

GOD'S REVIVALIST

September 2023

and Bible Advocate



PART FOUR

Discipleship Series

Discipleship in the Home



thinking out loud

WHIPPING KENNY

I heard the fingers snapping. The misbehavior of me and my best bud, Kenny Sexton, had caught the attention of Betty Farmer, my mother, the enforcer of proper church decorum. She held her index finger up and then softly patted her hands together. This was parental code for “one more time and you will get a spanking.” Quite frequently, church services were inextricably followed by the well-established ritual of “go home, whip Kenny, and set the dinner table,” a pattern firmly fixed in the family agenda. There were ample occasions for non-church-related whippings, too. It wasn’t that I was mean—just mischievous and rambunctious. A deadly duo!

My mother most frequently stepped forward for the disciplinary task—a fast whip-and-go. It sometimes involved a flyswatter for minor malefactions. At other times, I was forced to go outside to “get a switch” from the backyard tree for her use. However, for more egregious misbehaviors, I would sometimes hear, “When your father gets home, you are going to get a whipping.” That was a different story!

Elmer Farmer almost exclusively used his belt for the disciplinary action; and although he whipped harder than Mother, what I dreaded most was “the talk” which often accompanied the punishment. I can replay those in my head even today: “Son, you know how much I love you. I really hate to have to whip you. I just want you to grow up to be a good boy. This hurts me more than it does you.” I was disgusted with myself for making my father and mother feel so bad. In those moments, I would resolve to be a better boy, and I succeeded—for a while.

Frankly, I am thankful for the whippings. They functioned as guardrails to keep me from more serious problems and laid the foundation for good character development. However, the most impactful part of the disciplinary process was the loving manner in which it was administered. Betty and Elmer disciplined me because I was their son, and they dearly loved me. It was part of their method to help me grow up to be a good boy. It worked!

I am reminded of Hebrews 12:6-7: “For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?” —KF ■

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God’s Revivalist and Bible Advocate (ISSN 0745-0788) is published monthly except for combined issues in January-February and June-July-August for **\$12.00 per year (\$28.00, Canada; \$60.00, other countries)** by the Revivalist Press of God’s Bible School, College and Missionary Training Home, 1810 Young Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202. Periodical postage paid at Cincinnati, Ohio, and at additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER: send address changes to God’s Revivalist and Bible Advocate, 1810 Young Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202.**

God’s Revivalist and Bible Advocate, the official organ of God’s Bible School, is a magazine founded by Martin Wells Knapp in July of 1888. We seek to proclaim the good news of salvation; to stir a revival spirit among Christians; to stimulate Christian growth and responsible Christian living; to present the happenings and interests of God’s Bible School.

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COVER PHOTO: Phillip Mills and his three sons.

the president's page



THE SECRET OF HOLY LIVING

by Dr. Rodney S. Loper, President

Chapters 9–11 form a break in Paul’s letter to the Romans. The focus of these chapters is salvation as it relates to the Jews: they can be saved, like everyone else, by calling on the name of the Lord.

In Chapter 12, Paul returns to the main idea of his letter. He has spent considerable time telling us how we are saved, what we are saved from, and what salvation has done for us. In this last section of the book, Paul’s focus shifts to holy living.

In our circles, there is a lot of talk, sermons, and lessons on holy living. To be honest, I receive more questions on this topic than on any other. It seems that the more we deal with this fundamental aspect of our theology, the muddier the water becomes. Make no mistake, it isn’t muddy because of the doctrine itself—but rather because of our presentation of it. In our quest to highlight the need for holy living, we have at times stumbled into at least three ditches.

First, we preach it so high that no one can live it. How many souls are grappling with extra-Scriptural aspirations because it was preached so high? If entire sanctification did what some folks claim it does, we wouldn’t have any disagreements—no variant opinions—and we all would be as sweet as honey all the time. This view leaves no room for our humanness. I am not excusing carnality here—just reminding us that we “have this treasure in earthen vessels.”

Second, we water salvation down to where it does nothing! I assume the attempt to make less of salvation is to make “space” for the doctrine of entire sanctification. Friends, you get out of the sin

business at conversion—"Old things pass away." We are "new creatures in Christ Jesus." Any doctrine that makes excuses for sin in your life, or makes the atonement of Christ unnecessary for present-tense living, is damning.

Third, we preach a doctrine that has no power to purify. If the doctrine of entire sanctification doesn't result in purity in your life, you are missing its purpose.

Yes, I am afraid that at times we have muddled the water in our presentation of this glorious doctrine. But to complicate matters further, not only is our presentation misguided at times, but our actions, activities, and attitudes also often don't seem to align. Our *walk* does not line up with our *talk*. As a result, many sincere, rational, and objective people conclude that we who promote holy living lack this central doctrine in practice. Pause for a moment and think about how many decisions seem to be made from a self-centered perspective. We can't agree on some minor theological matter, so we splinter and split. We start our own church, our own organization, our own event—and do it the way we want to do it.

We know about sacrifices in Bible times. The animal was put to death, its blood was shed, and its flesh was burned on the altar. The process of offering ourselves as LIVING sacrifices, on the other hand, involves relinquishing control over our own lives and placing that control into the hands of God.

So, what can we do? Should we walk away from the doctrine? Should we quit preaching? Should we quit trying to promote events and organizations who don't agree with us? I want to be crystal clear here.... This doesn't mean we throw the baby out with the bathwater; this doesn't mean that we toss out everything associated with the doctrine because of the stupidity of some! Rather, our response should be, "I, by the grace and help of God, will not contribute to this hypocritical kind of living. I, by the grace of God, will show folks through my daily living that there is something to this doctrine."

The prescription to holy, consecrated living can be found in the opening verses of Romans 12. The first two verses give us some insight into an area of our walk with God that we must never overlook. These two verses tell us the secret of holy living.

Notice in the first verse that there is a **CHANGE OF LIVING**. Paul begins this passage by urging the Christians in Rome to follow the teaching he is unfolding for

them. This isn't some optional "take-it-or-leave-it" proposition. It is an imperative for them to follow. He challenges them to "present your bodies." In other words, place your life at God's disposal. Everything you are, everything you have, is placed in His hands. You totally surrender to God. Far too many people want to be saved in order to be "delivered from the wrath to come." However, when it comes to surrendering all to God, they hold back. They somehow believe that God is going to mess up their life if they place everything in His hands. From a purely human perspective, it is not natural to give up your wants, dreams, plans, and ambitions—but it is necessary!

Scripture doesn't leave us hanging. It provides a reason why every believer should be willing to make this consecration to God. Why should we do it? Because of His mercies! This phrase carries us back to what the Apostle Paul has been talking about in Romans: because we have been redeemed by God, we belong to Him! May we never forget that we were headed to Hell when He found us. We didn't care a thing about God, but He loved us. He died to save us. He convicted us and called us. The realization of all these mercies He has shown us leads us to the only appropriate conclusion—We owe Him everything!

What kind of consecration are we to make to God? We are to **OFFER OURSELVES AS A LIVING SACRIFICE**. This sounds dreadfully painful to us because we know about sacrifices in Bible times. The sacrificial animal belonged to the person offering it. The animal was put to death, its blood was shed, and its flesh was burned on an altar. The process of offering ourselves as *living* sacrifices, on the other hand, involves relinquishing control over our own lives and placing that control into the hands of God. That sacrifice, made in a moment of time, must continue daily in the "now." Yes, the sacrifice the Lord is commanding each of us to make is costly, painful, difficult, and personal, but it is necessary!

Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, concludes the first verse by telling us that the yielding of our bodies to the Lord is our **REASONABLE SERVICE**. A closer look shows that the word "reasonable" comes from the same word from which we get our word "logic." The word "service" comes from a word that means "to perform sacred service" and is connected to the idea of worship. Therefore, Paul is saying that this consecration we make by presenting our bodies as a living sacrifice is an act of worship before the Lord. Your worship is in your surrender—not in your singing, listening to sermons, or attending Sunday school. Totally yielding to Him is the highest form of worship that we can render!

There is much more to unpack, so we will continue with this in the next issue. Blessings until then! ■

The Disciple-Making Home

by Nathan Brown



My mom can still remember the evening she realized the importance of family discipleship. It was the mid-1950s in Pasadena, California, and her parents had invited some of their college friends over for a visit. These friends had recently returned from a missionary tour in the Far East and had many fascinating stories to share. While the adults talked, my mom, who was ten years old at the time, sat in one of those large, canopied yard swings and chatted with the missionaries' daughter Mona. As they talked, Mona began to entertain my mom with stories of her own, only they weren't about witnessing or working in children's services. They were about her escapades with other missionary kids. She told of lying to her parents to attend parties and of wild car rides through the streets while sitting on some boy's lap.

My mom was shocked. How could the daughter of such godly missionaries be doing these kind of things? Now whether Mona spiced up her stories for my mom's benefit, I don't know, but from that moment, my mom determined she would do all she could to make sure her own children would never end up like Mona. She determined that she would disciple her children.

The Great Commission and Family Discipleship

Many people think of the Great Commission as a call to world evangelism. And indeed it is, for Jesus said, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19a). That's why we send missionaries to foreign countries, and we send workers to large cities for inner city ministries. But if we're not careful, we can overlook another very important mission field—the home. The Great Commission is a call to make disciples of our families. As parents, we have the responsibility to do all we can to raise our children to be devoted followers of Jesus.

But isn't discipleship something that's done by pastors and church leaders? Isn't that why we take our kids to church and send them to Christian schools? While it's true that churches and Christian schools play an important part in forming disciples, the home is the true center of discipleship. One of the reasons we're losing our children to the world is because we've taken a passive role and expected the church and the school to disciple our children.

I'll never forget the time an elderly evangelist told my dad about the heartache of watching his children drift away from God. He looked at my dad and said, "I just expected my kids would follow God the same way I did. I always wanted to do right, and I just assumed my children would be the same." Friends, we cannot sit back and assume that our children will turn out like we did. We must take action—we must disciple our families!

