner. Once a child realizes that he can get up and go potty anytime he wants, then the battle is over and the child has won. If the child insists on the need to get out of bed to go potty, follow the child in to the potty and unless there is a good fluid release, get the rod out and discipline for lying to Mommy.

6. No sugar after lunch. Again, a sugar rush followed by the emotional down-turn it causes when it is over does not put your child in a good position for a restful night's sleep.

7. No TV after dinner. The stimulation of TV does not prepare a child for sleep, nor does it allow you to gauge where your child is behavior-wise. After dinner, children do their homework, practice their musical skills, play quietly with brothers and sisters, or read books. It is a time for winding down, not for revving up. *This also presumes that you do not escape to the TV after dinner.* Evenings find our family together in the living room. One child may be playing the piano, another doing homework, a third reading a book or working on a project, I will be in my favorite chair, doing my evening Bible reading, El on the couch reading or working on a project. The family is together, finishing out the day together, the children are winding down, and the parents are available for help and nurturing. What a peaceful way to end the day.

8. No late dinners. Don't expect the kids to eat at 7:00 and then be ready for bed at 7:30. That means if Dad can get up very early and get to work, get in his game of racquet ball, run his odd mile or so, etc., he can be home on time for dinner. At the Mahon house, family dinner was sacred. When I did get home late, we still ate together. El would have given the kids a snack and the after-dinner rules would be after-snack rules. When I got in, they would be in their PJ's, ready for bed. We ate and off they went to bed. This was not ideal, but when a child realizes that he only has to obey under ideal circumstances, I can assure you that he will guarantee that circumstances will never again be ideal when it comes to bed time.

9. Rich bedtime routine with Dad.

The final time before bed can be a rich and rewarding time with Dad if the children have been trained. Being read a Bible Story, singing a hymn together and then being held close as you pray for them makes the bedtime experience a positive time to which they will look forward. I, personally, did not stick strictly to the Bible. There are many moral books which can also be read to the children. If it is long enough to take several nights, or weeks, to cover, then the child eagerly anticipates bedtime for the warmth, the love and the next installment.

10. Lights out means lights out.

Once the child can read, we allow the child to read. By the 5th grade, all of our children had read the Bible through at least once. The reason being that they could stay up as late as they wanted, as long as they were reading the Bible. We started them on a good children's Bible, but moved them quickly to their own adult Bible. Many parents struggle with spiritual attacks on the minds of their children and surly children who wake up in a foul mood. This is all changed if the child feeds on the Word of God and soaks their thoughts in the Word of God before going to sleep. Every night the child could read the Bible in bed for as long as he likes. Other than this one exception, lights out and the child goes to sleep. Whether it is daylight outside or not is not the issue, the issue is that in the minds of the parents this is best for the child and the family. The child then obeys his parents. Novel? Yes. Revolutionary? Maybe. Biblical? Without a doubt. Plus, it works!

When time for bed, all the kids raced to begin the routine. While most kids have to misbehave to get Dad's attention, the Mahon children knew that no matter how distracted I was when I came home from work, they had me totally to themselves as bedtime. What

Orlando worked in the aerospace industry and his work was very cyclical. He would chug along from eight to five and then, all of a sudden, need to put in a lot of hours in overtime to meet a deadline.

He shared with me that his getting in at eight or nine at night not only threw the family schedule out of sync but was hard on his relationship with both his wife and his children. I asked Orlando if the whole building was bustling until nine. "No" he answered, "just a few people here and there who had differing responsibilities on the project." The all-night maintenance people let them in and out.

I suggested that Orlando do what I did. Rather than tacking my extra hours on at the end of the day, I tacked them on at the beginning. Rather than stay until nine at night, go in at four in the morning. That way, you still have the time with your family and you work the same hours either way. Orlando did this and it had a great impact on his family.

The father, as head of the home, should suck it up and take the hit when it comes to work. The father pays the price and not the family.

Sam and I were reading Robinson Crusoe. When we came to the segment where Robinson Crusoe begins reading his Bible daily, Sam says, "Hey Dad, after this we should go back to the Bible, like Robinson Curusoe did!" Later, when Robinson Crusoe leads the native he saved from the cannibals to Christ, Sam expressed a desire to pray to receive Christ as well. I know that many modern Christian children's books are on the market, but don't forget the classics, like Robinson Crusoe, or A Tale of Two Cities. These books written when the term "Christian book" was redundant. They were written by Christian men for Christian purposes.

