

# Lesson 32

Teacher's Manual

## PARENTHOOD - PART II

READ & MEDITATE ON: Deuteronomy 6:6-9 MEMORIZE: Proverbs 23:13-14

### INTRODUCTION

"Why didn't someone tell me about this?" is an oft-repeated question asked when young parents find themselves faced with the perplexing problems of parenthood. Rarely does anyone attempt to provide an answer. More often than not, the troubled inquirer expects no answer as such. Sympathy, maybe; but, answers? No.

Some have viewed the lack of preparation for parenthood as a deficiency in our educative system. Offering special training of various sorts, they feel that the problem can be solved through academic means—add another course to the curriculum and let the school system provide the solution.

Others prefer to assign the dilemma to the individual parents. "Who," they ask, "would be better qualified than parents themselves?" And, the solutions, they reason, can be better found at the very source of the problem.

But, neither of these views are adequate. In fact, the solutions are quite often more harmful than the problem itself.

For instance, the views of humanists who would teach parenthood in a public school system are—for the most part—opposed to the concepts of true Christianity. Such an effort would remove any traces of Christian doctrines in one generation. We can never endorse such a move. Rather, we are obligated to resist it vigorously.

What about the proposal to refer the problem to the home? Well,

society gone astray!

The meaning of children staggers the thoughtful parent. If the parents are wise, it will drive them both to their knees and to the Word of God for guidance. Their efforts will be rewarded. God is concerned and anxious to guide and direct. He knows the full meaning of children. (See Psalms 127:3-5.)

## II. THE CHILDREN'S RESPONSIBILITY TO THEIR PARENTS

The wise parent does not assume that the mere recital of a list of responsibilities to their children will insure their compliance (obedience). (See Ephesians 6:3 and Colossians 3:20.) Rather, they so conduct themselves as to evoke (call up) the basic respect and honor so essential. Further, they expect, and even demand, that attitude from their children.

Let's amplify and clarify these statements.

The Biblical injunction (order), "Children, honor your parents" (Ephesians 6:2, 3), cannot be fully followed unless the parents earn that honor. Children can make an outer show of respect regardless of circumstances. And, this is commendable (praise worthy) on the child's part. But, true honor can only be given to one worthy of it.

Therefore, parents who are honorable can be honored. Integrity, or the lack of it, can be and will be recognized by the very young. In fact, the youngest are equipped with instinctive perception of such characteristics, though they cannot verbalize them. When a parent lives contrary to what he demands of the child there is a decided loss of rapport (harmony).

Children will honor their parents if taught by both word and deed. The capacity to do so is an endowment (help) from God. Moreover, it is a requirement—a responsibility. The honor is not without the attendant obedience and acceptable behavior expected of children.

The child who lives up to his responsibility of honoring his parents will be able to accept authority in other relationships of life. It is easier to obey civil laws and adhere to doctrines and standards of the Church.

To accept the fact of conflicts is not to encourage or even allow any behavior marked by rebellion. If conflict is dealt with by a parent on an authoritative level without careful consideration of the teen-ager's views, hostility and rebellion will eventually emerge.

If the conflict is in an area such as ethics, or morals, there can be no compromise. The most perfect character is marred by the slightest deviation from the right. So right must be maintained even to the point of enforcing it with parental authority.

Teen-agers are young adults. They will often respond to a high opinion of a parent. They will live up to what is expected of them, for the most part. All conflict isn't rebellion. It's simply the struggle of teen-agers approaching adulthood.

#### B. Parent Blunders

Give each teen a mimeographed sheet which contains two columns of "Yes" and "No" answers, ten to each column. Then give the following questions to them orally and have them circle their response after each question. The teens should be as honest they possibly can, and they need not put their names on their answer sheets.