What the Bible Says About Discipleship in the Home

The Bible makes it clear that discipleship begins in the home. We see this all the way back in Deuteronomy when God said, *"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise"* (Deut. 6:5–7).

I want us to notice two important points here. First, before God commands us to teach our children, He reminds us of the need we have to love Him and to carry His Word in our hearts. Why? Because it's impossible to pass on something we do not possess. Example has always been and will always be the most powerful teacher. Second, the responsibility to teach and talk about God's Word is given to parents. Other believers provide supplementary support, but the primary obligation is on fathers and mothers.

The New Testament echoes this imperative: *"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother' (this is the first commandment with a promise), 'that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.' Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord"* (Eph. 6:4). Obedience to authority is fundamental to family discipleship. If children won't obey their parents, whom they can see, how will they obey God, whom they cannot see?

A good example of family discipleship in the New Testament is Eunice and Timothy. Paul said, *"I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well.... But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus"* (2 Tim. 1:5; 3:14–15). Timothy is an example of how a mother and grandmother (Timothy's father is not mentioned) can pass on the faith to the next generation.

The Bible makes it clear that discipleship begins in the home, with parents recognizing that their children come into the world as sinners and need to be evangelized; and once they're saved, they need to be trained in righteousness and godliness. This is so important! The future of our churches depends on it! Scripture tells us that discipleship in the home is a prerequisite for ministry in the church.

Discipleship in the home begins, first and foremost, with our personal example. The most important thing parents can do to disciple their children is to be disciples themselves.



Paul told Timothy, *"If anyone aspires to the office of overseer [episkopes], he desires a noble task. Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?"* (1 Tim. 3:1–5).

Paul also told Titus, *“This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders [presbyters] in every town as I directed you—if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination”* (Titus 1:5–6).

Successful discipleship in the home qualifies believers for ministry in the church. This means that each man must be the small group leader of his home! Lest we think that only pastors and elders are subject to this requirement,



Paul makes it clear that church ministers and workers are also in view: *“Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well”* (1 Tim. 3:12).

Recently, someone told me the story of a man who went to the mission field in another country and left his children behind in an orphanage. Can you imagine? Friends, it is not God’s will for us to sacrifice our children on the altar of ministry! “But,” someone may say, “I’ve

got a call!” Praise God, I’m glad for the call of God on your life. However, the call to the mission field is also the call to the mission field of your home. The call to evangelize is the call to evangelize your children. The call to preach is the call to share the gospel with your kids. The call to pastor is the call to pastor your own little church at home. The call to ministry is the call to minister first to your own family. Friends, we dare not neglect our children; we dare not fail to shepherd our own flock, for if we do, the Holy Spirit tells us—we will undermine our ability to shepherd the flock of God!

What Discipleship Looks Like in the Home

I believe all of us want our children to grow up to be godly men and women, and I think we’re all trying to make this happen. But it isn’t easy, and none of us can make our children serve God. So as we look at this question, I want to acknowledge that I’m still learning and growing in this area. I make mistakes, and there are times I have to apologize and ask forgiveness. So I present the ideas below as a fellow laborer in the home field, and I hope they can be of value in the common goal of family discipleship.

DISCIPLESHIP IN THE HOME BEGINS, FIRST AND FOREMOST, WITH OUR PERSONAL EXAMPLE.

The most important thing parents can do to disciple their children is to be disciples themselves. Why? Because we learn primarily by observation and imitation. This means the example parents set is the first and greatest teacher.

Remember Deuteronomy 6:4-8? Before God commanded parents to teach their children, He focused first on the affections of the parents. Why? Because it’s impossible to pass on something we don’t possess. The first duty of family discipleship actually has nothing to do with our children at all: *“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart”* (Deut. 6:5-6).

Now, obviously, this covers the basics of personal discipleship, which we’ve discussed in earlier articles, but your kids are also watching your entire life:

- How you interact with authorities.
- How you talk about people with whom you disagree.
- How you answer all the “Why?” questions.
- How you react while driving.
- Your attitude about church attendance.
- Your love of God’s Word and prayer.
- Your comments about current events.
- How you entertain yourself—what you watch, listen to, and read.
- What you do to relax.

So, the number one principle is—be a good example. This is the hardest part of family discipleship, and since

all of us will make mistakes, be willing and ready to admit when you're wrong, ask your kids to forgive you, and then keep going onward and upward.

DISCIPLESHIP IN THE HOME CONTINUES WITH LOVING LEADERSHIP. FOR MEN, THIS MEANS:

Personal integrity and wise management. The Holy Spirit, through the Apostle Paul, gave us qualifications for leadership in the church (1 Tim. 3:1–13; Titus 1:5–9). These qualifications are a template for what men should strive for in their personal lives and in their homes. Since managing the home well is a prerequisite for serving in the church, every man should be working each day to be faithful in these areas.

Loving their wives. Paul said, “Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her” (Eph. 5:25). Peter said, “Husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered” (1 Pet. 3:7). The bar is set high indeed, for the example we have to follow is Christ’s sacrificial love for the church! Men, we need to love our wives in this way, not just because it’s the right thing to do, but also because our children are watching. We are showing them what it

means to be men when we obey these commands. Being a man is not about the macho things by which the world is enamored—it’s not about being able to hold your liquor and drive the big truck and have the biggest gun. If you want to know what it means to be a man, look at the life of Jesus! One of the most manly things we’ll ever do is to love our wives well.

Providing for their families. Paul said, “For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone’s bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you” (2 Thess. 3:7–8; cf. 1 Tim. 5:8; Col. 3:23–24). Paul left us an example of hard work and diligence, and we should follow in his steps.

Actively training their children. Paul said, “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4). We’re going to explore this in more detail in just a moment, but remember this is a call to men.

DISCIPLESHIP IN THE HOME CONTINUES WITH RESPECTFUL OBEDIENCE. FOR WOMEN, THIS MEANS:

Being their husband’s helper. When God created Eve, he said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him” (Gen. 2:18–24; cf. 1 Cor. 11:8–9). Wives, before saying



Lyle and Michelle Witt Family, 2014

yes to some request or pursuing some endeavor, ask yourselves, “Does this help my husband?” This simple question will keep you focused on this fundamental role.

Submitting to and respecting their husbands. Paul said, “Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands” (Eph. 5:22–24; cf. 1 Pet. 3:1–6). When a wife is disrespectful and defiant to her husband, the children notice. They, in turn, often imitate her example by acting out against authority. Wives have the unique opportunity to display for their children submission to authority by submitting to their husbands, and this often sets the tone for the children’s ability to obey God for the rest of their lives.

Loving their children. Now we may think that this goes without saying—after all, don’t mothers have a natural desire to care for their children? Well, yes, they do. But then why does Paul say, “Older women likewise are to...train the young women to love their husbands and children” (Titus 2:3–5)? Paul says this because true love always does what is best for the child, and that often means reproof and rebuke. We really find out what it means to love someone when we are forced to rebuke and correct that person. That is hard to do! Many times women find themselves pampering, spoiling, or pacifying their children rather than truly loving them.

Being self-controlled, pure, working at home, and kind (Titus 2:5). While it is the man’s responsibility to be the provider of the home, it is the woman’s responsibility to be the caretaker of the home (Titus 2:3–5; 1 Tim. 5:14).

DISCIPLESHIP IN THE HOME CONTINUES WITH PROPER PRIORITIES. HERE IS THE PROPER ORDER OF PRECEDENCE THAT SHOULD GOVERN OUR LIVES:

God. Our relationship with God is our top priority. Our decisions should be made with this question in mind—“Is this in harmony with God’s will and His place of supremacy in my life?”

Spouse. Putting God first will enable us to be the spouse God wants us to be. The most important needs of husbands and wives are the affection and companionship of spouses who are totally committed to loving God with all their heart. We can’t succeed as a spouse if our relationship with God is marred by sin.

Children. Putting our spouses before our children will enable us to be the parents God wants us to be. The most important need of a child is the environment of a healthy, loving husband-wife relationship in the home. We can’t succeed as parents if we’re neglecting the needs of our spouses or if we’re undermining each other’s role in the family.

Church. The needs of the family take precedence over the needs of the church. Remember—each family IS a church! So what you’re doing here is prioritizing the needs of your “little” church for the eternal benefit of the larger, universal Church. All too often people allow their

ministries to take priority over their families. Eventually the problems created by this in the home will undermine one’s ability to minister in the church. Note that this is not an excuse to neglect or ignore the needs of our local churches! We should do our best to make sure that family interests and activities don’t keep us from attending church and edifying the body of Christ.

Job. While our jobs are essential in providing for our families, they should never prevent us from obeying God’s command to meet together regularly with other believers (Heb. 10:25). All of us are an essential part of the body of Christ, and we need each other in order to be successful disciples of Jesus.

Think about how this priority structure will guide our decision making:

- It will prompt us to find a job that allows us to attend church on a regular basis.
- It will make sure that we don’t let the time spent with our children crowd out the time we spend with our spouse (e.g., Charity and I go on a date every week, and this helps us have the marriage we need).
- It will ensure that we don’t spend more time ministering to others than we do to our own families.
- It will remind us that our job should never take priority over our spouses and children.

DISCIPLESHIP IN THE HOME CONTINUES WITH PROACTIVE TRAINING. FOR PARENTS, THIS MEANS:

Teaching their children to obey. At very early ages, children can be taught the meaning of the word “No.” Be proactive about this, and set up training sessions. When our daughter Kathryn was about eight or nine months old (this can vary depending on the child), we would put a shiny toy within reach, and then tell her in a calm voice, “No,” when she started to grab it. If she grabbed it anyway, we gave her hand a little swat and simultaneously said, “No.” The swat was hard enough to make her consider the relationship between the toy, her desire, the command “No,” and a little reinforcing discomfort. It took some time, but we were consistent, and Kathryn learned to obey.

