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The Responsible Christian Parent

(Part 1)

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Series: Living Lessons From Proverbs



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INTO HIS LIKENESS RADIO

The Responsible Christian Parent

The scene is a packed auditorium, thousands of Christians from all over the area have gathered, notebook in hand, to be instructed on how to become godly parents. They take notes, nudge each other to signify conviction, and on occasions, even bury their heads in their hands to indicate guilt. They are burdened, convinced, and determined. By God's grace, they are going to be the kind of parents the speaker described they should be.

The scene shifts...Carl and Cathy Christian arrive home from the seminar. There's Donny's bicycle out in the rain (he has forgotten to put it away for the eleventh time.) What was it the speaker said about dealing with unkept promises? And wasn't there a chapter on rusted bicycles? They walk in the door and are greeted by a baby-sitter whose very countenance borders on hysteria. It seems you find, much to your dismay, Bobby thinks he broke his thumb trying to keep Janie from stuffing your new sterling silver down the disposal. Sandra's in her room crying because Billy asked Edna to the Prom instead of her; and Robbie wants to use the car tonight to take a girl you don't like to a movie you don't want him to go to. Welcome back to the real world of parenting!!!

Your first impulse is to call that polished speaker who just gave you all those simple-sounding principles dotted with those entertaining illustrations and cry, "But you didn't cover an atomic attack"; yet somehow you feel that you can't tie your household to his wisdom with an umbilical cord from Southwestern Bell. He's there and you're here, and somehow you've got to sort it all out and make it work.

And so for two or three days, you take turns trying your newfound child psychology and parental theology on your four preteen and adolescent guinea pigs, taking on occasion, one step forward and two steps back.

The scene shifts again. A month has passed. There's a notice in the church bulletin that Charlie Childcare the famous Christian child psychologist is going to be speaking at the church down the street on "How to Have a Happy Home even though You Have Unhappy Children." You rip the reservation form off the bulletin and rush out to tell your mate that your 16th seminar on being a parent looms next on the horizon. The players are different,

The Responsible Christian Parent (Part 1)

but somehow, the score turns out the same. Transformation 2 - It seems like such a slow journey down the road to effective parenthood.

Our lesson is entitled “The Responsible Christian Parent.” It will probably be the 35th message you have heard in one form or another on the subject this year, and at the very mention of the topic, you automatically have mixed emotions. You have great interest; but low expectations. Our outline may further confuse you. It goes like this:

I. A popular Issue

II. Some Personal Observations

III. Some Practical Problems

- a. Operation information
- b. Operation saturation
- c. Operation application
- d. Operation frustration

IV. Some Principles from Proverbs on Parenting

Well, the popular issue is obviously, parenting. Parenting, along with husband-wife relationships, has become the new thrust of the Church in America.

In the fifties it was grassroots evangelism...in the sixties, it turned to social concern, and the fur flew in nearly every denominational convention over how these two great Christian responsibilities, evangelism and social concern, could be merged into a balanced spiritual curriculum for the seventies. Remember? About that time, God began raising up in the Christian community a new wave interest and a new banner to follow.

It all seemed to begin when a man named Bill Gothard developed what has come to be known as his Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts, tracing many of our basic problems back to the violation of principles in the home. His crowds began to swell. Interest was phenomenal. And soon other Christian authors and speakers began to surface dealing in detail with issues and areas of marriage and child raising that had never before been addressed in the Christian community. It was like a breath of fresh air that appealed, strangely enough, to Christians both on the right and on the left theologically. The issues of evangelism and social concern both seemed to slip on the ladder of importance.

The Responsible Christian Parent (Part 1)

And as we see the early eighties unfolded, the issue of marriage and the home, of parenting and of being a godly husband or wife literally became the consuming topic of the Christian community.

Christian bookstores now dot the horizon the way service stations did a decade ago, and whole sections of each store are devoted to literally hundreds of books, tapes, and Bible Study guides on the Christian Home. At least in some measure, the Christian Home became the Gospel of the Eighties.

