



volume one

issue two

Honoring Heaven in our Homes

By: Lisa Kennedy

Recently I was singing a children's Bible class song to my daughter which ends, "God loves you, learn to serve Him faithfully!" I cannot force my children to obey God, at least not for long; rather, I must teach them about God through His Word, equipping them to follow Him (Deut. 6:6-9).

Raising children to be faithful goes beyond teaching biblical facts and clearing our calendars on Sundays. As we apply scripture, we must teach our children to respect authority so they may learn how to honor God's sovereignty. Parents have the unique and foremost responsibility to teach our children what it means to be respectful. Our children's view of authority is formed in our homes and will be reflected in how they regard other adults, teachers, elders, government officials, and ultimately God (Pro. 24:21).

How do we teach children to respect our authority? First, teach the importance of respecting the personhood of everyone and the specific respect due to some positions, roles, and titles (1 Pet. 2:17). Our children need to understand that their parents have authority in their lives, just as we need to understand that God has authority in our lives as our Heavenly Father and Creator. Therefore, submission of a child's desires will be brought under those decisions of their God-given parents. Obviously, as those children age, a maturing relationship will be built; and rules and responsibilities will be age-appropriate.

Secondly, be consistent and follow through with consequences. Mean what you say, and stick to it (Matt. 5:37). Like God, establish clear expectations, boundaries, rules, and consequences. Avoid bending them (Pro. 29:17). A child who is consistently bargaining to change your decision does not respect you. There is great spiritual danger in leaving children with the impression that God will "bend the rules" for them, or that He doesn't really mean what He says. Laying out clear expectations, boundaries, and rules for all mankind, God has given us everything that

we need through His Word (2 Tim. 3:16-17, 2 Pet. 1:3). Loving parents would do well to follow God's lead!

Finally, practice and exemplify respect every day. Children are keen observers, and they know if we practice what we preach (Pro. 23:26). They see when Mom will not submit to her husband as God commands. They notice how we speak about elders (Heb. 13:17). They know if we obey the laws of the land (Rom. 13:1-7). They observe us each day. Not living out the respect we teach our children shows us to be hypocrites, undermines everything we teach as the closest authoritative figures to them, and can imprint on them a view of God contrary to the one "in whom there is no variation" (Jas. 1:17).

Respectful children understand their position, and follow the rules set out by those in authority, not because they always agree or understand, but because of their role of obedience (Eph. 6:1). They don't whine to get their way but use kind and courteous words. Respectful children come when they are called and obey without complaining. Respectful children will not regularly create problems for babysitters, teachers, or parents. And, as they age, they will not need juvenile intervention nor will they need to be often rebuked by their elders. God, who has clear roles, rules, and responsibilities, loves them beyond words and has a place in eternity prepared just for them. My desire, in raising godly and respectful children, is that they learn to serve Him faithfully (3 John 1:4).

Lisa Kennedy and her husband, Trent (SWSBS - class of 2007), work and worship with the University congregation in San Marcos, TX. Lisa is a small business owner who specializes in photography and graphic design and Trent is the Texas State Campus Minister.. These endeavors allow her to stay home full time with her four children.



Titus 2:4 - Teaching the Young to Love By: Neta Genduso

I knew from the time I was 10 that I wanted to be a teacher! Anxious to have my own classroom, I used to gather all my young cousins together at family events and play school with me as the teacher. I did go on to receive a degree in education and taught elementary school for 11 years before I “retired” to raise my own babies.

Teaching in the private and public school setting was rewarding on so many levels, but that teaching pales in comparison to the essential teaching that God expects of Christians. One such example is found where God commands the older women, “That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children,” (Titus 2:4).

It is a huge honor and responsibility to be named among the older women. May we never take that role lightly! We must be willing to share the benefit of our experience and our knowledge of God’s word with those who are younger and will face the same challenges. We must first be a worthy example “in behaviour as becometh holiness” (Titus 2:3), and then share the seriousness (“to be sober” in Titus 2:4) of following God’s holy precepts and living faithfully for Him.