You can use this same approach for the positive commands of “Give” or “Come.” Set a child down on one side of the room and say “Come.” Give lots of praise when the child makes his/her way to you. Spend a week or two focusing on practicing these two commands, and you will be amazed at how quickly your children can be trained.

Treating a rotten attitude as the rebellion that it is. Outward compliance that conceals inward resentment must never be tolerated. This gets harder to detect as our children get older, so we need to be vigilant about this when they are young. If children obey but stick out their lips at the same time, treat it like disobedience. Sulking,

pouting, whining, complaining, begging, and such should be dealt with promptly and firmly. If we're consistent, we can avoid many of the dreaded temper tantrums that parents are forced to handle. As your children get older, teach them this definition of obedience: "Doing what I'm told, when I'm told, with a good attitude." If any of those pieces is missing, it's disobedience.

DISCIPLESHIP IN THE HOME CONTINUES WITH CONSISTENT DISCIPLINE. LOVING AND CONSISTENT DISCIPLINE IS IMPORTANT FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS:

It deals with the root problem in our children's hearts. "Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline drives it far from him" (Prov. 22:15). When we look at our children, what do we see? We see their bright, inquisitive faces, so full of life and curiosity about the world. We see how cute they are, how adorable they are. But do we see the sinful nature that is lurking there? Do we see the folly that is bound up in their hearts? Do we see their determination to have their own way, whatever the cost, and the rebellion that is just under the surface? Most of us don't. In addition to enjoying the delightfulness of our children, God also wants us to see their "other side," for all come into this world as fools and sinners. We need to learn to see our children from God's perspective!

What does it mean that folly is in our children's hearts? It means that children do NOT know what is best for them. It means that children do NOT know how to choose wisely. We should never leave decisions concerning work, entertainment, education, health, etc., solely up to them. We are the parents; we are the adults! We should be making the right choices for them, even if those choices are not to our children's liking. Remember this: your children's immediate happiness is NOT the guiding principle for parenting! God's Word and their eternal welfare is. Solomon said, "The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother" (Prov 29:15). If you leave the garden of your child's heart untended, it will grow weeds, not roses.

It is the essential ingredient in loving our children. "Whoever spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him" (Prov. 13:24). Solomon equated love with "discipline," and hate with "sparing the rod." By this definition, many parents hate their children. What a sobering thought! Now understand, this is not talking about the feeling of hate; it's talking about an action of hate. You can feel affection for your kids, you can feel all kinds of warm fuzzy feelings about them, and yet be hating them!

When we think about this proverb, it should remind us of Eli and his sons. He scolded his sons, but he did not discipline them or remove them from service. "What is this that I hear, my sons?" (cf. 1 Sam. 2:22–36). If we coddle our children and excuse their sin, we are setting the stage for their destruction.

Now, I want you to notice that one word keeps popping up: the rod. Proverbs emphasizes the need for physical discipline (it's not just a metaphor, it really means physical discipline), so let me give you a few tips on using the rod:

- The earlier it's used, the less it's needed.
- The more consistently it's used, the more effective it is.
- It teaches best when used in private (in our day this is important).
- It should always be accompanied with words of reproof (take time, don't just react).
- Its presence paves the way for other forms of discipline.
- When used properly, it will make our children feel loved and, in turn, they will love us.

It prepares our children for the gospel. "Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you strike him with a rod, he will not die. If you strike him with the rod, you will save his soul from [death]" (Prov. 23:13–14). Long before our children can understand words like "depravity" and "flesh" and "sin," the pain of discipline is showing them they have a problem. I'll never forget when my child, who was on his way to another painful session with the rod of discipline, asked me, "Why do I keep doing this?" Why indeed! What a great question! That gave me the chance to tell him about the true condition of his heart.

DISCIPLESHIP IN THE HOME CONTINUES WITH SPIRIT-LED EVANGELISM. HERE ARE THREE THINGS WE CAN DO TO EVANGELIZE OUR CHILDREN:

Share our testimony. Do your children know the story of how you were saved? I hope so! As soon as they are able to understand, we should be telling our kids how we came to Christ. If you were saved from an adult life of sin, don't give details and make sure never to glorify or glamorize the things you used to do. Explain the scars those sins left on your life and impress on your children that they must not make the same mistakes. If you were saved as a child, all the better! You can use that to encourage your children to follow your example.

Model repentance. If (or perhaps I should say *when*) we ever treat our children unkindly or harshly, make sure to say, "I was wrong. What I did was sinful and I apologize. Will you forgive me?" Be specific; call it sin! This gives them an example of sincere repentance which they can one day use as a model for their own repentance. We can also relate other times of failure and tell our children how we asked God to forgive us (do this in moderation and with discretion). This reinforces the principle that sin must be confessed and forsaken.

Be prepared. If your daughter came to you right now and asked you to help her pray for forgiveness, are you ready to lead her in prayer? If so, wonderful! If not, let me give you a suggested prayer for kids: "God, I know that I've done bad things. I'm sorry for doing wrong. I believe that

Jesus is Your Son. I believe that He died for me and that He came back to life so that I could live in Him. I ask you to forgive me and come into my heart. Thank you for saving me. In Jesus name, Amen.” We should expect our children to serve God, and we should let them know that we expect this. Don’t tell them they’re saved if they’re really not, and don’t coerce them, but make sure they understand that serving God is the greatest thing in the world, and that it’s the smartest decision they’ll ever make.

DISCIPLESHIP IN THE HOME CONTINUES WITH THOUGHTFUL INSTRUCTION. THIS INVOLVES THREE MAIN ACTIVITIES:

Lead. Encourage each member of your family to practice personal discipleship. The husband should

lead by example, and the wife and children should follow the husband’s leadership. When an entire family is engaged in personal discipleship, the results are amazing. The Bible reading and prayer system on the website (comeafterme.com) is perfect for this.

Fellowship. Take time each day to discuss what God said in the daily reading. You can use the “Think” section of the Bible page to do this. Share ideas and personal applications. Help your family develop the habit of discussing their relationship with God: what they’re learning, how they’re growing, what God has been saying to them, etc. This will prepare them to discuss spiritual things with people outside your family.


Teach. Schedule a time each week or month when your family gets together for a discipleship lesson. Make the occasion special, something your family will look forward to during the week. Pick a lesson from the website (see the “Lessons” menu), and go over the material. Encourage questions and discussion. If you do this consistently, you’ll be preparing your children to disciple their children.

Conclusion

I began this section by noting that all of us want our children to grow up to be godly men and women, and that we want to do the best we can to make this happen. I’d like to conclude with this reminder: “*Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain*” (Psa. 127:1). All our good intentions and best efforts will come to nothing without God’s help and blessing. This keeps us both humble and prayerful, for only with His guidance and direction can we succeed in having a disciple-making home. How appropriate that this verse begins a psalm that goes on to say: “*Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward*” (Psa. 127:3). We parents cherish that gift from God with a grateful heart as we personally follow Christ, strive for proper priorities, and diligently instruct the “new converts” in our homes in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. ■

Nathan Brown is a senior engineer for Southern Company Services, Director of Discipleship for the Bible Methodist Connection of Churches, and founder of ComeAfterMe.com (a discipleship website). He, his wife Charity, and two children live in Trussville, AL. All Scripture quotations are ESV.





thoughts on the “IDEAL” FAMILY

by Ken Farmer

One of the perks of being the managing editor of *God's Revivalist* is that I get to read everything in advance. I have been enjoying the much-needed information in the current series on “discipleship”—a treasure trove of helpful material. I read with interest this month's lead article, “The Disciple-Making Home, p.5.” When Timothy's family structure was discussed (2 Tim. 1:5; 3:14-15), it got me thinking.

THE “IDEAL” FAMILY STRUCTURE

Let's go back to the time of Edenic Perfection. God, who had just finished creating the land animals, turned to the “crown of creation”—mankind, superior to all other life forms because God made them in His very image. Adam was the first to be created. He was placed in the garden and was given the responsibility “to work it and keep it” (Gen. 2:15b). Everything seemed to be ideal...or was it?

God also gave Adam the task of naming all the animals. As they paraded before him, no doubt the fact that they were in pairs made an impression on Adam. Realization set in that he did not have a “helper fit for him” (Gen. 2:20b). Had God made a mistake? No! God had a plan. From the beginning, when the Triune God

said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness” (Gen. 1:26), He continued, saying, “And let THEM [emphasis mine] have dominion....” Wait! Them? Yes, God's plan for creating mankind was still in progress. The forming of Eve from the rib of Adam would bring the “THEM” to fruition—“male AND female created he them” (Gen. 1:27c; emphasis mine). Time spent tending the garden and followed by the animal-naming exercise could be seen as God's way of preparing Adam to see that he indeed needed a helper.

Eve was made “for the man” for that very purpose. Philip Brown commented on the meaning of “for” in the previous issue of *God's Revivalist*:

It is “for” in the sense of purpose, design, and as a complement to. Here's where the Genesis 1-2 background comes in. Man was designed to image God, to have dominion over the earth, and to multiply and fill it (Gen. 1:28). But by himself man was

insufficient (Gen. 2:18). He could not fulfill his purpose alone. He needed a helper who would correspond to him and complement him (Gen. 2:19-20). So, God created woman “for” man to complete His image, to complement man’s design, and to cooperate with him in caring for creation. (“Dear Phil,” *God’s Revivalist*, June, July, August 2023, p.20)

What can we take from this? Mankind was created to be a TEAM—a husband and wife working TOGETHER to fulfill their God-given purpose. That is the ideal!

THE “IDEAL” ROLES OF HUSBAND AND WIFE

While Timothy’s family structure may not have been “ideal,” it is presented as an example of how discipleship successfully takes place in the home, without mentioning the presence or absence of his father.