One thing is true: God has certainly alerted the Church to the fact that the Home, (His foundation for communicating the Gospel to the next generation) is on the ropes. The escalation of the divorce rate, the increase of immorality, rising peer pressures among the youth and the flood of narcotics, all have shaken the very foundations upon which God's framework for evangelism, the home, was built, and the church has, by and large, fiddled while the home burned. So the concern is genuine, and the need is critical.

My personal observations, however, and please forgive me for intruding for just a moment with these thoughts, are that while this preoccupation with the Godly home is founded on the basis of solid need, we must also guard against the blessing becoming a curse; against the tail wagging the dog; against this reflection of Godliness (the Godly Home) masquerading itself to be the whole counsel of God.

Because of this, before we begin our look at the issue of becoming a responsible parent, I would like to address the practical problems that seem to be developing in the body of Christ at large as a result of this new wave of Christian Home theology.

Let me just quickly mention them: We'll look at:

- 1) Operation Information,
- 2) Operation Saturation,
- 3) Operation Application, and
- 4) Operation Frustration.

The little illustration of the parents with which we began this lesson will serve as somewhat of a backdrop for these points.

OPERATION INFORMATION

Problem area #1: We, as Christians in an age of mass media technology (who seem to live in Seminar City), suddenly find ourselves deluged with information on how to save our marriages

and how to raise our children.

It's almost all good. The illustrations are hysterical. The principles are applicable, and the material is responsible. The problem comes when we must determine why the illustrations don't always match ours, why the principles aren't always the ones we need, and why even the material sometimes falls short of changing our marriages and our homes.

I believe the key lies in our understanding the difference between the CONCEPTS OF MEN and THE PRECEPTS OF GOD. A precept is a law; a concept is a thought or a notion. I have been sharing with you some of my concepts about the church in the 1980's. They may or may not ring a bell with you. Even if they do, don't build your life on them. Analyze them, observe their validity, and go to the WORD and seek wisdom. BUT... In a few moments, I will be sharing with you some precepts from the WORD. They are absolute. They will not ever let you down. Build your home on them. They are not mine; they are God's.

Learning to discern the difference may change your whole perspective of spiritual growth. No matter who you are listening to, (even if he or she is the world's foremost authority on the subject being shared); their concepts are subject to scrutiny and application in your particular life. But the precepts they share from the WORD are absolute. Write them down, memorize them, and apply them as quickly and as faithfully as you can to your life.

For instance, the fact that discipline is a necessary ingredient in child-rearing is a precept. In that regard, you, as a parent, have no options. (We will read those passages next week!) But HOW you discipline in a given situation may not be exactly the same as the seminar speaker you just heard. His spiritual gift and his temperament may not be the same as yours. Your children may not have the same emotional or spiritual makeup as his. The precept is in concrete. The concepts are optional; they must be considered, weighed, maybe even tried. But be careful, THAT YOU DO NOT THROW OUT THE PRECEPTS if the concepts do not work for you. Satan would love that; and you and your children miss God's best.

OPERATION SATURATION

Problem area #2: The human mind can absorb just so much information. You and I are not always wise enough to discern that.

The Responsible Christian Parent (Part 1)

On a given Sunday you may listen to an hour of Sunday School, then an hour of church (on an entirely different subject) then hopefully many of you will return that night, where you will hear perhaps another message dealing with a yet another topic, then maybe stay for a film afterwards dealing with still another. On the way home, you'll turn your radio on to the Christian station and listen to yet another message. When you get home, you may turn on cable TV to the Christian channel, and get still another, while you get out your tape recorder to listen to a Christian tape you got in the mail.