In column one, they answer questions relating to their parents' attitudes toward them, and in column two, questions about their attitudes towards their parents. The total number of "yes" and "no" answers in each column can be totaled after the quiz and may then be used as a basis for discussion. Normally, whenever the parents score a high number of "no" answers, so does the kid. (And vice-versa.) For example, if a teen says his parents do not act like they trust him, he will undoubtedly answer "no" to the questions about trying to earn and keep his parents' trust. The answers should show that both parents and teens have a 50-50 share of the responsibility for their problems. The following are some common parent blunders as addressed to their teen-agers:

1. Do your parents listen to you when you have a family discussion?
2. Do your parents act like they trust you?
3. Do your parents treat your friends nicely and make them feel welcome?
4. Do your parents admit their mistakes when they have been wrong?
5. Do your parents openly express and show their affection for you?

### 1. List What "They" Did Wrong

Here are some samples of some common faults of parents as viewed by teenagers:

- a. Failing to keep their promise to me.
- b. Accusing me of things I didn't do.
- c. Giving more attention to others in the family than to me.
- d. Not giving me a chance to explain.
- e. Telling me not to do things and then doing them themselves.
- f. Taking out their frustrations on me.

### 2. List What "I" Did Wrong

It is amazingly easier to remember what the "other guy" did than where we were wrong. This step requires honesty on our part. Here are some helpful hints that are common faults of teenagers:

- a. Bad attitude. How would your parents rate your attitude at home?
- b. Unthankful. When did you last thank your mother for the good supper or your dad for those new clothes?
- c. Rebellious. How do you react when asked to do something around the house? 1) Do it right away. 2) Say, I'll get to it later. 3) Say, why can't he/she do it. 4) Ask why I have to. 5) Say, I can't do it.
- d. Untrustworthy. 1) Have you done something to make it difficult for your parents to trust you? 2) Have you been guilty of telling them half-truths to get your way or to stay out of trouble. 3) Have you made decisions by yourself which should have been shared with your parents?
- e. Resentful. Have you been holding a grudge over something you and your parents have disagreed about?
- f. Laziness. How would the Mobil travel guide rate your room for neatness? Are your homework assignments almost always done on time?

### 3. Apologizing

This is the hardest of the three steps. You must be honest and truly sorry for "your" offenses. You "break the ice" by asking forgiveness of the one you wronged.

canopy, we expose ourselves to unnecessary temptations. That is why the Word compares rebellion with witchcraft (I Samuel 15:22, 23). Both terms mean, "subjecting ourselves to the realm and power of Satan."

### 3. To Understand Guidance For Life Decisions

Faith involves visualizing what God intends to do. Making right decisions involves faith. One of the most basic aspects of faith is to understand how God gets His directions to us through those He places in authority over us.

CHART-52

## G. Responding To Authority

### 1. Position And Personality

A teenager needs to differentiate between his parent's position and personality. It is possible to respect a parent's position of authority as God's plan, while at the same time be aware of personality deficiencies in that parent which give room for improvement. God has committed Himself in His Word to work through parents. (See Proverbs 16:7 and I Peter 2:18-20.)

### 2. Learn How To Make An Appeal To Authority

When you and your parents are not agreeing about a matter very important to you, or when they are using their authority to force you into some action you feel is wrong, learn to come up with a creative alternative.

The scriptural background for this is found in Daniel 1:12. Daniel convinced the King to allow the Hebrew young men to eat pulse and water for a ten day's test instead of the King's meat. The King agreed and at the end of the test God had intervened to honor the Hebrews for their stand. In many situations you can ask God to give you insight to come up with a creative alternative that would be acceptable to you and your parents.