I think we can agree that a family with both a father and a mother actively involved in discipling the children is ideal. However, the father and/or the mother may not be available due to various circumstances, including death and divorce. Timothy’s reality suggests that in less-than-ideal situations, others can step up by filling roles and functions to achieve the goals of discipleship in the home. The remaining parent, family members, close friends, and even the local church and related parachurch ministries can all make a positive contribution. Notice that Timothy’s mother and grandmother were evidently successful in discipling Timothy (2 Tim 1:5; 3:14-15). One could say that their LESS-THAN-IDEAL family situation was made IDEAL given the exigencies of their reality.

The argument can be made that although this issue’s lead article (“The Disciple-Making Home”) represents legitimate Bible exegesis and is an excellent outline of how this works out in IDEAL situations, not everyone lives in the ideal. With Timothy, apparently raised without a father, this would have necessitated a redistribution of the responsibilities for the father and mother to the mother and the grandmother. This reallocation of responsibilities was IDEAL for their reality.

There is also the question of whether the elements of the portfolio of responsibilities are kept in discrete and separate “boxes” with respect to the mother and father. While it is great for the father to exercise “loving leadership in the home,” surely mothers share in that responsibility. Similarly, wives should give “respective obedience” to their husbands, but husbands should also give “respective consideration” to the viewpoint of the wife. They should strive for harmony as they BOTH “actively train their children,” and they should be “helpers” together in effecting this process.

Another question is whether or not portfolios of responsibility can change due to the unique individual

skill sets of the husband and wife. We all have ideas of what is “normal” and “ideal.” Does the one with the best grasp of business and finances handle the family checking account and the payment of bills? In many homes that is regarded as the job of the husband. But what if that is an area of weakness for him? His wife—his helper—can step in. In fact, both husbands and wives should actively look for ways to help their spouses. Together they manage the affairs of the family.

Finally, portfolios of responsibility in reality can simply be snapshots of cultural norms at a particular time. Our cultural background and family upbringing influence what we think of as IDEAL. Consider the biblical description of what the “virtuous woman” (Proverbs 31) did in fulfilling her role: Rising before dawn to get food for the household; buying and selling property; spinning fabric; making clothes for the family; selling fabric and clothing to others. She had a lot on her plate! Notice how some aspects of the much longer list (Prov. 31:10-31) seem to be more appropriate for husbands today. Changes within cultural norms do indeed have their effect.

This is not an argument for just “going with the flow.” Not all cultural changes are equally valid. Some changes are evil—obvious assaults on God’s order and plans. Just think of how “gender as a choice” has become the main battlefield for today’s culture wars. The demonic fingerprints are apparent. Neither am I arguing for being content with less-than-ideal aspects of our lives. While some circumstances may be fixed, God expects us to be committed to making the changes that lead to becoming a better Christian and a better spouse, parent, and friend.

CONCLUSION

We do live in a fallen world, and each person is a unique individual. That uniqueness becomes evident in personality development and is accentuated through the processes of socialization. The result is that there are areas in our lives that are “less than IDEAL.” This is part of the reality of the world in which we live. But God can take these broken realities and meld them into what is IDEAL within the REAL.

God works with imperfect families made up of people who are willing to develop and grow! He meets husbands and wives where they are and helps them become the best team they can be in managing the affairs of the house and raising and discipling their children.

Ask God to help you be the best team member you can be so that you can achieve what is IDEAL for you! ■

Dr. Ken Farmer (BRE ’74) has been the managing editor of *God’s Revivalist* since 2013. Prior to that he served for 31 years as a Bible college professor and chief academic officer. He and his wife Paula (BA ’72) live in Cincinnati, OH.



Miller, Jessica Smith, and Michelle Probst) in an evening concert featuring classical and sacred works for piano in both solo and collaborative settings.

The 28 campers benefited from daily instruction in general music classes (theory and Solfège,



piano literature, performance), music exploration courses (Classical Piano Meets Church, Muse on Art, Intro to Orff, Intro to Drama, Organ for Pianists), as well as daily private and collaborative lessons in traditional and hymn-based literature with assigned instructors.

Evening activities, led by the HPI Social Team Lead, Eli Albring, and assisted by Breanna Loper and Derek Derscheid, included flag challenges, minefield and color wars,

2023 HILLTOP PIANO INSTITUTE

The annual GBS Hilltop Piano Institute (HPI), a 5-day summer piano camp for pre-college students, always scheduled the week of Memorial Day, was held May 29 to June 2.

The opening evening showcased the camp faculty (Jana Pop, Timothy Crater, Michael DeStefano, Martha



REVIVALIST FAMILY

On these pages, we feature items about GBS alumni, significant events scheduled throughout the "Revivalist Family," and brief news notes from across the Holiness Movement.

BIRTH

To **Kimberlee (Russell) (BA '13) and Anthony Wilson (2009-10)**, a son, **Paul "Adrian,"** born March 24, 2023, at Grandview Medical Center, Birmingham, AL.



Kimberlee taught elementary education and music education at the Bible Methodist Christian School, Pell City, AL, for seven years before becoming a full-time piano teacher for three years. She is currently a stay-at-home mom. Anthony works as a welder and fabricator at Woodland Parts and Services, Talladega, AL, and assists with youth ministries at Golden Grove Bible Methodist Church, Eden, AL. After their marriage on September 25, 2021, the Wilsons moved to Talladega, AL, where they currently live.

DEATHS



Evelyn (Cochran) Phillips, 98, of Horton, MI, went home to be with her Lord on March 20, 2023. She was born on March 23, 1924, in Jackson, MI, to Mack and Ottie (Dawson) Cochran. Evelyn began her career teaching kindergarten at the One Room School House, Northwest District (Grand Rapids, MI), and went on to teach kindergarten and 4th Grade at Flora List School, Jackson County, as well as Bird Lake School, Hillsdale County. A passionate reader and a lover of books, Evelyn started Bible Heritage School and Faith Holiness School and taught Sunday school for many years. She was a GBS donor and a *God's Revivalist* subscriber.

Evelyn is survived by her daughter, Sylvia Foster; three grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren. A funeral service was held at the Hampton Funeral Home in Jackson. Interment followed at the Spring Arbor Cemetery.

nerf battles, water wars, capture the flag, and an outing to beautiful Eden Park. The ten sponsors enjoyed outings to Carabello Coffee Company and Smale Park/Roebling Bridge.

Both campers and sponsors benefited from lodging in the dormitories and meals beautifully prepared by Katrina Rehfeldt and her team in the cafeteria. The finale of the week was the Friday student recital, where campers performed both solo and collaborative selections in a casual and supportive environment. The success of HPI was demonstrated through a great balance of learning, fun, and reflecting on God's goodness.

Campers came mostly as strangers and left as lasting friends. A camper stated, "So glad I was able to go to Hilltop Piano Institute last week! I met so many new people, made friends, and learned so much! I had a blast and hope to go again next year!" A sponsor (parent) said that

she and her daughter could not stop talking about camp the whole way home to Indiana, and they couldn't wait to come back next year. "It was such a great balance of learning and fun!" God has truly blessed this opportunity, and we are all jointly excited about years to come!

—Dr. Jana Pop, chair, music division

GBS AGAIN NAMED CINCINNATI TOP WORKPLACE

GBS has once again been awarded by Enquirer Media Top Workplaces. The list is based solely on employee feedback gathered through a third-party survey administered by employee engagement technology partner Energage LLC. The survey uniquely measures 15 culture drivers that are critical to the success of any organization, including alignment, execution, and connection, just to name a few. ➡



Mildred A. "Millie" Yoder, 95, of Lebanon, PA, passed away April 24, 2023, at her residence. She was born in East Hanover Township on July 2, 1927, to Warren and Elsie (Kreiser) Rhoad. She completed the Christian Worker's Course at God's Bible School and was proud to be a member of the "GI's of the Cross" crusade during her time there.

She worked in quality control at the Hamilton Watch Company in Lancaster and attended the Lebanon God's Missionary Church, where she had been its first pastor for seven years. Millie traveled to all 50 states and every province of Canada. She enjoyed going on mission trips to Haiti and visiting Israel. She was a GBS donor and a subscriber to *God's Revivalist*.

Millie is survived by her brother Clinton and several nieces and nephews. A Celebration of Life service was held at the God's Missionary Church in Lebanon.

Esther Lucille (Bozzer) Liles, 83, of Pensacola, FL, went to be Jesus on April 30, 2023, at Baptist Hospital,



Pensacola, FL, surrounded by her family. She was born December 7, 1939, in Mentcle, PA, to Daniel and Genevieve Bozzer. While attending GBS, Esther (BA '63) met and married Buddy Liles (HS '60). She was employed at The Christ Hospital, Cincinnati, OH, prior to moving to Pensacola in 1972 when Buddy began a 25-year stint singing bass with the Florida Boys (a well-known southern gospel quartet). She was employed as a transcriptionist at Baptist Hospital in Pensacola for over 20 years.

Esther faithfully served at Ensley Church of the Nazarene, Pensacola, FL, for over 45 years. She had a strong and vibrant faith in Jesus, loved to read her Bible, and was often found on her back porch praying for her family and friends. Esther loved music, singing, cooking, shopping, and being with her family. She was a GBS donor and a *God's Revivalist* subscriber.

Esther is survived by her husband of 62 years, Buddy Liles; daughters, Annette Jackson and Anita ➡

These honors are awarded to businesses within the greater-Cincinnati and northern-Kentucky area. This is the 13th year in a row that GBS has earned this distinction—an outstanding achievement! And who should receive that credit for this outstanding award? Our employees! They make campus a wonderful place to work. So thank you, staff and faculty members, for your dedication, compassion, and ministry to the students God has entrusted to us. Keep it going!