Of course, that's an exaggeration; but the principle is that you and I may well be suffering from spiritual indigestion. We accumulate so much time receiving input from so many different sources that we lose our ability to extract from all that knowledge real wisdom...and Satan loves it! I'm not suggesting we stop listening; but I am suggesting that we don't let listening become an end within itself. Unless we learn to get into the WORD for ourselves, taking perhaps the material we have heard as a base, and appropriate that knowledge into understanding, we may well become the most intellectually stimulated, spiritually ineffective generation in history. This is particularly true of material on the Christian home and parenthood. We've heard so much, we almost think we are guaranteed success! And yet some of us may simply be more educated and more accountable, but no more effective than we were before. If so, we need to stop gorging ourselves and take time to digest what we've taken in.

OPERATION APPLICATION

Problem area #3: Here is the crux of it all! DO NOT DEAL WITH OTHERS UNTIL THOSE ISSUES ARE REAL TO YOU. I have a suggestion. This morning, and this evening as well, take a pencil and paper, and as you hear principles that seem to you to be vital, write them down, and then place a star or an asterisk or something by the one or two principles that you personally need to ask God to work on in your life. This week, concentrate on ONLY those principles.

Keep the sheet of paper for future reference, with the principles listed topically. At a later time, go back and review the others, and choose still another principle to meditate on and apply. But take life's great changes one at a time. Otherwise, Satan will see that in reality, you identify with many of them, but implement none of

them, and are in fact deceived into thinking you have made great progress.

OPERATION FRUSTRATION

Problem area #4: This is an area of greatest concern. You agree, for instance, that you have a real need in your relationship with your children. You attend a seminar, receive new information and new inspiration, and go home prepared to turn your home inside out.

But it doesn't always work the way it did in the syllabus. (Maybe your children didn't read the book.) Maybe they are a little far down the line to quickly respond to plan B, and you get frustrated. May I remind you that the "battle is not your's; It's God's!" And may I remind you that the choice to obey is not yours, it's your child's.

Responsibility, remember, is your response to God's ability... you can't do it; only GOD can! And His ways are so much higher than yours. And remember, too, God has chosen to give your child a free will. You can lead Him to the Living Waters, so to speak, but you can't make him drink. You may apply all the right precepts and even try some neat concepts, but if little Johnny hardens his neck, the results are still between little Johnny and God.

The key is that we learn God's ways and honestly begin to walk in obedience. We can't undo our mistakes of the past, and we can't circumvent our children's choices. Our responsibility is to respond honestly in obedience to God's ability and REST. **R.E.S.T.** It spells: **R**elax... **E**xpecting the... **S**pirit to... **T**ransform. We are to obey and REST; the rest is up to GOD. You can't be responsible for how your children turn out or even how they respond to God's precepts. You can only be responsible for your response to God's ability to change them.

As we shall see next week, the resting leads to praying, which is, in effect, our greatest work of all as parents. May I simply remind every one of you, who are parents that GOD is more interested in how your children turn out than you are? Do what you can, and then relax... GIVE THEM TO GOD. He is the perfect parent. If we are not careful, all this good information could cause us to stop resting in the arms of a sovereign God!

So, we have seen that parenting is a popular issue with practical problems, and you have graciously endured some personal observations about the state of the Union, so to speak,

The Responsible Christian Parent (Part 1)

in the church today. The problems involve an abundance of information, the problem of saturation, the need for application, and finally the danger of frustration if we are not able to see the kind of change we are expecting in our homes.

With that behind us, let's REALISTICALLY take a journey down the pathway we've come to know as Proverbs and find what principles or precepts are clearly defined in Scripture concerning parenting. Remember, if the WORD says it, it is not a concept, but a precept, and you can bank your life on it. Remember to look for one or two to concentrate on this week. The rest put on hold for a later time.