"The Word of God, last thought at night, first thought in the morning."

Dawson Trotzman

close, rich, fun times we shared during this part of the evening. We all looked forward to it, and it was an important bonding time for us as a family.

Often, when I prayed with the child, I would hold them silently for a little while. There in the dark, being held by Daddy, after the bed time routine, if I would just linger for a moment and they would often share things from their heart that would not always come up otherwise.

How long we kept up this bedtime routine really depended on the child. It is fun, towards the end, to reread your favorite childhood novels with your own children. I kept up reading with the children long after they themselves could read. We developed a routine where they would pick a book and then I would pick a book, and so forth. This was great fun for me as well. If the father looks forward to bedtime, so do the children. How sad for those families where bedtime is a time of conflict rather than bonding! How simple it is to discipline and train a child in this area. No other area is so clearly foolish and is foolishness so clearly driven out by the rod, than the bedtime routine.

V. RESPECT FOR PROPERTY

The failure to respect the property of others is both irresponsible and dishonoring to parents. The destruction of other people's property is never cute. Taking something that does not belong to you is not inquisitive; it is stealing. Breaking things that belong to others is not carelessness; it is vandalism. Touching or taking things without asking is not curiosity; it is rudeness. Whether it is the Sunday School class, the home, or a visit to Great Aunt Agnes, no one who entertains your family should first have to "child proof" their house and especially you, as the parents, should not have to adapt your life style to the rule of the child.

If you are fortunate enough to have a friend who will make comments on your children's behavior, count yourself truly blessed. If not, take a couple aside who truly know you and will be honest with you. Ask them for insights and then urge them to speak up if they see any blind spots.

Honoring parents by respecting their possessions. The only latches on our cabinets or doors were the ones where the poisons were kept. Our children were trained to obey in this area, but we would not take the risk of a life threatening "slip" when it came to cleaning fluids, etc. With all other items, training is more important than trinkets. There were some places they could go and some things they could touch and others they could not go to or touch. When visiting friends, we

Gus, my supervisor in the campus ministry I was assigned to, called me. Gus and I were close and I could tell something was on his mind. Finally, he shared with me that Becca (age three) had torn up his daughter's paper dolls. We had visited the day before and Becca had been allowed to play in his daughter's room. She was away at school. Gus stressed to me the difference between carelessness and destructiveness. It was hard to swallow. My little Becky-boo... destructive?

I listened carefully and thanked Gus. My first reaction was, "How dare he accuse my little darling in such harsh terms!" But as Eleanor I discussed it, Becca had been destructive. Gus' daughter would be hurt and feel she had been taken advantage of. What Becca did was wrong. We disciplined Becca for two things— first for disobedience, and then for destructiveness. It was a lesson she did not soon forget. Then that night we called and she apologized over the phone to both Gus and his daughter.

I thank God for a friend like Gus who took the time to share with me about my daughter. He knew it might possibly jeopardize our relationship, but he loved me enough to do it anyway. Becca is and has been known as a responsible person who can be trusted and I link the roots of this strong character trait of hers to our training her to be respectful of other people's possessions.

And Lot lifted up his eyes and saw all the valley of the Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere (this was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah) like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt as you go to Zoar. So Lot chose for himself all the valley of the Jordan; and Lot journeyed eastward. Thus they separated from each other.

Gn 13:10-11

would show our toddler the “No’s” and then discipline accordingly. The sad thing is when you see 4, 5 and 6 year-old children who cannot keep their hands off things. These children are severely limited in their cultural and social opportunities by their own lack of self-control. How sad that Mom and Dad did not work to develop the fruit of the spirit of self-control in their lives early on. How sad that they did not add self-control to their love early on. How much sadder still to see these children in their teen years not able to see something and keep their hands off it— be it girls, alcohol, marijuana, or items in the mall.

1. Office in the home: A father should be able to keep his office in his home without fear that the children will make a mess of it. In younger children, this means not touching. In older children, this translates into respecting the property and possessions of the father.

2. Desk in home: In many cases, Mom keeps a desk in the home where her important papers, bills etc. are kept. Teenagers who would be horrified to think of Mom going through their drawer, think nothing of rummaging through Mom's desk looking for a pen or scrap of paper. Children of all ages should learn the discipline and self-control necessary to respect the space and belongings of parents. It takes self-control for a child to be able to honor their parents' possessions. If they cannot respect you, the most prominent authority figure in their lives, what authority figure will they respect when it comes to touching and taking?