### 3. Trust The Lord To Change Parents' Minds

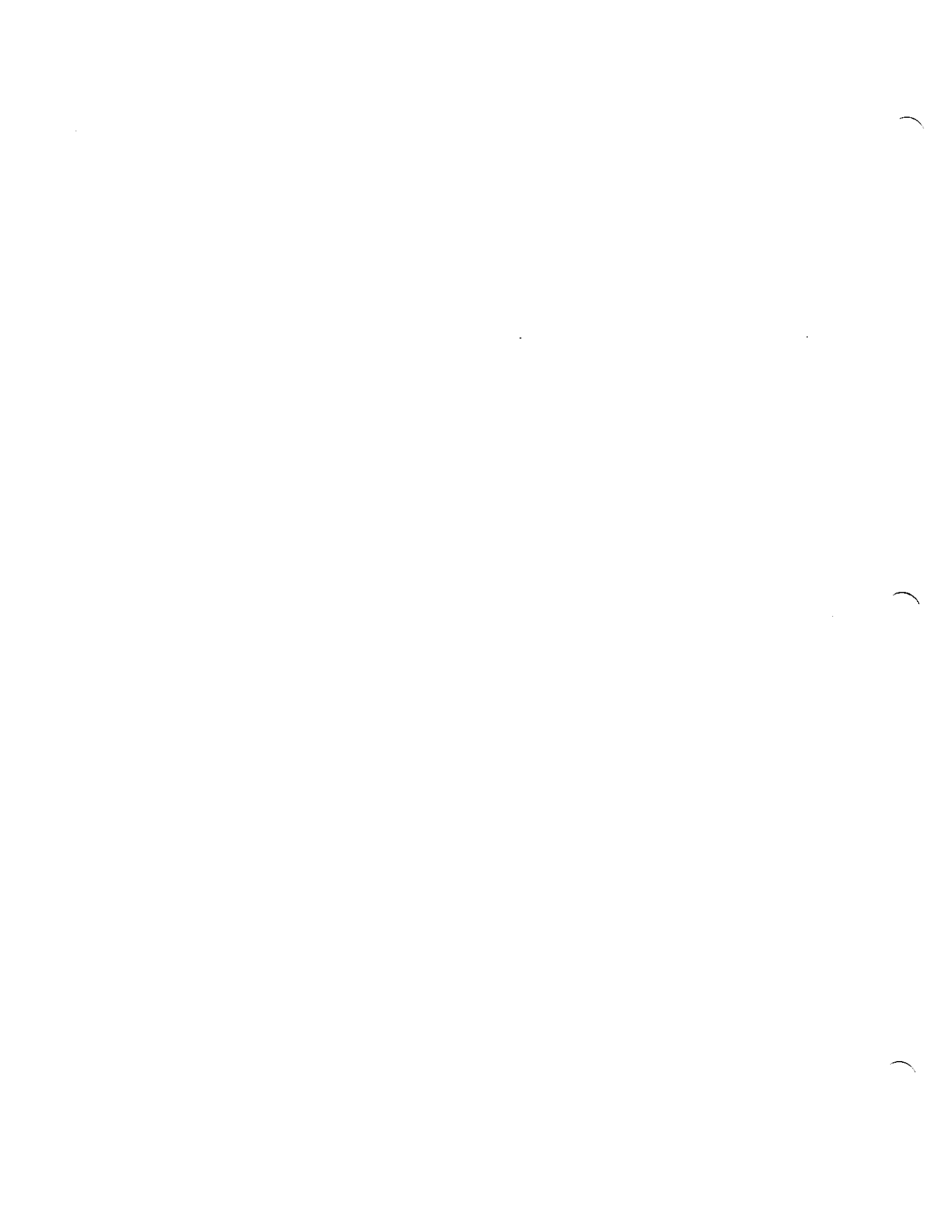
"The King's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will."

*Proverbs 21:1*

changes have taken their toll. There are definite evidences of what has seemed an almost imperceptible unnoticeable change. The family is back to the two who began marriage together. With the departure of the children, there seems to be a void.

Later in marriage, the woman who has never learned submission in action and attitude wakes up to another potential problem. During the days of child-rearing, she dominated the children and bossed them around. When the children have grown and left home, her increased self-confidence and dominance may then be directed toward her husband. The retirement years then become "rough and rugged" instead of "restful and relaxing." This is why parents must fulfill their proper roles in the child-rearing years, so the years together as grandparents can be exciting and enjoyable.

