

Family Heritage Developer

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"God forbid that I should forsake the inheritance of my fathers" -- 1 Kings 21:3

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Parenting as Ministers of Light

Part 3 of 3

By Gary L Cox

Give No Offense

2 Corinthians 6:3-5a, "Giving no offense in anything that the ministry be not blamed: but in all, approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments..."

How does one give offense to the ministry? Only one way, by refusing the trouble that God chooses to bring upon us so that we might be conduits of the grace of life. The Apostle Paul had a testimony as a broken vessel, his life was not his own, he was not living it to himself. Paul approves his ministry by faithfulness in trouble. To suffer in service to the needs of others is the most convincing evidence of genuine caring love.

"O you Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged, you are not straightened in us but you are straightened in your own bowels. Now for a recompense in the same, I speak as to my children, be ye also enlarged." 2 Cor. 6:11-13

Good ministry has a genuine tone of fervor and compassion. In it is a movement of intensity in the deep compassion of the soul. As vessels of His light, we are going to be vessels of His passion, and we are going to be passionate for the very things of God.

Now passion does not back away from the precipice. There is risk, there is danger, and our children or anyone that we minister to need to be called into the counsel of God: lose your life for Christ's sake. This is the nature of ministry, you call someone in trouble into the counsel of God. There is an instinctive nature of man to push away the counsel of God and to seek rather the counsel of man. The counsel of men will always seek to preserve this life. Worldly counsel might have a little bit of long range concern for this life versus short range concern for this life. It might have a little appearance of maturity, but it is going to be concerned about this life because that is the nature of the counsel of man - preserve your

life. The counsel of God, however, is always going to be a call to abandon this life, to die to it, to surrender it. There is nothing in this life that is permanent.

Where Do Your Children Draw Their Counsel From?

2 Corinthians 6:14, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?"

This passage is not talking about marriage; it is a passage on counsel. Where do we draw our counsel from? Now, here is the Scriptural point: if you draw your counsel from those that would save this life, you are unequally yoked. Let me give an illustration of unequal yoking: children talking together in a back bedroom, speaking against their parents and their parents failures (much of which may absolutely be correct). They are speaking against the parents in such a way so as to exclude

them from the "bowels of their compassion." They refuse to call and hear and draw out their parents counsel and have that counsel minister to them. This is unequal yoking. Children can be guilty of unequal yoking by complaining with their siblings against their parents. Accepting counsel places one under the authoritative influence of another. The receiving of false counsel from the lips of our own siblings, is unequal yoking, it is rebellion.

It does not have to be a sibling does it? It can be a peer. How many times do peers get together and talk about their terrible authorities (parents) and plant thoughts in each other's minds? "I know what I am going to do, as soon as I turn 18, I tell you what, I am out of here, I have had it." Again it is that same exact process of refusing affection to the primary people that God has put in their life for spiritual counsel and nourishment.

To look at faults and earthly loss and to say, "I have had it, I am not going to put up with it anymore": that is unequal yoking.

According to Scripture, unequal yoking is one thing: whether or not ones heart and affection are open to the authorities that God has put in his life for his spiritual being. When I see God as a minister in those people that He has put in my life, that they are there by His hand as a means to my spiritual advancement, then I will seek God through those counselors God has given me.

Received by the Father

"And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols for ye are the temple of the living God as God has said, 'I will dwell with them and walk in them and I will be their God and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them and be separate,' saith the Lord, 'And touch not the unclean thing and I will receive you and will be a Father unto you and you shall be My sons and daughters,' saith the Lord Almighty'." 2 Cor. 6:16-18

Here is the most tender promise for us as people under authority. We can draw near to God by receiving those God has put over us for our own good. We have the promise that when we come out from under ungodly counsel, when we separate ourselves from those who are tempting us to save this life, God Himself will receive us as a child. This is significant. It is not a question of whether people can perfectly serve us. What is important to understand is that God has chosen people as a means by which to minister to us, a means by which to give us life and health. This is how God becomes our Father, through His choice of authority over us, He becomes engaged in the process of preserving His interests in us and He acts on our behalf.