3. Valuables and special items: Little toddlers have an insatiable appetite for knowledge. The desire to touch, feel and taste an item is tremendous. However the Word of God is very clear, one of the first character traits to be added to knowledge is self-control.

2 Pt 1:6 commands us to add to our knowledge “self-control.” This was Eve’s problem. Her desire for knowledge was not tempered by self-control. It is never too early to begin tracking these two traits, rewarding the quest for knowledge, and developing the trait of self-control. For the toddler, it means not touching an electrical outlet. To the pre-schooler, it means staying out of Mom’s makeup drawer. To the elementary school child, it means keeping your hands to yourself at school. To the pre-teen, it means saying “no” to opportunities to smoke, to shoplift, to engage in petty theft of classmates' items. To the teen, it means saying “no” to drugs and alcohol, to sneaking the car out at night, to putting your hands where they don't belong on a date. It takes self-control for a child to be able to honor their parents by respecting the “off limits” of life. At every age and every stage of life, there are things which will seem valuable or special to the child but the child should exercise self-control-do

not touch, do not feel, do not taste. The time to instill this in the child is the first time. To the sorrow of many a parent, there all too often comes a premature last time.

When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.

Gn 3:6

To touch something on a shelf in any store was always a training spank on the spot. If things seemed to be too appealing, I might ask the child to put his hand in my pocket as we walked, or ask them to put their hands in their pockets or hold their hands behind their back. My wife loves to window shop in trinket shops where “You break, you buy” signs abound. I, being a little gangly, will often walk through those narrow isles holding my hands behind my back. This is not cruel and unusual punishment for a child. It is a good skill that will open many doors to him that are closed to other less disciplined and trained children.

4. Vandalism: This falls close behind honoring the “off limits” of life—those things which are valuable or special. How many small children have needed to learn the difference between writing on paper, and on the wall? Between cutting paper dolls and cutting tablecloths? Between scratching pictures on the sidewalk with a rock and on the cabinet with a hairpin? The failure to honor parents and others by respecting property is a serious flaw. The inability to distinguish between appropriate actions and inappropriate, even though they are virtually the same, brings shame to the child and to the parents. For the toddler, it is moving from the paper to the table top when coloring. For the pre-schooler, it is the mural on the wall of their room. For the elementary school child, it is cutting up something special to Mom to make paper dolls. For the pre-teen, it is using Dad's tools or Mom's makeup, writing on the bathroom walls at school or the mall. For the teen, it is acts of vandalism, irresponsible use of the car, careless use of parent's possessions. At each stage, the failure by the parents to have instilled, early in life, the ability of the child to show honor to the parents through self-control, brings shame to both parent and child. The next time you are tempted to giggle or rationalize away the creative tendencies or natural curiosity of your toddler or pre-schooler, visualize the action or principle unchecked in the antics of a 5'8" 150 lb. teenager.

One of the reasons our children were able to gain access to relatives' and friends' homes when they were young is because we had disciplined and trained them to be respectful of other people's belongings, whether in the store, the church or the home. Thus invitations for “tea parties,” shopping trips or visits in the home to bake cookies etc. came unexpectedly and frequently, giving Mom a much-needed break and the children a boost in their social skills and their self-image.

C. HONORING PARENTS BY RESPECTING THEIR SPACE:

1. The kitchen: Mom should have areas of the kitchen which can be off-limits. Eleanor knew that our children liked to do what she was doing. When she was in the kitchen, they would much rather play with her toys than theirs. As a result, she had one cabinet door which they could open and a few utensils which they could play with. Any child can differentiate early on between what is permitted and not permitted in terms of space.

2. The bedroom: Our children always have to knock before entering our bedroom.

It is not a living room. It is our private bedroom. Even if they can see one of us cleaning, or sitting in a chair working, they still have to knock and be recognized before entering. Once they were through nursing, their life in our bedroom ceased. They were not allowed to sleep with us if they had a bad dream, if there was a storm or if they were feeling cranky. Children need to learn to show honor to their parents by respecting their parents'

Our children knew that one of the quickest ways to get a spanking was to walk into our room without knocking. Whether we were in the room or not, whether the door was open or not, whether it seemed OK or not—if they did not knock and get permission to enter first, they would get a spanking. I am always saddened by families where the parents have no privacy or security because the children walk into the room anytime they want, unbidden, and take and break what they want.