But, with each change there is the potential for greater growth and productivity. What is lessened by the years is replenished by the experience gained. Acceptance of the changes enables the parents to look forward to the role of grandparents. And, strangely enough, each stage of life becomes the launching pad for the next. Each phase is better and more rewarding. In fact, the best is yet to come!



If God can change a King's mind and the mind of Pharaoh to let the Israelites go, He can change anybody else's mind if He decides it's necessary—even the mind of your parents. Only if we are responding properly to our parent's authority can we expect God to change their minds.

#### H. Rejecting Authority

Rejecting authority only makes us the loser. The original potential God intended for our lives is diminished. Three consequences of rejecting authority are:

##### 1. Our Children Suffer

By our rebellion against the authority God places over our life, we fail to grasp spiritual insights and integrity which God intended. So we are not able to be the parents we could have been to our children.

##### 2. We Suffer

The lack of character, wisdom and understanding we have because we refused authority will forfeit some of the potential we could have had in the Lord's work.

##### 3. Life Expectancy Shortened

The Bible shows a clear relationship between obedience to our parents and to God and a long, healthy life. (See Proverbs 3:7, 8; I Corinthians 11:27-32; and Ephesians 6:1-3). The way a teenager responds to his parent's authority soon becomes the way he responds to ministerial authority and ultimately God's authority.

CHART-53

#### V. PREPARING FOR MIDDLE-AGE CHANGES

As parents watch their children reach adulthood, they undergo some changes themselves. The children don their guard of adulthood, and the parents begin to notice that while they were carefully watching the changes in the children, some changes were also occurring in themselves.

Many of the goals they had set for themselves remain unreachd. It begins to appear as if they won't be reached. Physiological



- a. How NOT to's: 1) I know I was wrong, but you were too. 2) If I was wrong, or offended you... 3) I'm sorry!!! (snapped explosively).
- b. How to: The following statement is an ice-breaker because it reflects your willingness to admit you were wrong without accusing the other party involved.

"God has shown me how wrong I was in (my wrong attitude, words, actions). I know I have offended you in this, and I've come to ask you, will you forgive me?" This is much better said in person than over the telephone or in a letter.

#### E. Befriending Authority

We're all in it together—parents and teens. We all live under some authority. It just so happens that the teenager is under the authority of his parents. Life is more rewarding when we can peacefully coexist with the authorities God places over us rather than maintain a rebellious cold war.

God places the authorities over us that he does in order to accomplish His will and purpose in our lives. Some have used the illustration that the teenager is like a "diamond in the rough." In this illustration, parents are God's tools to chip away the rough edges of the teen's life to produce beauty from all angles.

CHART-51

#### F. Purpose Of Parental Authority

To befriend and appreciate authority, you need to understand God's purpose for it.

##### 1. To Grow In Wisdom And Character

Jesus became subject and obedient to the authority of His parents. The next verse says, "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man" (Luke 2:52).

##### 2. To Gain Protection From Destructive Temptations

When submission is properly understood, it is not "putting myself under the domination" but rather the "protection" of authority. Authority could be compared to a "canopy of protection." When we take ourselves out from under the

6. Do your parents avoid comparing you to brothers and sisters, or other youth?
7. Do your parents keep the promises that they make to you?
8. Do your parents show their appreciation and give you credit when you do something good?
9. Do your parents set a good example for you in their personal honesty?
10. Do your parents use the kind of language in front of you that they told you to use?

C. Teen Goofs

The following are some common teen goofs with respect to their parents:

1. Do you listen to your parents when they want to share an idea or advice with you?
2. When your parents say "No" to your plans, do you accept that answer without complaining?
3. Do you try to understand the pressures and problems that sometimes make parents grumpy and hard to live with?
4. Do you say "Thank you" for everything that your parents do for you?
5. Do you try to plan something nice that you can do for your parents occasionally?
6. Do you say "I'm sorry" when you know you have been out of line or have said or done something you shouldn't?
7. Do you try to earn and keep your parents trust by doing what they expect of you?
8. Do you play fair with them and discuss things honestly, without covering up for yourself?
9. Do you ask your parents' advice about decisions that you have to make?
10. Do you try to avoid problems and arguments by doing what you're supposed to before you have to be told?