The greatest deception that Satan puts in the lives of young people is, "Don't tell your parents." Satan uses privacy to separate children from the bosom of their parents' compassion. Children become separated from their parents by deception, secrecy and the refusal to receive correction. It takes a bit of death to self in order to go to your parents and say, "I have some things I am

struggling with, things I have done and I need your counsel and I need your help." Those words are so precious because they open up the opportunity to engage in holy communion - parent to child - receiving counsel and direction from the Lord Himself. That is our opportunity; that is our privilege.

How do we get spiritual results? We adjust our lives according to the promises, "Having therefore these promises dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit..." 2 Cor. 7:1 Let us cleanse ourselves. We have promises, let us cleanse ourselves. Let us put off our own conniving, our own interests. Let us cleanse ourselves. God has a promise. We can make a promise to every young person: "Take God at His Word and see your parents as His direct means of ministering His light and life to you on His terms. Seek your parents counsel with every fiber in your body to give glory to God and to receive from your parents what God has for you. Open yourselves up to them, tell them the secrets of your heart, tell them the places you are angry at them, tell them the places that you are struggling. Pursue your parents, go after them as if they are hidden treasure. If you will do this you will find not only your parents there to serve you, but you will find God Himself as a Father, preserving His every interest in you. Someday you will look back and you will say, "Truly God has been my Father, truly I am blessed because God has preserved me, He has filled me and I lack no good thing." This is His promise to you.

For those who still have parents, take advantage while you have them. Let God minister

to you as He has chosen to, let His promises be reaped because you have walked by faith.



Becky's Tips

Worship

When leading your children in worship at home or church encourage them to examine their own hearts.

Consider practicing a variety of methods for at home worship.

For example:

- Listen to music and sing quietly along.
- Plan a minute of total quiet.
- Allow each person to contribute a thought. Practice exploring how that thought fits with Bible principle.
- Dramatize what you read at Bible.
- Talk about what brings God delight.

Encourage

- Consider praying specifically about how you can encourage someone else who homeschools.
- At workshops look around for a new family and in conversation

discover where the new mom needs encouragement.

- When your child writes a note of thanks, help her to include a specific encouragement.
- Be alert during church time to notice someone who could profit from your wisdom and encourage her.

Side benefit: In encouraging others you become encouraged.

Championship

Our key word this year is "excellence." For this tip consider the word, "excellence" as applied to:

- Spelling – You call the word. The child writes the word. You help with correction (if needed) immediately.
- Math – As child copies problems from a book and supplies the answer, you are looking not only for the correct

answer but also neat format and printing.

- Read-aloud – When you are choosing books to read TO your children, start with those that best promote what you are trying to teach. If you have unlimited time for read-aloud you could be less selective but we have schedules!

- Behavior – Little things matter greatly. With child training realize that words, actions, gestures, sighs, eye rolls, and foot stomping all reveal the condition of the heart. It is the **HEART** that we want to train.

Writing Notebook

As you probably know we have resurrected the writing notebook for this academic year.

If you have children from 3rd grade down the writing notebook (in my opinion) is the best writing

and grammar workbook you could use. It may be modified to suit older grades, too.

A few writing notebook reminders:

- It is not intended to be used along side a text, but rather replaces the text. Overload usually results in diminishing returns in young children.

- After writing several sentences (1 per day) begin introducing noun and verb.

- During the entire year learn noun, verb, adverb, adjective, preposition.

- Correct immediately.

- Be positive about progress.
- Expect perfection. Because the assignment is only one sentence, you can expect the letters to be formed correctly, words spelled accurately, punctuation in place, proper following of assignment.

Covenant

One of the exciting reminders during my recent study of covenant (Kay Arthur, Our Covenant God) is that God has chosen to obligate Himself to keep His promises. He does not keep them

because I deserve that but purely because of His love plan for me. This thought is especially helpful during conflicts you may have with your children. Your enemies, He has agreed to make His enemies. So as you struggle with what to do, you can rest in the assurance that He is making a path for your victory.

Love,

Becky

ALUMNI UPDATE

WCFS Class of 2013 graduate, Caroline Tatum has committed to serving the Lord in Haiti for 5 months. Caroline will serve in Borel, Haiti, teaching 3 missionary children from January through May, 2014. Please join us in praying for Caroline as she desires to be a light and encouragement to the people of Haiti!