Titus 2:4 also shows the perfect balance of serious teaching and love. The older women must teach the younger women “to love their husbands and to love their children.” The word for “love” in this passage comes from the Greek word “philos.” It is the friendly love that shows fondness and affection. We need to teach the younger women how to enjoy and show affection to their families. Philos love involves showing the joy of being together. We show that by hugs, kisses, LOTS of smiles, holding hands, cuddles, cheering for one another, showing kindness in words and actions, and just simply enjoying the company of family. When our family was riding along together in the car, our 4-year-old daughter announced “We love to do things “togeder!” (Mom’s translation: “together.”) We still talk about that moment (she is now 19) when such a sweet little girl reminded us of the joy of family!

Young ladies, young wives, young mothers – know that there is a wealth of wisdom and experience among the women of Southwest available to you for the asking. Please ask! I encourage you to seek out the love, help, and support that is there for you from women who have walked where you are now walking.

Older women – know that there are younger women at Southwest who need your help, guidance, love and wisdom! I encourage you to reach out to those younger women, wives and mothers. Build a relationship of trust with them. Teach (train) them along the way to be serious when it comes to God’s truths, and to love their husbands and children as God would have them to do. “Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.” (Proverbs 11:14) Ladies, heaven awaits! May we help each other, along with our families, to get there together!

Biblesoft’s New Exhaustive Strong’s Numbers and Concordance with Expanded Greek–Hebrew Dictionary. (Biblesoft, Inc. and International Bible Translators, Inc. 2006)

Words of Wisdom

What Do They See? By: Midge Siebert

From the time they leave the womb, infants begin to communicate and observe. Without nurturing from those around them, they simply would not survive! It isn’t long before they begin to mimic those who care for them—a learning process that continues throughout the “growing- up” years.

We are blessed with a large number of children at Southwest—children who love attention and are eager to learn. How are we influencing them? Are they observing and imitating a great love for the Lord (Matt. 22:37; John 14:15)? Do they see us worshipping joyfully and respectfully (Ps. 29:2; 89:7)? Showing kindness and concern for others (Matt. 25:31ff; John 13:34)? Do we take time to talk to our

children/young people, express our love for them, and tell them how much Jesus loves them (Matt. 18:2-5)? Do we encourage them to be daily Bible readers and good Bible students (Ps. 1:2)? Do we commend them for their efforts and give them a hug or a pat on the back? Do they truly see Jesus living in us? Be assured, they are watching and learning— and we are teaching, whether in a classroom setting or by example.

We have the ability to impact the world through our children (Ps. 127:3-5). Our lives are but a vapor (James 4:14), and the church needs youth to grow spiritually and carry on the Lord’s work. May we shine the Light and guide them to heaven’s pathway (Ps. 119:105)!

Word Study

What Exactly *IS* Discipline? By: Courtney Westbrook

Are rules a bad thing? Do they limit the moral growth and development of my child? Do they impede their creativity and imagination? Do they encourage negativity? In the beginning, we see that God established a set of rules or expectations for Adam and Eve (Gen. 2:15-17) and when they disobeyed, they were disciplined. The word “*discipline*” comes from a Latin word “disco” which means “to learn or get to know, a direct kind of acquaintance with something or someone.”¹ Throughout the bible God shows Himself as our Master and Teacher, who desires a relationship with us through obedience to His holy word. In Deuteronomy 11:1-2 we learn that God wants us to learn obedience to His commandments through the “discipline of the Lord”. It’s important that we note, however, that God does not demand obedience without the hope of a reward. Again, in Deuteronomy 11, God continues to talk about the blessings that will come if the children of Israel will love and obey. The first example we see of discipline is in the family, in Deuteronomy 6:20-25, when the father is instructing the child to continue in the way of the Lord “for our good always” and “it will be righteousness for us”. This does not have a negative connotation, but rather, it states the blessings that we can receive if we continue in the commandments of the Lord (2 Tim 2:3-5).

According to the American Psychological Association, the process of disciplining your children can make a difference in their moral development. The article suggests using a teaching method identified in the research as “induction” which consists of the “parents focusing on the consequences of the child’s actions” instead of taking a “power assertion” or “love withdrawal” approach.² We see the need for instruction even in the scholarly research in our world of overwhelming immorality. The important thing to note here is the emphasis on helping the child to understand and identify that there are consequences to their actions both good and bad.

