

FAMILY TIMES

A Home-school Newsletter for New Testament Christians
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March-May, 2003

Tolbert Family Profile

by Suze Tolbert

Hello, all. My name is Suzette (or Suze) Tolbert. I have been married to Joel for 16 1/2 years now - not so very long, as I want to celebrate our 75th wedding anniversary one day. He works on computer problems, usually over the phone but sometimes he has to travel. We have 2 wonderful boys named Joshua (age 13) and Caleb (age 10). This is our 3rd year of home schooling. I did not understand how to home school or I am sure I would have done it from the first. My friend, who finally "opened" my eyes, tells me I had been doing both, home schooling and public schooling. I must say it makes life much easier to only home school.

We do several things away from home. On Monday we belong to a home-school bowling group; on Thursday we belong to a home-school band. Joshua plays the trumpet and Caleb plays the clarinet. They also take a private lesson every other Monday evening, each taking a turn.

Joshua is a first-class-level boy scout, and will become Star level next month. He hopes to become an eagle scout in the next year-and-a-half with the camping merit badge being the most difficult for a Christian. We usually pick him up late Saturday night or early Sunday morning. If they are not close, Joel gets to camp so they can leave Sunday morning.

For 8 weeks in the spring and in the fall they both play soccer for our local recreational league, and Joel and I each coach - or at least assistant coach - for each of the teams. I like to be involved. This spring will be Joshua's last season as he will be too old for the league then. We might look into a traveling team but some games are on Sunday and I haven't wanted to deal with that. Joshua knows he will not miss services so he would miss the game if necessary.

With all of these activities I feel that socialization is not a problem. Joshua is part of a class held at the zoo nearby, once a month. It is supposed to tell him about zoo careers. He says it's not quite what he thought it would be, but he still goes. We also get to see the zoo then.

Our usual school day is rather relaxed. I have a book of sheets I made up and fill in for them. I put down which subjects and what pages are to be completed each day. I allow them to choose the order of completing their assignments. I am using a variety of companies based on my previous two years and seeing which companies fit which child. They do seem to enjoy A Beka and the bigger challenge they pose. We do English, writing, science, math, history, geography, Bible, literature, spelling, and they keep a journal. School takes them about 2-3 hours to complete, not including projects or experiments or practicing their instruments. Usually they complete school before lunch but not always.

We then eat lunch and have outdoor time for about an hour. When they come in they practice their instruments and do any projects for the day. For example, when we studied Egypt, I bought a kit to build a pyramid and make a mummy.

I plan to add more art this semester. I have borrowed a book called *Discovering great Artists*, by MaryAnn F. Kohl and Kim Solga. In the back it has the birthdates of several artists and I am going to try to do a project for each one on his birthday.

For example, Michelangelo's birthday is March 6, 1475, and his project is a lie-down painting. You tape a sheet of paper under a table and the kids lie-down and paint. You need to put down lots of newspaper on an old sheet to catch all the falling paint. You also used tempura paints. It shows them just how difficult it was to paint upside-down.

We also make a yearbook. We take pictures of the places we go and activities we do throughout the year, or we just write something about our experience and save ticket stubs or receipts. The yearbooks are made of heavy card stock paper with 3 holes punched down the sides and held together with ribbons. This way we can add or subtract sheets as necessary.

For example, our last outing was to the Art Institute of Chicago. Tuesdays are always free. A special exhibit including Michelangelo's pieces was coming for a few weeks and would only be in two US cities on this tour. I decided this was a good time to go. We only took one picture of a painting by Monet. My camera cannot turn off the flash, and flash is not permitted. I had thought it was bright enough not to flash, but I was wrong. So we didn't take anymore. We then bought one post card for each boy of something they enjoyed at the exhibit. I then cut up the bag the cards came in with the museum name on it and put it next to the post card, leaving room for our picture when I get them developed.

Next year Joshua will begin high school. I am going to use a correspondence school, which will take him two years to complete high school. We live within 5 minutes of our local Junior college, which is very friendly to home schoolers. I plan for him to begin his degree there once high school is completed. I might even start before then. Once he has decided on a degree he will then pick the college closest for that degree to attend. The University my husband graduated from is within 15 minutes of our home.