PRINCIPLE #1 may seem unnecessary (but nothing in the WORD is unnecessary). It is this: *YOUR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN ARE A GIFT FROM GOD.*

Grandparents, here's a verse for your bumper sticker:

Children's children are the crown of old men; and the glory of children are their fathers. (Proverbs 17:6)

But Mom and Dad, listen to this one:

Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD; and the fruit of the womb is HIS reward; as arrows in the hand of a mighty man, so are children of the youth, Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them; they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate. (Psalm 127:3)

Behold children are a legacy from the LORD, the fruit of the womb is His reward. (Berkeley)

Fatherhood itself is the Lord's gift, and the fruitful womb is a reward that comes from HIM. (Knox)

We might paraphrase it this way:

"What a gift from GOD our children are: They are His way of rewarding us with love. And the more you have, the more you have to be grateful for. As your years go by, their lives will be a living argument against those who oppose you. And what a blessing to be a grandparent; a gift from God reproduced once over! What a delightful way to grow old."

Do you see why this is the first basic premise of parenting? It means that GOD has designed your children as a blessing and a reward to you. When they are cuddly and happy and cooperative, they are a gift from GOD. When they are rebellious and irritable and unmanageable, they are still a gift from GOD. If someone were to give you a gift of a new computer, you would probably

The Responsible Christian Parent (Part 1)

be ecstatic, but if the computer breaks down, and you lose all your information, is it any less a gift? Ought you to be any less grateful?

Children are a heritage of the LORD; a reward from a loving GOD. Let me explain why this principle is so important. When the heat is on, if you lose your perspective and look at your children as an imposition, or a stumbling-block to your career or an intrusion on your time, or an expense item that keeps you from having “things” you could otherwise have, you may as well not worry with seminars and tapes and sermons on “training up a child”. Unless you see them as a delightful gift from a loving GOD, you cannot communicate to them the heart of GOD nor demonstrate to them the mind of GOD. The Mind of Christ is this: Children are a love-gift from GOD. Any time they are not that to you, you do not have the mind of Christ. Whatever other psychology or theology you may cling to is incidental. THEY know the difference and so does GOD.

May I suggest that if this precept has been violated in your life (and it has in mine), that before you consider the principles we will look at later in this lesson and the next, you take one week and simply make every day praise day for your children. Agree perhaps to spend the first minute of every hour or the first hour of every day praising God for them, one at a time. List their strengths, list the blessings God has brought into your life through them, even through their mistakes. And take the time to stop and tell each one of them that they are a blessing from God to you.

How you do it is unimportant. Those are concepts. My ideas may not appeal to you. But the PRECEPT...that children are a gift from God is not optional. It is a necessary ingredient in the proverbial formula of God for building the God-centered home. And the WORD says, “Whom the Lord loves, He tests to deepen.” So those exceptional, or special, or unusual children GOD may have given you are a SPECIAL GIFT of love for those HE has SPECIALLY CHOSEN to receive SPECIAL blessings. Praise Him the more for them. Children are love-gifts from the LORD. They are a reward to be appreciated, never a burden to overcome.

PRINCIPLE #2- *THE GREATEST GIFT YOU CAN GIVE YOUR CHILD IS THE EXAMPLE OF A HOLY LIFE.*

The righteous man leads a blameless life; blessed are his children after him.
(Proverbs 20:7)

The Responsible Christian Parent (Part 1)

The righteous man walks in his integrity; blessed, happy, fortunate, and enviable, are his children after him.

(Amplified)

Praise the LORD! For all who fear GOD and trust in him are blessed beyond expression. Yes, happy is the many who delights in doing his commands.

His children shall be honored everywhere, for good men's sons have a special heritage. (Psalm 112:1,2 TLB)

The greatest gift you can give your sons and daughters is not the newest video game or a new RX7 to drive to college. The greatest gift you can give your children is not a strong box of stocks and bonds or a family name noted for worldly success. The greatest gift you can give your children is a life that through it all has demonstrated Holiness. You will leave them a heritage so valuable, no price can purchase it.