Disciplining our children is not easy (Heb. 12:11) but it is essential in raising our children to understand what it means to truly love (Prov. 13:24; Rev. 3:19). God commands us to carry out this aspect of raising children (Eph. 6:4), and we must seek out His wisdom in the Word of God to assist us in this important and challenging task we **chose** to take on as parents. When we establish a set of rules and expectations for our children, we need to make sure to be consistent with our implementation of those set rules to gain our children’s respect and further grow the intimate relationship that we have with our children. (Prov. 29:15, 17; Deut. 8:5) In doing this we will, ultimately, be instructing our children to gain self-discipline when the time comes for them to make choices and handle the consequences of those choices for themselves (Prov. 13:1, Heb. 5:8, 1 Cor. 11:32). Our goal in raising our children should be to help them get to Heaven (Prov. 10:17)!

Words to Grow By

What Ephesians 6:1 Means to Me By: Ava Harris (age 9)

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

First, I needed to look up what it meant to “obey” in Webster’s New World Dictionary. The dictionary said that to obey means, to “be guided by (to obey one’s conscience), to carry out the orders of, and to be obedient. God is ordering me to obey him because he is our Father. He wants me to be obedient as His child and also because I am a child to my parents. I want to listen to him because he said “children”, and I am a child. The verse also tells me that to obey Him is right. If God says something is right, it is the truth. He will not tell me a lie because he can’t. When I was studying with my mom, we found another verse in the Bible that says the same thing as Ephesians 6:1. It is found in Colossians 3:20. It says, “Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.” If God said it twice in the Bible, it must be very important, and something I need to obey.

I like that the Bible said something only to children. I know that he is saying something special just for me and other kids like me. Because he said for me to obey my parents twice in the Bible, I really, really, really want to obey Him. I hope that other kids will want to obey Him too.

¹ Butler, Trent C. Editor. Entry for ‘Discipline’. Holman Bible Dictionary. <http://www.studydrive.org/dictionaries/hbd/d/discipline.html>. 1991.

² Parent discipline and the child’s moral development. HOFFMAN, MARTIN L.; SALTZSTEIN, HERBERT D. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Vol. 5(1), Jan 1967, 45-57. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/h0024189>

Getting to Know

Getting to Know – Candy Bennett By: Carol Tisdale

Our lovely sister in Christ, Candy Bennett, was born in Oklahoma City to her 16 yr. old biological mother, but was adopted by her maternal grandparents when she was 2-1/2.

Candy met LeVan Bennett in 2000 while working night shift in direct care at the Austin State School. Van was working on units that had unruly residents and one night he was assigned to one of the areas of the school where he met Candy. Because she rode the bus to and from work, Van began offering her rides to and from work. They married August 12, 2002 and their precious Stella was born in 2006! When Candy discovered she was pregnant she was already 5 months along and the birth of Stella was going to fall very close to her birthday – she considered it a birthday gift from God!

When Van invited Candy to go to Bible Study with him she did so and the second time she attended, she realized the “true” reason for baptism and so she followed through and was baptized for what was the right reason!

Regarding parenting, just as every other new Mom discovers, the greatest challenge for Candy was finding the time to sleep!! Stella is her only child and Candy finds that perhaps having the one child makes it easier to notice or to “catch” things early that may be going on with her child.

Working mostly full time as a Home Health Aide, Candy also homeschools Stella. Homeschooling actually helps to balance home life and work life because Stella is able to be more flexible about when she does her school work, as it can be done on the weekend or later in the day.

God’s Word has helped Candy learn that as a parent, being stern but also patient is an important factor in the raising of a child.

We asked Candy what qualities she would most like to see the women of our congregation exhibit so as to be examples to her Stella as she grows up in the church at this location. She said she would like us to show “love and respect to all others, holding to our word even if there is a wait and following through on our responsibilities”.

Want to guess what Candy’s dream vacation destination would be? Australia!!

Upcoming Events

March 26-29 - Homecoming Lectures at Dripping Springs church of Christ

April 29 - Ladies Day with Erynn Sprouse at Colleyville church of Christ

May 6-11 - Focal Point (A Preacher’s Workshop) at University church of Christ in San Marcos

About *The Upright Woman*

The Upright Woman publication is intended to educate, promote, and encourage the women of the church to strive for righteousness in every aspect of life. It is the mission of this publication to provide women an opportunity to study the word and share articles about various issues and topics to encourage us to be upright women in an upside down world.

“For the Lord is righteous; he loves righteous deeds; the upright shall behold his face.” Psalm 11:7

We pray that with every issue and in every article all glory is given to God.