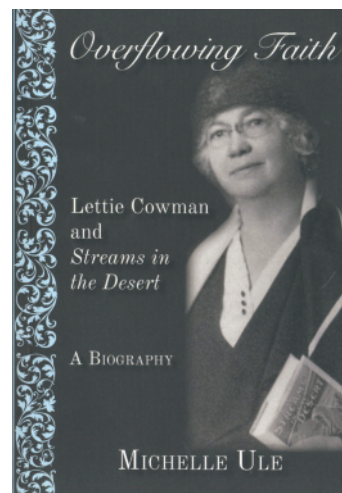
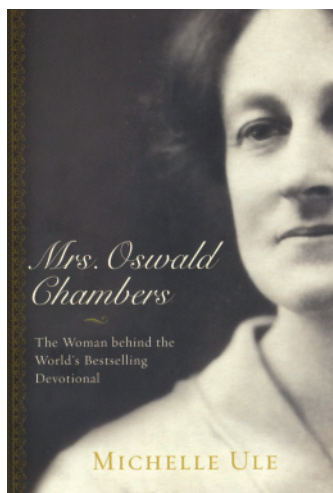
CHAMBERS/COWMAN BIOGRAPHER VISITS CAMPUS

Public speaker, essayist, and *New York Times* bestselling author Michelle Ule recently visited GBS along with her husband, Robert, a retired naval officer; friend and local author, Kim Duffy; and Kim's daughter, Ellie, a newly-enrolled GBS college freshman. In 2017, Michelle wrote the biography, *Mrs. Oswald Chambers: The Woman Behind the World's Bestselling Devotional*; and just this year she released another: *Overflowing Faith: Lettie Cowman and Streams in the Desert*. Both of the featured women have strong ties to early GBS history.

Biddy was the wife of Oswald Chambers, who taught at GBS in 1907 and was a speaker at the school's annual camp meetings for several ensuing years. When Oswald had speaking engagements, Biddy transcribed his lectures by shorthand. After Oswald's untimely death, Biddy compiled an assortment of his lectures into the best-selling devotional book, *My Utmost for His Highest*.



Robert and Michelle Ule with President Rodney Loper



REVIVALIST FAMILY continued

➡ Cleckner; five grandchildren; five great-grandchildren; siblings Arleene Burgess, Daniel Bozzer, Lois Hembree; and numerous cousins and extended family. After a memorial service, Esther was laid to rest at Pensacola Memorial Gardens.



Rev. David Boyd Gardner, 78, of Frankfort, IN, went home to be with the Lord on May 27, 2023, at St. Elizabeth Florence Hospital, Florence, KY. He was born February 1, 1945, to James and Helen (Boyd) Gardner of Erie, PA.

David married Rachel Anne Cope on June 18, 1966, and together they served as missionaries to Haiti, Dominican Republic, Mexico, and South Africa. He also

volunteered with the Indiana National Guard as a chaplain at Camp Atterbury. The Gardners began their ministry in the Free Methodist Church and also pastored Pilgrim Holiness, Wesleyan Holiness, International Conservative Holiness Association (ICHA), and Church of God (Holiness) churches in Missouri. In his spare time, he enjoyed hunting, fishing, and hiking. David was a GBS donor and a *God's Revivalist* subscriber.

Surviving David are his wife of 57 years, Rachel Anne Gardner; four children, Carol Gardner, David, Steven, and Rebecca Marshall; nine grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren; five brothers and sisters, James, JoAnne Thomas, Marjorie Brown, Michael, and Janice Blass; and many nieces and nephews. Funeral

Lettie Cowman and her husband Charles were both enrolled at GBS during its first year of operation in 1900. Upon leaving the campus, they went as missionaries to Japan and formed one of the world's largest missionary organizations, the Oriental Missionary Society (OMS—now One Mission Society). For many years (1920-1950) Lettie wrote a regular column in *God's Revivalist*, "Thoughts for the Quiet Hour," which became the source for her best-selling devotional volume *Streams in the Desert*.

Robert and Michelle Ule live in California, where Michelle earned a degree in English literature from UCLA. She loves history, music, traveling, amusing friends, and irony. In addition to her two aforementioned biographies, Michelle is the author of two novels and five best-selling novellas. She has traveled the world in conjunction with writing a WWI coming-of-age novel, *A Poppy in Remembrance*, and has written over 100 posts about Oswald and Biddy Chambers on her blog, www.michelleule.com. This month she intends to post an account about her visit to GBS.

In a recent email, Michelle commented, "I particularly wanted to see the Oswald Chambers Room. Since I'd forgotten GBS has OC's desk, that was quite a surprise to see, sit at, and touch! I marveled to think this was the one spot I knew for sure OC, Lettie, Charles, Juji [Nakada], and possibly Biddy have all been.... I was impressed by our tour, ...the way this small school has stayed on the Hilltop for 120 years.... I'm grateful I got to visit you all." ■

HOMECOMING

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GOD'S BIBLE SCHOOL
& COLLEGE



services were held at the Bethel Bible Holiness Church, Frankfort, IN, Rev. Mark Mowery officiating. Burial followed at Bunnell Cemetery, Franklin.



Heidi Renae (Davis) Elliott, 36, of Owosso, MI, passed away Sunday, May 28, 2023, surrounded by family after a four-year battle with cancer. Heidi was born in Owosso on September 2, 1986, to Robert and Sandra (Bailey) Davis. She was a 2005 graduate of Owosso High School, where she was involved in many activities. She attended GBS (2008-09).

In 2014, Heidi married Sean Elliott. They had two children, Saige and Wyatt, and two nieces, Celeste and Aaliya, whom she took in as her own.

Heidi worked in home healthcare and as a night-time supervisor at The Meadows, an assisted living community. She had a great love for older people and enjoyed singing, painting, and making things.

Heidi is survived by her husband, Sean; her children, Saige, Wyatt, Celeste, and Aaliya; her parents, Sandra and David McGowan, and Robert and Amy Davis; sister, Amanda Brown; brothers, Chad Sheldon, Tyler Sheldon, and Bradley Davis; grandmother, Betty Bailey; and step siblings, nephews, cousins, and other family members. Funeral services were held at the Free Methodist Church, Owosso, with Rev. Terry Bailey and Rev. David McGowan officiating. Burial followed at West Haven Cemetery. ➡



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Charlotte Esther (Rogers) Hulett, 84, of Elizabeth City, NC, passed away peacefully on June 3, 2023, in her daughter's home in Elizabeth City. Mrs. Hulett was born on February 11, 1939, to Joseph and Nettie (Wilson) Rogers of Scioto County, OH. She married GBS high school graduate James Hulett (HS '58).

Charlotte was a licensed practical nurse as well as a loving wife, mother, and grandmother. A faithful prayer warrior, she was a member of the North Carolina District of The Wesleyan Church and most recently attended and enjoyed fellowship at First Church of the Nazarene in Elizabeth City. She was a *God's Revivalist* subscriber.

Surviving Charlotte is her husband of nearly 65 years, Rev. James Robert Hulett; a daughter, Barbara Jane Turner; two sons, Gregory Keith and Timothy Joseph; four grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren. A memorial service was held at First Church of the Nazarene, Elizabeth City, conducted by the Rev. Kenneth Greenway.



David E. Smith, 91, passed away June 6, 2023, at Park Pointe Village, Rock Hill, SC. Born at home in Cable, OH, David was the oldest of the 14 children of David Alex and Ethel Irene (Parker) Smith. David (GBS 1951-53) met Dorothy Monce (HS '51) when they were both students at GBS, and the two were married in 1952. They continued to stay in touch with their alma mater

through the years as donors, annuitants, and subscribers to *God's Revivalist*.

David retired from Square D, Middletown, OH, where he worked as the purchasing manager for 40 years. Previously he was employed by Barkelew Electric, which merged with Square D in 1967.

His faith in the Lord was immense. He served as Sunday school superintendent at the Church of the Nazarene, Trenton, OH, for many years. He was instrumental in founding and supporting the Trenton Learning Center, the church's preschool operation. He had a local minister's license and preached in various Ohio churches for many years. About 20 years ago, he and Dorothy moved to Fort Mill, SC, where they joined the Church of the Nazarene.

David was preceded in death by his wife, Dorothy. He is survived by his sons, Randy and Scott; five grandchildren; three great-grandchildren; four brothers, Richard, Harold, Jack, and Roger; and three sisters, Barb Curry, Mary Mullet, and Nina Sampsel. Per David's request, there was no public funeral.



Rev. Orlow Chilton Webb, 84, passed away peacefully June 6, 2023, at IU Hospice House, Bloomington, IN, after a serious illness. He was born to Rev. John D. Webb, Sr., and Maude Elizabeth (Spring) Webb on March 27, 1939, in Williamson, WV. He graduated from Rush Creek Memorial High School in 1957 in Bremen, OH. After graduation, he entered Gale Institute, Minneapolis, MN, for railroad telegraphy and became a telegraph operator for Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy Railroad (CB&Q). After his conversion, Orlow enrolled at Frankfort Pilgrim College (1961-67), Frankfort, IN, earning a BA and a ThB. On Christmas Eve, December 1963, he married Rhoda Christine Ferguson in Nevada, OH. Together, they traveled in evangelism for more than 45 years and pastored 11 years. He was a *God's Revivalist* subscriber.

Orlow is survived by his wife, Rhoda; two daughters, Valerie Quales and Monica Whitaker; two sons, Anthony and Wesley; ten grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren; and a sister, Rebekah Reed. A funeral service was held at the Ferguson-Lee Chapel of Thorne-George Family Funeral Homes, Bedford, IN, with Rev. Edward Lecates officiating. Burial followed in Nevada, OH.