These parents are going to have a very interesting life when these little toddlers, who have no respect for their possessions or privacy, become teenagers as big (or bigger) than they are. A child who walks in a room and takes something without asking as a toddler, walks into a car and drives off as a teen. A toddler who can't keep himself from breaking things at your friend's house, turns into an effective vandal as a teen. A toddler who cannot keep his hands off the toy shelf or the candy counter, grows into an effective shoplifter as a teen. How sad that parents do not commit themselves to disciplining and training their children to respect the property of others. How sad when mothers rationalize away sin, calling it “curiosity” or “inquisitiveness.” They are surprised when the child becomes “curious” about sex, or “inquisitive” about driving your or your neighbor's car and does not have the discipline or training to resist the urge.

space. Children share space with children, parents share space with each other. There is a big difference between children and parents. Children are to honor their parents and one key way is by honoring the privacy of their room.

3. Special rooms: Most parents have an office, a workroom, a craft room, a workshop, some special room in their home which is theirs. Children should honor this space. It is a sad home where the parents are waiting for their children to leave home so that they can have a special project room of their own. Children do not need, nor are they automatically entitled to a room of their own. Parents make this decision based on what is best for the child. All rooms in the house are not created equal and it is perfectly acceptable to place any room of your choosing off limits to a child. If no room is off-limits to a child, then no buildings are off-limits to a teen, be it an X-rated movie theater, a bar or a house party where drinking and sex are rampant.

VI. LOOKING TO THE FUTURE: A FINAL WORD OF CAUTION

Do not allow your child to develop behavior or Social Patterns as a child that you do not want them to manifest as a teenager. A few examples of this are...

1. Swimsuit and Summer Outfits Modesty begins at a young age. Do not dress your child at the beach to attract every pedophile in the area. *Do not communicate to a young child that sexy is cute.* Sexy is to arouse a member of the opposite

sex. Sexy is wonderful in marriage; it is one of the most thrilling aspects of the union between man and wife. Sexy is cheap outside of marriage. It is something that is used to exploit women, degrade men and drive our economy. Start with appropriate swimwear and stay with it. Project what your child is wearing into a 16 year old at a coed summer swim party. Start them now wearing what you think will be appropriate then.

2. Respecting Property If you do not want to have to set your alarm at 3 a.m. to check and see if your teen has snuck out with the car again, then start them at an early age respecting the time and possessions of others. Develop this wisdom and life skill while the window of opportunity is open. Discipline quickly whenever a child takes something that is not theirs without asking first. Reject outright, "I was only looking." If it is in their hand, they are not looking or touching, they are taking. This includes brothers and sisters respecting one another's property. Nothing drives a wedge between sibling relationships faster than the destruction or misuse of one child's possessions by the other. A child should be disciplined quickly for the misuse of a brother's or sister's possessions or space, just as the child would be for your own. When younger children are disciplined for getting into an older brother's or sister's belongings, they learn not to do this but rather respect their space and possessions. Then the older children can relax, love and enjoy the younger child. Likewise when the older children are disciplined for taking advantage of the younger child by disrespecting their space or belongings, then the older children learn

In the town where we lived, there was a bar frequented by college students and the singles crowd. True, many parents went there in the afternoon and early evening for their great burgers and Mexican food, but the real action was in the evenings.

They produced a great t-shirt which began to appear all over the Southwest. From elementary kids on up, children wanted one. I could not believe my eyes when I would see parents of Sam's friends at church, who would die at the thought of their children one day going to after-game drinking parties at this bar, allowing their children to wear the t-shirt.

Think about it. What you allow your children to wear is what you are allowing. Your child associates what you allow with what you approve of.

S p e c i f i c

to respect and treat the younger child with kindness, thus allowing them to develop a close and loving relationship.

3. Bedtime If you do not want to spend the rest of your life, finishing your day off by fighting and nagging your children, then establish by age nine months that you set bed times. Somebody is going to set the bedtimes. It may be the fallen world system via the TV and entertainment industry. It may be Satan and his demons, through irrational fears and feelings. It may be the flesh, through restlessness and whining of an undisciplined or uncontrolled child. It may be you, the parent, who disciplines and trains the child for its good and the good of the family to go to bed at a specific time. Someone is going to decide when your child goes to bed. If you surrender that decision, then it immediately falls to the world, the devil or the flesh.