We are all so busy toiling to have something to leave our children when we go. We want them to be proud of our accomplishments (and in this materialistic society we gauge our success much the way the world does). But when the smoke of life's pressures has cleared, that is not what will leave its mark on their life. What they will remember is WHO we were, not WHAT we did. CONCENTRATE ON GODLINESS... IT will, in turn, not only honor GOD, but will be a gift you will leave to your children that they will cherish always.

I wonder if before we add anymore principles of parenting to our list, some of us don't need to go back to the QUIET place alone with GOD and deal with the hypocrisy and the impurity in our own lives. Then, with the beam removed from our own eye, we can begin to see with 20/20 vision, how to operate on the specks in our children's eyes.

There are many things we need to learn to do as parents. But before we can honestly DO anything, we should first to remind ourselves what a GIFT those children are from GOD? And we need remember that before we can change our children, we must submit ourselves to GOD to become increasingly HOLY in our own lives? There are many gifts we can give to our children, but all of them fade into insignificance when compared to that one gift... the gift of a GODLY LIFE.

PRINCIPLE #3- A PARENT'S JOY OR GRIEF IS GREATLY AFFECTED BY HIS CHILDREN'S REBELLION. The Scripture teaches us that the normal response of God's man or woman to

The Responsible Christian Parent (Part 1)

his child's rebellion is a grief that affects his entire life.

A wise son maketh a glad father; but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother. (Proverbs 10:1)

Or as one translator puts it,

A sensible son is a joy; a senseless son is a grief. (Paraphrase)

He that begetteth a fool doeth it to his sorrow; and the father of a fool hath no joy. (Proverbs 17:21)

To be a fool's parent is grief for a man; the father of a numbskull has no joy. (NASB)

A rebellious son is a grief to his father and a bitter blow to his mother. (Proverbs 17:25)

But on the other hand, God adds,

The father of a godly man has cause for joy - what pleasure a wise son is. (Proverbs 23:24)

Be wise my son, then you will bring joy to my heart, and I shall be able to forestall my critics. (Proverbs 27:11 NEB)

Whoso loveth wisdom rejoiceth his father. (Proverbs 29:3)

Probably the most encouraging verse in all of Scripture concerning this truth is found in Matthew where God, the Perfect Father spoke of His Son this way:

This is my beloved son; I am wonderfully pleased with Him. (Matthew 3:17)

In Matthew 17:5 on the Mount of Transfiguration, once again, God the Father spoke:

This is my son, whom I love; with Him I am well-pleased; listen to Him!

So it is not spiritually unnatural to be grieved over your child's rebellion. The Scripture says the father of a rebel has cause to grieve; and the father of a godly son or daughter has cause for joy.

God, the perfect Father, spoke clearly of His perfectly obedient Son. He was wonderfully pleased with Him. To retreat to your prayer closet and cry and pray when your children are rebellious is not unspiritual; it is spiritually natural. To sing songs of joy to God when your children walk in Truth is not prideful, it is an expression of joy that God the Father had and expects us to have. The key is in learning the difference between grief and false guilt. Grief is assuming God's attitude towards rebellion. God grieves.

The Responsible Christian Parent (Part 1)

Listen to Jesus in Matthew,

Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killeth the prophets
and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often
would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen
gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not.

(Matthew 23:37)

Jesus was grieved over their rebellion. Grief is of GOD. But false guilt is different. False guilt is assuming the responsibility for your child's choices. We don't have the right to accept the praise for their right decisions, only to rejoice in Christ. Neither have we the right to accept the guilt for their wrong ones; only to grieve with GOD over the temporary victory Satan has won.

Beloved, we must learn this truth and be set free. It is not wrong to rejoice over our children's spiritual victories; and it is natural to grieve and be led to prayer over their rebellion. But the difference between grief and false guilt is a lesson we must all learn.

PRINCIPLE #4- THE CHARACTER OF A CHILD CAN BE DETECTED EARLY.

Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right. (Proverbs 20:11)

The character of even a child can be known by the way he acts, whether what he does is pure and right.

(Ken Taylor)

That precept on the surface may seem to be somewhat superfluous, but think about it! What I believe it says is this: You can't begin too early to discern the character and makeup of your children. Before you explain away their behavior as the "terrible twos" or the "ferocious fives", or the "traumatic teens", remember that God is allowing those character strengths and weaknesses to surface to give you a platform for prayer. Our job is to pray for character; not just circumstances. It will make no eternal difference whether or not Suzie gets that bicycle or Johnny gets that "A" in math; but it makes all the difference in the world whether or not God deals with the issue of integrity in Suzie's life, or Johnny's problem of slothfulness or unfaithfulness. So God is revealing their character early so we can: a) know how to pray and b) so we can learn to build into their lives the offsetting character qualities.

What I mean is this: If Suzie is slothful, begin teaching her

The Responsible Christian Parent (Part 1)

the biblical concept of diligence (no matter how young she is.) If Mary is ungrateful, begin pouring into her life lessons on contentment. If Bobby is self-centered, rather than badger him over his self-centeredness; begin building into his life the concept of servanthood. God reveals character early to teach us how to pray and how to teach our children the ways of God.

PRINCIPLE #5 is one of the Basic Principle of Parenthood: *THE PRINCIPLE OF THE UNIQUENESS OF EACH CHILD.*

God, the perfect Father, has given us the perfect illustration. He loves us each equally, but He treats us all differently, because He who made us knows, no two of us are exactly the same. One of the great dangers of programming effective parenthood is the danger of creating methods and expecting each child to respond the same way. The most famous parenting passage in Proverbs, says this:

Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old,
he will not depart from it. (Proverbs 22:6)

But of course, the actual meaning of that verse is lost in that translation. The Amplified Bible says it this way:

Train up a child in the way he should go and in keeping with
his individual gift or bent, and when he is old, he will not
depart from it. (Amplified)

In other words, the key phrase “the way he should go” is a phrase used to describe the making of a bow as a tool to shoot an arrow; indicating that you take into account the natural bent of the wood and shape the bow according to its natural bent. To bend it back the other way, means you are nearly sure to break it. So you examine the manner in which the bow is bent, and you shape it accordingly. And Proverbs 22:6 is saying, so it is with EACH INDIVIDUAL child. You study them; you observe the manner in which their bow is bent, how they are gifted, their temperaments, their physical and emotional makeup, their spiritual gift (if they are a Christian). You approach them with spiritual truth according to the bent of the bow of their spirits. The truth will be the same; but the manner of communicating that truth will not be the same anymore than Matthew, Mark, Luke and John wrote the same Gospel. They wrote the same Truth, but it was shaped by the bent of the bow of their individual spirit. Each child is unique, and each child is uniquely special. To mass-produce techniques and expect them to be cloned into obedience is not God’s way;

The Responsible Christian Parent (Part 1)

therefore, it must not be ours either. Train them up in keeping with their individual bent, and when they are old, the bow will not have broken, but will have rather been transformed into a useable instrument in the hands of our Great God.

In the next lesson, Lord willing, we'll look at the other half of that verse, the "training up of a child" and we'll look at some principles from Proverbs on punishment. Then we'll go on and view from the rest of Scripture such topics as: 1) the role of the older women to teach the younger about parenting; 2) the principles of exasperation; 3) principles of communicating personal experiences to children; 4) we'll look at Paul's illustration of expending yourself as a father even to ungrateful children; and 5) we'll look at principles of praying for your children. Hopefully, before we are through, we will view: 6) God's perspective of parenting through the eyes of some of his living legends, such as Moses' mother, Manoah, Hannah, David, the Shunammite woman, Job, Lemuel's mother, the nobleman who came to Jesus, and Lois and Eunice, Timothy's mother and grandmother. We still have a long way to go. But before we conclude this lesson, let's just quickly remember the key thoughts we have shared together.