Three of Orlow's children attended GBS: Valerie (BSM '87) and her husband Donald Quales (BA '85); Monica Whitaker (BA '89); Anthony (1991-94) and his wife Marci (Miller) (1992-94). Additionally, Anthony has served on the Alumni Executive Council and the Alumni Relations Committee of the GBS Board of Trustees. His son, Lane, is currently employed as a sound technician at God's Bible School. ■



GO. MAKE DISCIPLES.

by Jonathan Slagenweit

Scripture: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

—Matthew 28:18-20

INTRODUCTION

I have been sensing an urgency to fulfill the Great Commission. We are living in a day in which the world desperately needs to hear the good news of the gospel. In our Scripture passage, Jesus has gathered His disciples together for His final instructions. Those last words to His disciples should be of great interest to us. Let's take a look.

Jesus tells His disciples that He has been given authority in both heaven and earth. That's interesting to me. What does Jesus mean by this statement?

Earlier, in John 13:3 (ESV), we read these words: "Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God...." God has given His Son authority over all things, both in heaven and on earth.

- He has authority over creation—He made it.
- He has authority over all earthly powers—it is God who sets up kings and takes them down.
- He has authority over Satan—when Jesus spoke, even the demons and unclean spirits had to obey.

Let me illustrate it this way. Students and staff members at God's Bible Shool are given a key card that enables them to get into certain buildings at certain times. But when I came to campus to speak for a series

of services, I was given a presidential pass card. That means I had access to all the areas that President Loper has authorized.

Jesus is saying, "My Father has handed to me the same authority that He possesses... and it's good for both the realms of heaven and earth." But in the very next breath, Jesus says, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations." In other words, Jesus is passing on His authority for us to fulfill His mission.

If God had intended for His Son to complete the work of evangelism, He would have left Him here on earth. But He didn't. Instead He gave the authority to His Son to commission His disciples to finish the work of spreading the gospel. The task is now in our hands!

Let's take a closer look at what this means as Jesus gives us the MISSION, the METHOD in which to complete the mission, and the MIGHT through which we are to operate.

THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

It may seem from the text that the mission of the Church is to GO, since that is the first word; but that's not the mission of the Church. In fact, the only words in this text that are in the imperative form are the words MAKE DISCIPLES. That means the responsibility of every Christian is to make disciples. YOU ARE CALLED TO MAKE DISCIPLES. It's not just the preacher's job. It's not just the missionary's job. It is also YOUR job.

What does it mean to make disciples? Does that mean to instruct someone into believing that Jesus is the Son of God? Yes, that is partially true, but making disciples is more than that. Even the demons believe that Jesus is the Son of God, but they aren't disciples.

Jesus said, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and FOLLOW ME." A disciple is more than just a mental believer; a disciple worships from the heart.

When you make disciples, you are leading them from death into life. The mission of the Church is not about building a large facility and drawing large crowds to hear a sermon. The mission of the Church is to spread the gospel—Christ died for our sins; He was buried; He arose on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.

THE METHOD OF EVANGELISM

I have a cousin who has served in the U.S. Army for several years as a Green Beret. Every mission he went on was accompanied by a plan—a method in which the mission would be completed. Similarly, Jesus didn't leave us without a method of completing the task of making disciples. I am thankful He didn't, because I have found His method to be freeing.

There is a debate about how to interpret the word “go” in this passage. Is it a command to go, or does it mean “as you are going”? It really doesn’t have to be an either-or proposition. The meaning can be BOTH—“Go. And as you are going, make disciples.”

Disciple-making must be intentional and accomplished in the everyday activities of life. Have you ever studied the way in which Jesus discipled His disciples? In Mark three we are told that Jesus called His disciples to be with Him. Their charge then, and ours now, is to focus on disciple-making as an intentional activity that is accomplished in the everyday tasks of life. When you go, and as you are going, you are to be baptizing new believers in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Baptism is an outward, physical indication of what the Lord has done internally in a spiritual sense. When you are baptized, you are declaring that you have been buried with Christ and raised to new life.

In other words, the mission of the Church is to make disciples and to invite them into the resurrection life of Christ. Maybe you think that’s a scary thought. How does one disciple someone else to identify with the death and burial of Jesus Christ? Jesus said in verse 20 that this is accomplished by “teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.”

The good news is that you don’t have to write your own curriculum to make disciples. God has given you all that you need. It is critical that you get into the Word, learn to know God and love Him, and then pass on what you have learned to someone else.

THE MIGHT OF EVANGELISM

Does it seem like a difficult task? Does it seem like a scary task? Know that Christ has given you a power source to enable you to complete the work that He started. Luke’s recording of this event in Acts 1:8 says, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

CONCLUSION

Jesus never intended to take His disciples with Him when He left this world. In fact, when you read His high priestly prayer in John 17, you hear Him pray that His Father would not take them out of the world, but rather that He would keep them from the evil one. Jesus redeemed you, not to isolate you from the world, (take you out of the world) but to insulate you from the world (make you holy) so that you can stay in the world and rescue the lost. Go. Make disciples! ■

Jonathan Slagenweit pastors the Bible Methodist Church, Easley, SC. This sermon is adapted from one he preached during GBS Commissioning Weekend, May 2023.

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

Letters should be emailed to revivalist@gbbs.edu or addressed to the Editorial Office, 1810 Young Street, Cincinnati, OH 45202. Letters reprinted here do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the editor of *God’s Revivalist* nor those of the administration of *God’s Bible School*. Names and locations of writers will be withheld at their specific request or at the discretion of the editor. We reserve the right to edit and condense.

My Grandma Stahlbusch and Great-Grandma Heath received *God’s Revivalist* in the late 1920s and through the 1940s. We’ve had the wonderful opportunity to worship with the GBS choir at Light and Life Park in Lakeland, FL. We are GBS donors; and in addition to our *God’s Revivalist* renewal this year, we would like to pay for five additional subscriptions for individuals who will be blessed by the magazine’s strong teaching of biblical values.

ALONZO STAHLBUSCH
Hudsonville, MI

I received *God’s Revivalist*, and the article that Kevin Moser wrote [“Alumni News,” Summer 2023, p.22] concerning my dad, Albert Muir, and our family—it was absolutely perfect. When I went to church last Sunday, everyone was talking about it and the wonderful job of creating the spread. I didn’t realize so many members of our congregation subscribed to *God’s Revivalist*. Thanks again.

SHARON (MUIR) HENDRICKSON
Lawrenceburg, IN

I just wanted to say thank you for writing such a lovely article about Pappaw, Albert Muir [“Alumni News,” Summer 2023, p.22]. We sure appreciate the recognition that he deserved, but never needed.

JULIE LANDES
(Albert Muir’s granddaughter)
email

I always enjoy the editor’s writings. I remember when GBS was trying to get approval for the skywalk [see GR, summer 2022, p.2]. I enjoyed my time as a part-time student in the PR department, working a couple years with Larry Jewett and Densel Ball!

JERRY READLE (BRE ’87)
Denver, CO

(continued on p.23)



Training

UNDER THE RADAR

Techniques for Teaching Character and Reducing Disciplinary Moments

by CHARITY BROWN

Christian parents understand that disciplining their children is a non-negotiable matter commanded in Scripture. I remember looking across the room, seeing my two-year-old in desperate need of correction, and averting my eyes.

"You're tired, but you need to get a handle on that." My faithful friend's voice might not have been welcome at the moment, but she was right on both counts. I was so, so tired of dealing out correction.

Part of the problem was I felt I was disciplining my children all the time. I needed to work smarter because there was no way I could work harder.

Enter training. Over the years, I collected a number of techniques to reduce the number of disciplinary moments in our house. Discipline remained a necessary piece of Christian parenting. However, training became my priority, and our home became a much more peaceful place to live.

#1 TRUTH OR LIE

Taking advantage of car-seat captives

Little children thrive on simple, clear communication. The more terms are defined outside of disciplinary moments, the better. This is how it normally goes down: A child hits a playmate. The child is disciplined, and the parent attempts to give a little instruction on kindness. But the tears are flowing, and the child's brain is unable to receive a whole lot at that point. The more teaching that can happen outside of the high-flying emotions of being "in trouble," the better.

This can be made easier with car-seat games. Mom starts off with, "Sissy is wearing....(dramatic pause)..."

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pink polka dots! Truth or lie?" "Lie! She is wearing blue dots!" "Awesome! Here is another: birds lay their eggs in nests under our porch!" "True!" "You guys are amazing! OK, God is good on Mondays and Fridays only." "Lie! God is good always." We called this simple exchange the Truth or Lie Game, and the sillier it was, the better. It evolved over time to have many variations. They especially enjoyed the Kind/Unkind game ("Mr. Ficklesnickle tripped his neighbor in the street. Kind or unkind?") and the Respectful/Disrespectful game ("Grammy bit the preacher's finger during handshake time. Respectful or disrespectful?").

Although we had stories and music and other activities in the car, this game was a regular part of running errands. The kids just saw it as fun with Mom, but this simple approach allowed us to define important concepts outside of the negative emotions of discipline. They then understood our expectations when we instructed them to be "kind" to a cousin or show "respect" to the pastor. They had fun and affectionate memories of hundreds of examples they could use. This greatly reduced both the incidence of discipline as well as the parental frustration of wondering if they really understood what we were asking.

#2 NEAR & DEAR TO THEIR HEARTS

Using what they care about

There is a great mystery in all homes with small children. Mom unwraps the chocolate, an invisible sensor goes off, and a small child appears, hand outstretched, saying, "Bite?" This is another beautiful place to define your terms! Give them a bite, smile, and say, "I will share with you. It is good to share fun things with others." We have the chance to build positive associations to sharing with that one simple act, as well as to teach them what it means to share.

Most children have "treasures" (little rocks from the park, a feather, or a doll). Use their great love of their treasures to train them in treating their siblings with affection and care. When they show you their latest find, say, "Oooh! Another treasure! How do you want me to treat your treasure? With love? Did you know your sister/brother is the truest kind of precious treasure? Do we hit precious treasures? Do....?" It was especially helpful in sibling conflict to remind them of the deep value of each other. I remember asking 3-year-old Alex in a disciplinary moment why he was in trouble for hitting his sister. He said, "I know, I know, she's a pwehsuss twehzer." Often sibling conflict is seen as natural childish behavior. There is a difference between sinful behavior and childish behavior. Hitting your sister is different from spilling a glass of milk. The second should be handled with gentle patience, but the first should not be tolerated.