4. Eating habits Do not cheat your child of social opportunities. Do not lay your teen open to the callous comments of his peers. Develop early in the life of your child proper eating habits. *Why should a toddler or child decide what to eat and when to eat?* Why even bother to have parents if this most basic of life's functions is going to be immediately turned over to the child? A child who does not have to eat what he does not like shows dishonor to the parents. He shows a lack of self-control. He shows a lack of thankfulness. He shows himself to be foolish when it comes to his well-being. What could be more foolish than for a child to think he knows better what he should eat than his mother or father? Why should a child who has throughout childhood decided when, where and what to eat, respect a parent's decision or counsel when it comes to drugs and alcohol?

5. Artistic activities In the area of artistic dance, we stuck with ballet. In tap and jazz, the little girls look very cute, but I have been to the recitals where, knowingly or unknowingly, teenage girls show off before the boys in these dances, and their hoots and catcalls fill the auditorium. It is not something you want your daughter doing. High-stepping drill teams are the same, as can be cheerleading. Don't think like a mother... think like a fifteen-year-old boy when you make these decisions on activities which the child may follow for years and years to come.

Musical instruments are the same. Some social doors may open to your child that you don't want opened. I took a pass on the guitar and drums for all the kids because of the doors to the teen subculture that these skills open and the social pressures that face a youngster who is adept at these two instruments. Either can be learned during the college or adult years when as an adult there is the stability to resist such temptations.

Then Joshua said to Achan, "My son, I implore you, give glory to the Lord, the God of Israel, and give praise to Him; and tell me now what you have done. Do not hide it from me." Chapter 6

So Achan answered Joshua and said, "Truly, I have sinned against the Lord, the God of Israel, and this is what I did: when I saw among the spoil a beautiful mantle from Shinar and two hundred shekels of silver and a bar of gold fifty shekels in weight, then I coveted them and took them; and behold, they are concealed in the earth inside my tent with the silver underneath it."

Then Joshua and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, the silver, the mantle, the bar of gold, his sons, his daughters, his oxen, his donkeys, his sheep, his tent and all that belonged to him; and they brought them up to the valley of Achor. And Joshua said, "Why have you troubled us? The Lord will trouble you this day." And all Israel stoned them with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones.

Jos 7:19– 21, 24– 25

Some of the most decadent models, movie stars and musicians are contributing their marketing appeal to a new café / bar chain in the U.S. I don't know how many friends of my children have come back from a vacation with the bars t-shirt and a story of going there with their parents. This represents the drinking, sex and fast life of the media elite. Parents who would be horrified to know their children were going to sexually explicit R-rated movies, smoking, drinking, experimenting with drugs and partying with loose women, take their children to these cafes which are really bars, allow them to oooh and aaaah over the memorabilia of these decadent men and women, and then buy them a t-shirt to bring home. Think about it, what you allow your children to wear is what you are allowing. Your child associates what you allow with what you approve of.

For the same reason we did not encourage art or drama classes past the middle school years. I found that for the most part, high schoolers in these two disciplines were there as much for the lifestyle associated with these two arts, as they were for the arts themselves. Unfortunately, the same can also be also for the teachers. Why our society allows such a double standard for rock bands, artists and actors in our society is beyond me. Actions that would get a math teacher fired on the spot, are lauded in the press when done by a rock star. Actions which would get an engineer thrown out on his ear, are seen as creative genius when done by an artist. Actions which would cause an accountant to instantly lose his job are seen as good publicity when done by an actress. Parents should accept this reality as is. If you encourage your child in these pursuits, then you are encouraging your child to enter a subculture which thrives on rebellion and sin.

6. Media marketing and your child

Things that kill you aren't cute. We did not allow our children to play with things that we did not want them to do as teenagers. Think about the marketing of an item. Is it bubble gum or is it a precursor to chewing tobacco? Bubble gum is marketed in both ways. We would say “no” to one, explaining to our child how the marketers were trying to play them as a fool (foolish child) and “yes” to the other, explaining how the marketers were appealing to those who thought through on their designs (wise child). How stupid can a parent be who lets their children buy and play with candy cigarettes and cigars! Think about the soft drink, is it making additives, such as caffeine, sound like something sexy as a precursor to beer or is it appealing to their thirst and taste? Is the t-shirt your child wants laying the groundwork for sexual, alcohol or drug abuse? Think about it, what you allow your children to wear, to eat, to drink is what you are allowing. Your child associates this with your approval. What you allow is what you approve of.