Contributed by Bill O'Connor, San Dimas, California. Taken from: Youth Specialties' Ideas Number 15.

CHART-50

D. Remodeling Your Relationships

One has said that where people of varying personalities and ages live together under one roof, trouble spots are inevitable. Where does one find a wider age span than the average family at home? It is no wonder that there are conflicts between parents and children. When conflicts with your parents or other family members do occur, it's important to know how to remodel the damaged relationship. Here is a three-step plan that should help:

### III. GOALS FOR CHILDREN

Boredom is an enemy of youth! Every generation complains both individually and collectively: "But, we have nothing to do—nothing!" Regardless of the "outlets" or "activities" provided by parents, they feel there is nothing to do. (See Ezekiel 16:49-50.)

Perhaps the best remedy to their universal dilemma lies in providing young people with goals instead of structured activity. We are all goal-striving creatures. God made us so. Young and old respond to challenges if they are presented in the forms of reachable goals.

Achievement is a magic word. To feel the joy of achievement and know what it means to receive the praise and approval of parents is invigorating. To invest time and money in projects which allow our children to accomplish a worthwhile task is the best investment parents can make.

Each child is different. There is no way we can catalog activities to appeal to all. The individual child will indicate his own interest field. The wise parent can "hook" his child's spiritual needs to the star of his individual interests. By directing the child's development by helping him set goals and achieve them the parent can overcome the "nothing'to'do" syndrome. Furthermore, he can develop some excellent traits in his child.

CHART-49

### IV. PARENT—TEEN CONFLICTS

#### A. Controlled Conflict

A book could be written on this subject. But, in a few words, conflicts are inevitable. This is not to suggest that conflicts should be allowed to develop into hostility—or even rude behavior. It is a declaration that a normal teen-ager will come into areas of conflict with his parents.

If a relationship has been established which affords the parent rapport (harmony) with his teen-ager, these conflicts can be resolved in a very satisfactory manner. A wise parent will welcome an expression of views contrary to his. He will, however, insist on a respectful manner and attitude on the part of his child. The key to obtaining such an attitude is to maintain one.

actually, that's where it is now. And, obviously, the arrangement is yet lacking. Why is it so? Lack of understanding is passed down from generation to generation and destroys the very family structure we would preserve!

Children whose parents screamed at them, abused them and neglected them, tend to deal with their children in the same way. If they attempt to change, they are in danger of going to an opposite extreme which is as bad as the former problem.

The cycle can be broken through an understanding and acceptance of Biblical principles of parental responsibility. The Bible has much to say on the subject. Much of what it does say is in direct contradiction to present-day concepts. Only as a parent exercises faith in God's Word through obedience, will any marked improvement occur. Humanists and modernists have views which have too long dominated our minds. A return to God's pattern of parenthood is our ONLY ANSWER!

#### CHART-48

##### I. MEANING OF CHILDREN

Children may be viewed from many points—all of them true and profitable. For our purpose here, however, let's recognize the eternal aspect of those we bring into the world. It is around this that all our thoughts and efforts should revolve.

Each child is an individual. Each has his own unique set of fingerprints—and his own taste buds. Two children raised in the same home see life from their own individual viewpoint. They develop into entirely different persons with widely differing personalities.

The role of parenthood calls for acceptance of each child, as he or she is. The child will have both strong points and weak. Never should parents forget this fact. Praise them for their strong points and carefully correct them on their weak points. NEVER CRITICIZE!

Development of the individual child must focus on the value of the soul. It is true that "making a living" is important. Without detracting from that, it is far more important that "living the life" allotted them be kept in proper perspective. (See Matthew 16:26.)

If parents see the meaning of children as our Heavenly Father does, it will become all important that we provide training which will make "right living" a joy and not a drudgery. We will examine every aspect of life in search for the best. We will evaluate the "best" by a Godly set of values rather than the standards of a