#3 DROP & AND GIVE ME FIVE

Making obedience enjoyable

Obedience drills. It is in the child's absolute best interest that they learn to obey on command. Pull this as far out of disciplinary moments as possible, whenever possible. Call for a drill. "Clap three times." "Run to the front door and back." Play random "freeze" drills at home and in the store and congratulate them on how quickly they stopped moving and their funny frozen facial expressions. Play along. Play Simon says, Mama says, the police officer says. Make obedience a fun and positive thing.

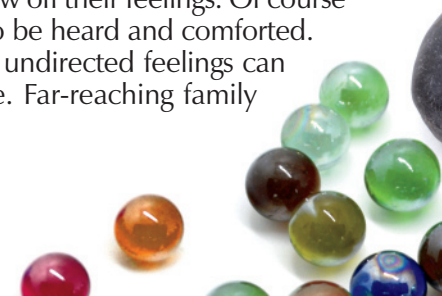
As the children got a little older, we even played drills in the parking lot as we taught safety. They were "baby seals" trying to get to the "iceberg" (store), avoiding the "sharks" (cars with red taillight "eyes" indicating they were backing out). If they saw the "eyes" up ahead, they had to freeze in place and stay very still so the shark would not get them.

#4 DIALOGS & SCRIPTS

Making interactions & reactions easier

Children often act out when they feel insecure or put on the spot. This happened a lot when ours were little. While attending an orchestra concert, our son hid behind me because all the players were "looking at" him. At church, our daughter quite literally turned up her nose and slowly pivoted away from elderly people who approached her! "It's my shy face, Mommy," she explained. That is definitely not what it looked like! So, we began practicing for those moments. "Pretend I am Bro. So-and-so.... 'Hello Alex, how are you?' As our car approached the building the next week, we would remind them of their practice and assure them we were confident they could do this. Doing these often-silly practice dialogues and giving them a heads-up as we pulled into the parking lot helped them face their fears with more confidence and less conflict.

We also found "setting an emotional script" to be useful. Small children often narrate their feelings right aloud, but they do not always know what to do with the big feelings that they have. We were driving past a daycare with a large, colorful playground. Oh, they were so jealous. "We wish WE had a playground like that." Gripe, moan, etc. That is when I stumbled upon this concept quite by accident. "Wouldn't that be cool?" I agreed. "But they can't be with their moms all day long, and they have to play behind that fence instead of in the woods like you did this morning." This is not to say we blow off their feelings. Of course not. Just like us, they need to be heard and comforted. But a child left to wallow in undirected feelings can hold a whole family hostage. Far-reaching family



decisions are often made, not because it is the best interest of all, but because one child is not happy. Once they have been heard and comforted, keep training them to turn their thoughts to what is praiseworthy.

#5 ROCKS & MARBLES

Working together to grow as a family

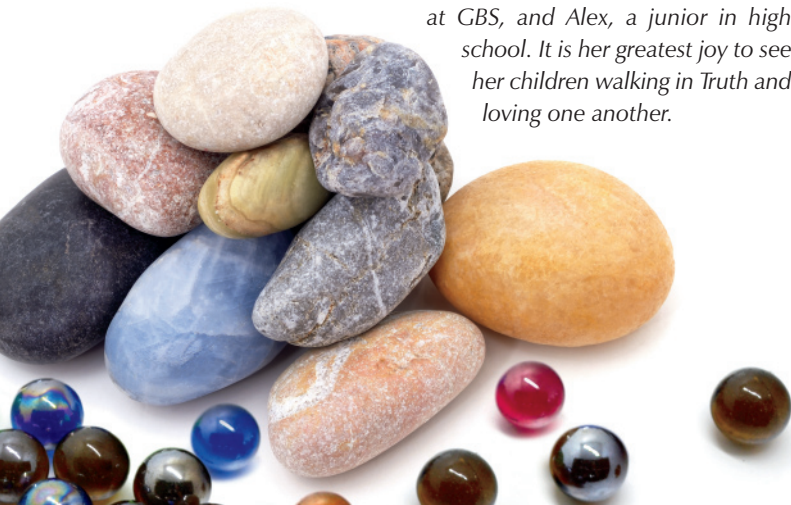
There are a variety of ways that families reward progress in character. We chose rocks and marbles. We set up a large clear container on the kitchen table. It was marked up the side in intervals. Reaching the first goal line meant a pizza night; the next one, dipped cones at Dairy Queen—whatever was special to our kids at the moment. We used one container because we were emphasizing how our family is a unit. Our behavior is not just about us; it is about our whole family's wellbeing. Each day, the children got to put in one marble for each chore they completed with a good attitude. This emphasized each member's valuable contribution to the running of the household.

But the rocks! The rocks got us to our goals faster. They were only given if someone outside the family (who did not know about our system) commented on the children's good character. ("Aren't you just so cute!" did not count.) My kids rushed to assist elderly ladies in stores and held doors for people, never knowing when someone might "give them a rock." (They were actually disappointed to get a money tip occasionally.) This particular game taught them everything we do affects the whole family, that character is far more valuable than how we look, and that there are people everywhere who can benefit from a helping hand.

You can probably see ways in which each of these ideas could go awry with a small child. I assure you, they did. There were bad attitudes and rebellious decisions and disappointing times when what should have been fun training dissolved straight into a disciplinary moment. However, on the whole, these simple games opened the door to a world of good times and strong relationships. Discipline became less frequent and more effective.

Exhausted by parenting? These tips might help. 📌

Charity (Frederick) Brown has been happily married to Nathan Brown for 22 years. She has homeschooled their children Kathryn, a freshman at GBS, and Alex, a junior in high school. It is her greatest joy to see her children walking in Truth and loving one another.



Letters

TO THE EDITOR

(continued from p.20)

McCain's devotional article ["Revivalist Pulpit," March 2023] is the most sensible, searching, and motivating piece I have read on personal devotions! It was so helpful, hope inspiring, and encouraging!

JAMES STROUP
email

Each issue of *God's Revivalist* is a source of much blessing to me. This new discipleship series is very timely. My prayer is that the Lord will use it to bless, encourage, and strengthen every reader. I'm grateful for the complimentary subscription that I receive in continuation of my late husband Dr. Wesley L. Duewel (ThB, BA '39).

HILDA M. DUEWEL (BA '39)
Corp. Secretary, Duewel Literature Trust, Inc.
Greenwood, IN

Thank you so much for the beautiful article about my husband, David Doctorian [GR March 2023]. He had fond memories of his time spent at God's Bible School. One of our family's favorite photos of David is of him at the Revivalist printing press [shown in the "Alumni News" article]. We are missing David but know he is in Heaven, and one day we will be reunited with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, David, and all our loved ones.

PHYLLIS DOCTORIAN
Macon, MO

"Look! She's reading *God's Revivalist* [April 2023]! She loves the dog on the front cover, and inside she thinks she sees a picture of her grandma (which isn't), but she was thrilled."

ROCHELLE McCONKEY
COSME (BA '09)
Cincinnati, OH

Message sent from
Rochelle Cosme
concerning her daughter
Chole, one of our
youngest readers! —KF



Becoming Your Mom Is a Good Thing

Thoughts on the Discipling of Daughters

by Valorie Quesenberry

There's an old Sunday School song with a line that says, "You can tell by every girl the kind of mom she's got."

Not always. There are examples of daughters who did not have a good role model in their moms and yet went on to excel in both life and in Christian character. But, as a general rule, a girl's ambitions and attitude and the aura of her appearance point back to the woman who had the biggest influence on her formative years, through direct teaching or the absence of it. And both the Bible and human experience tell us that the best way for a girl to learn about godly womanhood is from her mom.

NECESSITY OF PRINCIPLE

When God created parenthood and gave the reins of authority to dads and moms, He said clearly that parents should require obedience and that children should listen to and obey their parents. This is right (Eph. 6:1-3).

God's Word directly commands parents to teach their children. Firmly. Calmly. Biblically. Expectantly.

- "And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children" (Deut. 6:7).
- "My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother" (Prov. 1:8).
- "When your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean ye by these stones? Then ye shall answer them..." (Josh. 6:6,7).

As a parent, I want to train up my children with the knowledge that what I say is true and right and God-honoring, and that those little ones following me should imitate my steps in these matters of life and godliness. Our Master did not disciple His followers with a "take-it-or-leave-it" approach. Rather,

he told them "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed" (John 8:31).

We must teach and train our children with confidence and joy, with Christ as the natural center of life, and with a spirit that prizes their spiritual formation more than our personal vindication or gratification. Dads and moms must recognize their God-given platform and refuse to give it up.

It doesn't take a village to raise a child. It takes parents. God's plan was to give two of them to every child. They are responsible for the child's very existence, and in that responsibility comes the burden of teaching and training. My husband once said in a sermon that "parents should position themselves to be the biggest voices in their children's lives." That doesn't happen by accident or by allowing other adults to be the primary influencers in the daily lives and ears of our growing children. It happens only as parents take on their role with zest and give it everything they've got, expecting success.

And the layers of parenting are repetitive cycles of teaching, training, and discipling. This is childrearing in ever deepening ways.