My son played little league baseball when he was in elementary school. There is a type of bubble gum which is marketed and produced to look like chewing tobacco as used by the big leaguers. It even has a stylized drawing of a big league player with a “chaw” in his mouth. We did not let Sam buy this because we do not consider an addictive agent which will result in the removal of his tongue and jaw due to cancer to be cute. Sam could chew gum but we talked with him about the difference between what these people were trying to do and those which sold gum for taste or with baseball cards.

When Sam was in high school, and many of the guys on the team began to chew, Sam, having thought through on this was able to say “No.” Think about it. What you allow your children to do is what you are allowing. Your child associates what you allow with what you approve of.

7. Hitting and Temper Allowing hitting and the throwing of temper tantrums is not the way to develop or to express masculinity or individuality. It is not cute. It is not excess energy. It is not temperament. It is not a chemical imbalance. It is hitting. It is throwing a temper tantrum. It is foolish, disrespectful behavior on the part of the child. It should not be allowed to be directed towards the parents, towards the brothers of sisters, towards a game or an inanimate object. It should not be allowed. Imagine the behavior into a 6', 190 lb. child, and then nip it in the bud.

When character is concerned, there is no such thing as “growing out of it.” Children don't grow out of anything but clothes. In the area of character, they grow *into* things. What habit, what defect in your life, if left alone, improves with age? We do not grow out of foolishness. We do not grow out of a lack of self-control. We do not grow out of disrespectful behavior. They only become more entrenched. We all know this. Who is there who has a weight problem, if that problem is left to itself, simply becomes better? Name any character flaw, any bad habit and explain to me, how if left to itself, it will get better. *Children do not grow out of foolishness, disrespectful behavior or a lack of self-control.* It must and will be dealt with. If you relinquish your authority in this area you by default automatically enter into one of two systems. First secular society and/or

institutions which will deal with your child and in a far harsher and inhumane manner than you ever thought possible. Or, second, your child will slip into a social group where these actions are considered the norm and this will be to your grief and shame. Although God can use secular and religious institutions to shape and mold your child, that is not His first choice. More importantly, that does not free you, before God, from accountability before God for the fact that you abrogated your responsibility to your child in disobedience to His commands to you.

VII. REMEMBER...

A. Your Goals— Honor, Submission, Self-Control and Wisdom.

1. Our objective is that our child, in obedience to the Word of God, fulfill the Biblical mandate to honor his father and mother, and in so doing, express the character traits as laid out in the Word of God— submission, self-control and wisdom. As your child grows in these areas, the benefits will follow in your child's success, your relationship with the child and the harmony within the family. These are benefits, but not the goal.
2. The goal is that the child grows up responsibly, ultimately leaving home to lead a fruitful and fulfilled life in the service of the Lord apart from the parents, yet with an ongoing and deep love relationship with the parents.

Gill was an executive in a Christian organization. Like many conservative Christians, he was extremely dissatisfied with the government and schools. He voiced this openly and often in his family and curiously enough was surprised when his teenage sons turned up their noses at the laws and institutions which he so freely berated.

- ### B. Your goal— your child's successful independence.
- Your child should always be aware that your goal is his success in life through the conscious development of wisdom and life skills which the child will have at his disposal for the rest of his life. Always keep before the child, even in the early years, that you are preparing him to leave successfully, and that you are not trying to control him for life, just develop him for future success. If your child is convinced you have in mind their success rather than controlling them, they will forgive a great deal. A loving relationship and a solid history of helping the child excel in all areas of life will take you over the rough areas, both in your child's sins and in your own.

As my children grew into the teen years, I ceased to require them to read their Bible lesson or memorize their verses. Rather, I sought to model this for them. I tried each evening to be found reading my Bible in the living room. As we drove in the car, I would ask them to check my verses. I invited non-Christians to dinner to hear the gospel. We had missionaries who were on furlough in our home and made it known to agencies that traveling missionaries were welcome to spend the night. In every way, I tried to model to them the type of person I would like them to be. Children will always believe what you do.

C. Your example will be the door to wisdom or foolishness. No one will ever be a better student of your life than your children. No one has more insight into the relationship between your words and your life than your children. Your wife will rationalize away about any behavior, your mother will simply live in denial, your extended family will be shielded by you from your glaring faults as will your co-workers, church and friends. For the most part, you can behave well for the moment, you can do what is called for in any given social setting, and that is what is called for by society. But your children are another matter; they see you as you really are. They have the blessing or the curse of having parents who, rather than trying to impress them, simply live before them just the way they are. No one can define a hypocrite more clearly than the child of one. No one can define a disciple of Jesus Christ more clearly than a child of one.

