

Spiritual Considerations...

Selected articles designed to assist in our Bible study and Christian walk.



Dave Phillips, editor

number 18

(Though we have great challenges in our Christian homes, the opportunities for success and enjoyment are also numerous. The following two articles, one written by a Jon, a member of our congregation, exemplify some of the joy that is associated with the child-rearing years. We should continue to pray to God, work together, and encourage each other to let our children know of their great value in the eyes of God. I hope you enjoy these two well-written articles. Dave)

The Role of the Father in a Christian Home

Jon Arnett, Germantown church of Christ

As the father of three daughters, I feel I have been blessed with a special opportunity. It is an opportunity to daily love, teach, and most importantly, lead spiritually our children. In Ephesians 6:4 we are commanded to “bring up our children in the training and instruction of the Lord.” By praying together with our girls, my wife and I hope to lay a strong foundation for their spiritual life. There is nothing more rewarding and at times humorous than hearing your children pray and talk about God. Not only does God find humor in their simple but sincere prayers, but I believe it also teaches us adults how to pray in a manner that is pleasing to God.

I have found the book, “The Christian Family Answer Book: by Mike Yorkey to be very informative about being the best father I can be. In the book, the author lists seven secrets of effective fathers. They are as follows: (1) commitment, (2) knowing your child, (3) consistency, (4) protector and provider, (5) loving their mother, (6) active listening, and (7) spiritually equipping your children.

I would have to agree with this author that these seven areas are extremely important in raising children. Three of these areas really seem to touch home with me. They are commitment, loving their mother, and spiritually equipping your children.

First, I would like to focus on commitment. There are several simple ways we as fathers can show commitment to our families. One is by spending quality time with our children. It is a tradition at my house to let my sleep in on Saturday mornings while the girls and I make pancakes. Carson, 3, climbs up on the right side of the counter and Ellie, 5, climbs up on the left side of the counter both eager to help me in any way. Molli, 19 months, sits in her highchair and watches as we try to make some edible pancakes. The girls really look forward to making the pancakes and spending this special time together on Saturdays. After the pancakes are done, the girls go wake up Lori and we all have breakfast together.

Another secret is to love their mother. I feel this is a very important part of being a father. It is my responsibility to model to my children how a husband should treat his wife. I want my girls to see how important Lori is to me, not only by what I say, but also by how I treat her. In Ephesians 5:25 we are told to “love your wives, just as Christ love the church and gave himself up for her.” In order to be effective parents, we need to make sure our marriage is strong so that it will give our children that special sense of security. Many studies have been conducted about how the absence of a father can affect a child. Children who come from a home without a strong fatherly influence are often more prone to get into trouble. I feel it is because they don’t have that sense of security they need.

The third secret that I feel is extremely important is spiritually equipping our children by being active members in our church, and talking openly and freely about God. Of all the responsibilities we face on earth, this is our biggest and most important challenge. Today there are so many ways in which Satan is trying to reach our children. We have got to make sure that we are teaching our children about God and how powerful God is in our lives. The ultimate goal that we have for our children is for them to get to Heaven. It is my responsibility as a father to do what I can to help them reach this goal.

What Does a Kid Cost?

Author unknown

(North MacArthur Church of Christ bulletin in Oklahoma City, OK)

The government recently calculated the cost of raising a child from birth to 18 and came up with \$160,140 for a middle-income family. Talk about sticker shock. That doesn't even touch college tuition. For those with kids, that figure leads to wild fantasies about all the things we could have bought, all the places we could have traveled, all the money we could have banked if not for having a child. For others, that number might confirm the decision to remain childless. But \$160,140 isn't so bad if you break it down. It translates into \$8,896.66 a year, \$741.38 a month or \$171.08 a week. That's a mere \$24.44 a day. Just over a dollar an hour. Still, you might think the best financial advice says don't have children if you want to be rich. It's just the opposite. There's no way to put a price tag on:

- Feeling a new life move for the first time and seeing the bump of a knee rippling across your skin.
- Having someone cry, "It's a boy!" or shout, "It's a girl!" then hearing the baby wail and knowing all that matters is it's healthy.
- Counting all 10 fingers and toes for the first time.
- Feeling the warmth of fat cheeks against your breast.
- Cupping an entire head in the palm of your hand.
- Making out da-da or ma-ma from all the cooing and gurgling.

What do you get for your \$160,140?

- Naming rights. First, middle and last.
- Glimpses of God every day.
- Giggles under the covers every night.
- More love than your heart can hold.
- Butterfly kisses and Velcro hugs.
- Endless wonder over rocks, ants, clouds and warm cookies.
- A hand to hold, usually covered with jam.
- A partner for blowing bubbles, flying kites, building sandcastles and skipping down the sidewalk in the pouring rain.
- Someone to laugh yourself silly with no matter what the boss said or how your stocks performed that day.

For \$160,140, you never have to grow up. You get to finger-paint, carve pumpkins, play hide and seek, catch lightning bugs and never stop believing in Santa Claus. You have an excuse to keep reading the adventures of Piglet and Pooh, watching Saturday morning cartoons, going to Disney movies and wishing on stars. You get to frame rainbows, hearts and flowers under refrigerator magnets and collect painted noodle wreaths for Christmas, handprints set in clay for Mother's Day and cards with backward letters for Father's Day.

For \$160,140, there's no greater bang for your buck. You get to be a hero just for retrieving a Frisbee off the garage roof, taking the training wheels off the bike, removing a splinter, filling the wading pool, coaxing a wad of gum out of bangs and coaching a baseball team that never wins but always gets treated to ice cream regardless. You get a front-row seat to history to witness the first step, first word, first date, first time behind the wheel. You get to be immortal. You get another branch added to your family tree, and if you're lucky, a long list of limbs in your obituary called grandchildren. You get an education in psychology, nursing, criminal justice, communications and human sexuality no college can match.

In the eyes of a child, you rank right up there with God. You have the power to heal a boo-boo, scare away monsters under the bed, patch a broken heart, police a slumber party, ground them forever and love them without limits, so one day they will, like you, love without counting the cost.