1- There is a difference between the precepts of God and the concepts of man. Learn the difference. Build your life on God's precepts; but examine men's concepts in the light of your life and that of your children. The concepts are optional; the precepts are foundational and essential.

2- The human mind has a saturation point where information is concerned. The effectiveness of your life will not be determined by how many different messages you hear, but by how effectively you personally appropriate into your life the key truths about child-rearing, through personal study of the Word, and prayer.

3- The battle is not yours it's God's. You cannot be responsible for the outcome. The power is God's; the choice is your child's. Your responsibility is the proper response to God's ability to change your child into His likeness. They are ultimately not our children, but God's. Learn to rest in that fact.

4- Children are a gift from GOD. They are a reward based on His love. To see them as an inconvenience or imposition is to rob God of His perspective, and the rest of your efforts to be an effective parent will be incidental. They are a loving Gift from a loving Father, and the more exceptional their needs, the greater

the gift.

5- The greatest gift you can give your child is the example of holiness. What you give will fade. what you are will last.

6- It is spiritually natural for a parent's joy or grief to be a reflection of the faithfulness or rebellion of his children. God the Father was well-pleased with His beloved Son. We have a right to be the same. The key is that when they rebel, we must learn the difference between grief and false guilt. One is God-glorifying; the other is not.

7- The character of a child is revealed early by a loving God to teach us how to properly pray, and effectively train them, not in methodology, but in character.

8- No two children are the same. God expects us to study each child to train them up in the manner they are gifted, as the bow is bent. To do otherwise is to run the risk of breaking the bow and losing a valuable vessel.

Your assignment for this week, (should you choose to accept it) is to take no more than two of those precepts (preferably one) and set aside time on your own to cross-reference, study, memorize, and pray that truth into your life, and begin to actively work it into your family relationships. For example, if the principle of your children being a heritage from GOD is a need in your life, then you may want to set aside times of thanksgiving this week to thank God for them, and to thank them for what they are - a gift of love from GOD. Don't just think about it, do it! That's turning knowledge into wisdom!

If your area of need is to study your child's character for prayer, then you may want to begin a prayer notebook using the character qualities as a basis for praying, and the opposite character qualities as a basis for teaching.

If your area of need is to realize of how your child's bow is bent, how each child is unique in personality and gifts, then start a notebook on each child, and make it a lifetime project to examine how God made them...marvel at it. Don't compare Susie with Jane. Marvel rather that Susie is so special in her way and Jane in hers.

The key is that whatever God has convicted or encouraged you about in particular, you now have a responsibility to act on it. You must now respond to God's ability to change you and your

The Responsible Christian Parent (Part 1)

child. You do not do that by attending another seminar or reading another book or attempting to be overwhelmed by all that God has to say about the subject. You do that by taking one or two key areas of need, yielding yourself to God's miracle working power, thus turning knowledge to understanding; and then by creatively, actively, DOING something to begin to implement the power of God in that area of your life as a parent. Then you will not simply have received more information; nor will you have simply tried more concepts. rather you will have honestly rested your life on one of God's precepts, and trusted HIM to do the rest; and that is step one on the road to becoming responsible parents. We close with this:

ARE YOU A RESPONSIBLE PARENT?

Are you a responsible parent?
Does your home represent God's best?
Have you learned to respond to God's precepts
Then, learning in HIM just to rest?

Have you learned that each child is a gift from God
With a card written only to you?
That the greatest of gifts you can give in return
Is a heart that is Holy and True?

Have you learned that your child's very nature
As an infant begins to unfold
That, as you begin to see those traits
God's plan you'll begin to behold

Have you learned that no two children
No matter how good your intent
Can be treated exactly the same, for you
Must examine the way the bow's bent?

Oh, Christian, may our homes reflect
The road Godly parents would trod
That those who see us as parents
Might see our Father, GOD!

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