Someone is going to train your child in wisdom and life skills, the world, the flesh, the devil or the parent. **Take control of your family.** Embrace the mandate of the Word of God. What you allow is what you allow. Your child associates what you allow with what you approve. Bad habits and behavior are not grown out of. Your child is not growing *out* of anything. He is growing *into* habits and behavior. Your designs are yours, be they proactive, in taking action or benign, in not making a decision. To not make a decision in any area of your child's training is to make a decision to give that area over to some other authority. Think through, pray through, search the word of God, consult with your spouse and then lovingly and to the best of your ability develop in your child those wisdom and life skills which will prepare him to live both fruitfully and fully on his own and apart from you as parents.

Jerry would often take long trips with his sons. As a minister in a rural town, he was often asked to speak in outlying areas. The speed limits meant nothing to Jerry as he sped along on sparsely populated rural roads. Sometimes, coming back, he would let his son drive, even though he did not have a learning permit or license. Many times, on a long drive home after a Sunday sermon and country dinner, he would find himself dozing off. "All farm kids drive early," he would explain when he would sometimes pull over and let his son drive. Once they were pulled over while Jerry was asleep and it took some quick rearranging to avoid the wrath of the law. It always amazed me how puzzled Jerry was about his son's attitude toward the law. As teenagers, they were involved in shoplifting, underage drinking and casual sex. Jerry never saw the connection between his attitude toward traffic laws and his son's attitude toward the laws he found encumbering.

Larry was threatened by the manhood of his son, both in terms of his own self-image and in terms of his son's independence. He fought against this to the point where his son immediately assumed that every request of his father's was another attempt to control him and to keep him a little boy. His father came to blows with his son on one occasion and it culminated with the boy going off to military school where he did quite well. Larry cheated himself out of many precious memories by creating this spirit of distrust in the life of his son.

Contrastingly Hugh was a first generation Japanese son here in Houston. His father, Hirokio, came from a strictly traditional background in Japan where his family shared a strong Christian heritage. Hugh knew that his father was making him do things that were beyond the cultural norm of his peers but I noticed that he did not rebel. This surprised me as there was not the social or family support that would have existed in Japan to assure this.

When Hugh was a senior, I asked him about this. His answer was simple: though his father was wrong in many areas, he was totally convinced of two things: his father loved him intensely and without reserve; and, his father was totally committed to his entering adulthood as a success. Though his father was not nearly in tune with the culture as Hugh (and thus was making many mistakes) he knew from the loving relationship they shared that all the decisions were based on what would make Hugh a successful and independent Christian businessman. Because of this, the fatherly love and the goal of his being an independent adult, Hugh overlooked many faults and obviously wrong decisions on the part of his father.

VIII. Summary

SPECIFIC AREAS OF TRAINING IN THE AREA OF WISDOM AND LIFE SKILLS

Introduction: Goals

- A. Taking back the home (and in so doing...)
- B. Returning honor to parenting
- C. Returning the home to a refuge from a battle ground
- D. Returning authority to the parents

I. Eating

II. Baby-sitters

III. Grocery Store/Shopping

IV. Bedtime

V. Respect For Property

VI. Looking to the Future: A Final Word of Caution

- A. Do Not Allow Your Child to Develop Behavior or Social Patterns as a Child Which You Do Not Want Them to Manifest as a Teenager.
- B. If you do not arrest and shape this behavior, who will?
- C. What will this behavior look like in a five foot, ten inch, 150 pound teen?

V. Remember...

- A. Your Goals— Submission, Self-Control and Wisdom. As your child grows in this area, the benefits will follow in your child's success, your relationship with the child and the harmony within the family.
- B. If your child is convinced that you have in mind their success rather than controlling them they will forgive a lot.
- C. Your child should always be aware that your goal is his success in life—through the conscious development of wisdom and life skills which the child will have at his disposal for the rest of his life.
- D. Your example will be the door to wisdom or foolishness

POST-STUDY PROJECTS

CHAPTER SIX

The following projects are a continuation of the process begun in Chapter Five as you set and implement changes in your child's behavior. What follows are a number of projects which you and your wife can complete. Some are to be done separately and then the results compared. Others are to be done together. The goal is to come to agreement on the discipline needs of your child and then work on them together, as a team. Remember, the general rule in decision making in this area is to yield to the more conservative of the couple in arriving at a decision.

Scripture Memory Verse— Prv 22:29

Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will stand before kings; He will not stand before obscure men.