- Teaching: instruction on everything that pertains to life, from babyhood
- Training: practical application of lessons; training is both positive and negative
- Discipling: equipping the child to follow well and then to imitate the teacher

How can we, as moms specifically, be faithful to our responsibility of discipling our daughters? Here are three areas to start us thinking:



HEALTHY ACCEPTANCE OF PLACE

One of the foundational facts of a child's life is the knowledge of who he or she is, as created by God, and where his or her place is in His creation. Moms, we need to immerse our daughters in the truth that they are gloriously intended to be female/human bearers of the Divine Image. We are made for a certain place in this world, for specific functions and gifts, for the submitting and receiving part of the marriage relationship if God allows, and for domestic and maternal life expressions for His glory, both in single life and in the family. These allocations are not chains, but, as Elisabeth Elliot says, wings; wings to soar just as the eagle uses her pinions to catch the winds for which she was designed. For all of her life to come, a daughter will need to know where God wants her to be and to be able to accept and surrender to it. If she learns this from babyhood, how happy the future life seasons will be. And how much easier will be her surrender to the One who made her and wants to guide her through life and into His presence one day.

We impart this knowledge to our daughters with our words and actions, and with an attitude of joy in shared womanhood. We must instill in them the understanding that only by accepting God's glorious calling to womanhood can they glorify Him. To do otherwise is to refuse His plan.

FEMININE QUALITIES

While denigrated by those who believe gender roles are beneath liberated men and women or who throw off all such distinctions in the name of gender freedom, there is truly such a thing as feminine characteristics. And every girl needs to know about them. This has nothing particularly to do with whether one is a tomboy or not. Girls who like to climb trees and play ball with their brothers are not that unusual after all; physical activity and exploration are not interests which exclusively define maleness. These preferences may have more to do with individual personality and family context. As moms, we must not put labels on our girls, as to what "kind" of girl. We must simply affirm that they are indeed girls and that is good. And with the knowledge of being female comes the necessity of learning about female-ness. What does that mean? How are women supposed to act? How are women supposed to dress? How are women meant to behave in relationship to men? What are the unique gifts given to women and not to men? How does a woman reflect the glory of her Creator and live out the sacrificial love of Christ from a female modality?

These are the answers that will help moms clearly train their daughters to be joyful, holy women who know what is appropriate and good in behavior and practice. Mothers must combine the teaching of their

words with the everyday living out of the application. A living, breathing model alongside our daughters every day of their young lives is a powerful stamp that nothing can quite erase.

CHARACTER TRAITS

Long before a little girl can even comprehend her feminine identity, she will begin to understand concepts which lay the foundation for future character. When our daughters are tiny, we must begin to lay down the building blocks for future teaching. The basic principles of obedience and discipline, of perseverance and buoyancy, are vital. These traits are applicable, obviously, to both sexes and can be taught from a very young age..

- A child, boy or girl, must learn that to obey is a child's first responsibility. Every other lesson depends on this.
- He or she must grasp, incrementally as maturity comes, that self-control and self-regulation are expected. (I used to tell my children "Until you have self-control, you will have mom-control.")
- Our children must be convinced that not giving up, even when tasks are challenging or one does not understand all the details, is necessary for a well-adjusted, God-honoring future. Many situations in life are baffling, but doing what we know to be right this minute is always possible.

These and myriad other little lessons are the duty and delight of mothers as they disciple their daughters. What we understand from looking at the example of Christ is that discipling is time intensive, it involves the sacrifice of convenience and personal leisure, it is a long-term commitment, and it needs to be grace-filled and eternity focused.

PARTNERING WITH GOD

Daughters need their mothers to disciple them. They come to us fresh and malleable, endowed with a divinely-planned temperament, inherited physical characteristics and free will. But the teaching and modeling that will tip the scales toward godly womanhood is up to us! What an opportunity! What a privilege!

Let's be faithful moms, discipling our daughters daily in all things that pertain to life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). The God of all grace and truth will help us. And there is no life task more fulfilling than working together with Him. ■

Valorie Bender Quesenberry (BSM '94) is a wife, mother, writer, musician, and current director of financial aid at GBS. She is married to Duane Quesenberry (BRE '94) who currently serves as the GBS public relations director. Valorie and Duane have four adult children, a son-in-law, and a new granddaughter.

Discipleship through Children's Ministry

by Sarah Cook



One of my greatest joys and responsibilities through the years has been the work of discipling children. As a children's ministry director, I realize that leading children in sound doctrine and faith is most effective when done in partnership with parents, the local church, and, ideally, their school or homeschool. Working in this confluence of partners can result in the most well-rounded and most effective instruction. Children's ministry is not to be taken lightly.

Of course, parents have the primary responsibility to disciple their children. However, children's ministries can come alongside parents to strengthen their efforts. The most successful efforts I have been part of are those in which the parents are consistently and intentionally engaged in the spiritual growth of their children. Children's ministries can send resource materials home with the children that can serve as "homework" and the involvement of the parents in this process is beneficial. These should provide Scriptures, a Christian catechism (biblical truths), songs, and other materials that will allow parents to be able to study with their child. It is imperative that a children's ministry communicate with

**"And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."
—Deuteronomy 6:6-7**

parents about what materials are being covered and what is being studied.

Parents may also request additional resources or ideas from you to assist them as they lead their children at home. Be informed about and familiarize yourself with discipleship materials and tools. Even if you already have many resources in mind to suggest, understand that new resources are continually emerging. Staying up-to-date with what is available can help you and parents better answer questions about contemporary issues.

Both unchurched children and church children can struggle with a warped view of "what is truth," as that very concept is often twisted by information received through media or other influences in their lives. Studying and knowing your material well can help you prepare to answer questions. And don't just try to "fake an answer." Remember that it is okay to say that you are unsure of the answer to a particular question; but let the questioner know you have reliable resources that you can use to find the answer and that you will get back with them.

Covering biblical doctrine, apologetics, Scripture memorization, Bible history and context, etc., may feel like a heavy thing to load onto children, but I want to challenge you on this. Children have an incredible ability to memorize! Have you ever heard a child quote verbatim a scene from a video or a story? Or sing the lyrics from a complicated song they heard from such a scene? They do it all the time. If they can memorize that with seemingly little effort, they can do the same with discipleship materials.

How, though, do you get students to work at memorization? How was a fourth grader with whom I am acquainted recently able to memorize 105 catechism questions? Answer: Through the involvement of the parents and by making the process fun. Yes, discipling children can be fun for everyone! Use prizes and other incentives; utilize themes, games, songs, and crafts. Bible accounts can be told very dramatically and physically acted out. Present object lessons. The Bible is NOT boring, so don't make it sound that way. There are parts of it that may seem less engaging, but be creative. If you struggle with creativity, ask others for help or look for suggestions online where one can find a

**“And he took a child, and set him
in the midst of them: and when he had
taken him in his arms, he said unto them,
Whosoever shall receive one of such
children in my name, receiveth me: and
whosoever shall receive me, receiveth
not me, but him that sent me.”**

—Mark 9:36-37

wealth of great ideas. The goal is to have the children WANT to be in your classroom.

I will admit, not everything is easy in children’s ministry. Some of the children who attend do not have the parental engagement which is so crucial. This results in the additional challenge of trying to encourage some young children to take initiative to study on their own. This is certainly a more difficult scenario, but I know many children who were disciplined with love by someone involved in children’s ministry, a Sunday school teacher or a Christian teacher, even without the assistance of the children’s parents.

On rare occasions, a parent’s involvement may create a difficult situation. Resolving conflicts and questions that may arise with parents is not the most-loved aspect of children’s ministry. Ministry can be messy because humans are messy, right? Unresolved conflict may unintentionally sabotage efforts in training children, especially if the children overhear parents making negative remarks concerning discipling efforts, tactics, materials, and methods. Keep parents informed, and don’t ignore the concerns and needs of their children. Children can often tell if you care about their concerns or if you like them or their families. Don’t just like them...LOVE them!

Children’s ministry is a high calling and is to be taken seriously. Jesus was very intentional in showing His love for children, even while His disciples expressed annoyance at their presence. We should emulate this Christlike intentionality. As you involve yourself in the ministry of discipling children, remember that your life as “the teacher” is being read like a book. Are you living what you are teaching? Don’t expect the children to believe you if you aren’t living it. Children are smart, and they notice more than you might think. May the Lord bless each of you as you “live out Jesus” for the children, and give you help as you instruct, equip, and disciple these little ones to follow Him! ■

Sarah (McClurg) Cook (AA ’02; BA ’17) is a teaching assistant at Aldersgate Christian Academy. Her husband Ron (BA ’00) pastors the Bible Methodist Church, Connerville, IN, where he preaches on Sunday mornings, and Sarah is the children’s ministry director at Wesleyan Evangelistic Church, Dayton, OH, on Sunday evenings. The Cooks have three daughters, all GBS students: Faith (college), and Charity and Hope (high school).



by Sonja Vernon

ON OUR SIDE

“The Lord is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me? The Lord is on my side as my helper; I shall look in triumph on those who hate me.” —Psalm 118:6-7 (ESV)

Imagine with me that Mr. X is the most powerful person in the world. It is one thing for me to say that I am on the side of Mr. X, but it is another thing entirely for me to make the claim that “Mr. X is on my side.” This implies a much more personal knowledge and gives me power and authority I do not have on my own. It is an outlandish claim, completely ludicrous unless Mr. X knows me and is actually “on my side.”

In Psalm 118, the psalmist makes the striking assertion that the God of the universe is on his side. His statement is matter-of-fact. There is no hesitation, no “maybe.” Have you ever thought about how shocking it is to make that claim? If we have placed our faith in Jesus, if we are walking in obedience, Scripture says that God is on our side! The covenant-keeping, eternal, all-powerful Creator is on our side. It is a staggering and life-giving thought.

Is Satan fighting you today? Is he telling you that you really don’t matter, that God has much more important things on His agenda than your “little” problems? Are you facing situations that look completely insurmountable? Remind yourself and your enemy that God is on your side today. Walk in the strength of the Almighty! He has everything you need for this moment and all the moments to come. Walk ahead fearlessly, not because of who you are, but because of Who is on your side! ■

Sonja Vernon is Vice President for Student Affairs at God’s Bible School.



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