Verse From Last Week— Prv 22:6 “Train up a child in the way he should go, Even when he is old he will not depart from it.”

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: WISDOM AND LIFE SKILLS

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: EPH 6:1–3

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week, and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: CoL 3:20

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week, and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: Ex 20:12

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week, and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: WISDOM AND LIFE SKILLS

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: DT 5:16

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: Rom 1:30

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week, and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: 2 Tm 3:2

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week, and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

Five Areas Of Life Skills

There are five areas of life skills which, if mastered, have an especially positive effect on Mom. First, do this project separately, then compare the results on your master sheet.

DAD

<u>Area</u>	<u>Acceptable Behavior</u>	<u>Behavior That</u>
<i>Needs Changing</i>		
<i>I. Eating</i>		
<i>II. Baby Sitters and Family</i>		
<i>III. Shopping</i>		
<i>IV. Bed Time</i>		
<i>V. Respect for Property & Space</i>		

Five Areas of Life Skills

There are five areas of life skills which, if mastered, have an especially positive effect on Mom. First, do this project separately, then compare the results on your master sheet.

MOM

<i>Area</i>	<i>Acceptable Behavior</i>	<i>Behavior That</i>
<i><u>Needs Changing</u></i>		
<i>I. Eating</i>		
<i>II. Baby Sitters and Family</i>		
<i>III. Shopping</i>		
<i>IV. Bed Time</i>		
<i>V. Respect for Property & Space</i>		

Five Areas Of Life Skills

There are five areas of life skills which, if mastered, have an especially positive effect on Mom. First, do this project separately, then compare the results on your master sheet.

AGREED-UPON AREAS

<i>Area</i>	<i>Acceptable Behavior</i>	<i>Behavior That</i>
<i>Needs Changing</i>		
<i>I. Eating</i>		
<i>II. Baby Sitters and Family</i>		
<i>III. Shopping</i>		
<i>IV. Bed Time</i>		
<i>V. Respect for Property & Space</i>		

PATTERNS OF LIFE

Evaluate any behavioral or social patterns which your child is now engaged in that you do not want manifested as a teen. Below are listed areas with room for your additions on the back. First, evaluate the area and then record, on a scale of 1–5, its relative scale of acceptability in a 16-year-old;

1— unacceptable to 5— perfectly acceptable. Then, write out the change desired, followed by how and when the change will be implemented.

<i>Area or Pattern Of Life</i>	<i>Level of Acceptability</i>	<i>Desired Change</i>	<i>Change To Take Place (When/How)</i>
<i>Swimsuit</i>			
<i>Respecting Property (Parents)</i>			
<i>Respecting Property (Others)</i>			
<i>Bedtime</i>			
<i>Eating Habits</i>			

PATTERNS OF LIFE
(Continued)

<i>Area or Pattern Of Life</i>	<i>Level of Acceptability</i>	<i>Desired Change</i>	<i>Change To Take Place (When/How)</i>
<i>Artistic Pursuits</i>			
<i>Media Marketing & Response To Trends</i>			
<i>Hitting/Biting</i>			
<i>Temper</i>			
<i>Behavior in Public</i>			

Decision Making And The Home

Truthfully and honestly answer each question in terms of who has the final say. Do so as it reflects the home experience. For instance, in the area of meals, the mother may make the decision to cook a casserole, but if the child does not like it and is instead allowed to eat a peanut butter sandwich, then the child has the last say. The mother may put the child down to sleep at 8:00 p.m., but if by crying, needing water, needing to go potty, having bad dreams, hearing people talk and coming out to investigate, the child does not actually go to sleep until 9 or later, then the child has the last say. The child is making the decisions. The parents may decide to eat at McDonalds after church, but if it is because they cannot take their child to the true restaurant of their choice because of the child's behavior, then the child is actually determining this decision. In the following areas, who makes the final decision?

Meal time? _____

What the child eats? _____

At what types of places you eat out? _____

What types of places you visit? _____

The relatives you visit? _____

Bedtime? _____

The bedtime routine? _____

Whether and when your child takes a nap? _____

Family trips? _____

The activities to which you can take your children? _____

If you can take a nap, read your Bible or have a quiet time alone? _____

How clean the house is? _____

The noise level of the house? _____

The number of conflicts you have with your child? _____

Whether you have a good day or bad day? _____

Whether your husband comes home to find you tired or not? _____

Whether or not your home is a refuge? _____