We very much enjoy life. Home schooling goes right along with this. I like my kids. I do not understand those who do not like their kids. I think my kids like me. :) We get along as a family and enjoy the activities we do. I always include the kids on school purchases, though they would skip math if that was an option. Ha! Ha! We also enjoy traveling and have been many places. Something educational happens everywhere we go, though my kids will moan if they hear the words, "Anyone wishing a tour, please come this way...." Enjoy your family, hug them often, take time for yourself each day, and remember God in all things. This is the only earthly life we get. Why not enjoy it and be happy?

Bob Jones Home Education Satellite System

Reviewed by Sherri Hope

For the past year, we have been using the BJU HomeSat system for our high schooler. The high quality teachers, visual graphics, and thorough instruction combine to make the classes enjoyable and interesting. These classes are challenging, content heavy, and tend to be more structured, requiring the student to adhere to a schedule. Compared to other video programs, HomeSat is more flexible. We can pick any combination of courses we want, regardless of grade or subject. No sets or unwanted Bible courses are required. Also, once taped, these courses can be kept and reused at a later time. HomeSat offers courses K - 12. While most classes are pretaped in a weekly block feed, some high-school-level courses can also be viewed live on a daily basis.

Startup costs include purchasing the hardware, course registration costs, and a monthly access fee (like cable TV). Books are purchased separately. The hardware consists of a satellite dish and a receiver. You can either install the dish yourself, or hire a professional (like we did). We've experienced no problems receiving the satellite signal, and the quality of the signal has been good. Course registrations pay for all test materials, assignment and taping schedules, etc. The Access fee allows you to view all channels plus any special programs. (For example, we watched the BJU Drama Dept. perform Shakespeare's "King Lear".) Student textbooks and curriculum are the buyer's responsibility. However, used materials can be purchased as long as they are current. We found that not all teacher's manuals are absolutely necessary. We also signed up during HomeSat's "register for one course, get one free" sale. These things helped to keep our initial costs down.

As with many curricula, HomeSat has a denominational world view. Unscriptural doctrine is sometimes discussed but we have found such references comparable to the A Beka curriculum. For more information, you can visit HomeSat online at: www.homesat.bjup.com or call them at 1-800-739-8199.

Selecting a Home-School Support Group

by Martha Hollingsworth

By the title you may think that this is a complete list of what you should and should not do when choosing a support group. Well, it isn't. I don't think that there is such a thing. But I would like to share with you a few things that I have run into while being a part of a group.

First of all, if at all possible, choose a group that is exclusively members of the church. There are so many hurdles to overcome when you are part of a group consisting entirely of denominational people: Christmas, Easter, instrumental music with songs of worship. It seems everywhere we turned in our group, we had to defend the Scriptures. As the group grew, each year the problems became more and more frequent.

If you can't find a group consisting entirely of true Christians, my next suggestion would be to choose one that has other members of the church in it. You may still be a minority, but at least you will have some support when it comes to some of the above-mentioned problems.

If there is a statement of faith, read it carefully. We ran into a single sentence that referred to Christ's second coming and His "reign" on earth. At the time the group was just getting started and I was able to take the person aside and talk to her about it. She changed it and it wasn't a big deal. If it had been a few years down the road, I doubt if I would have gotten those results.

Find out what kinds of activities are offered. Where have they gone on field trips in the past? What are the age groups? What "extras" do they offer (scholastic books, Book-it, clubs, and other activities)? Then, sit down and see how many of your children will benefit from the group's activities.

What is the annual membership fee? The group that I was a part of had a \$5 membership for use of the gym and \$5 for the newsletter (\$2.50 if you took it by email). There were some who wanted to raise that. A few others and I disagreed. The others thought that we should charge more to be able to "give" to programs and to do little extras. I disagreed, knowing what kind of programs they would deem worthy, and knowing that some of us would not be able to afford the higher fee. Find out the group's feelings, so you know where your membership money is going and whether they are in it for the money or for support.

If possible, go to a couple of outings or meetings before committing. Talk with other parents who are present. Keep your ear open for signs of discord among the members. Watch the children closely. Are they fairly well behaved? Are they reasonably willing to share? Is there adequate supervision?

Most importantly, pray! Ask God to help you find a group that will be truly beneficial for you and your children: one where you will have the opportunity to let your light shine and where you can make new friends that will uplift you, not bring you down. Consider what kind of influence the children in the group may have on your kids, good or bad.

We recently left the group that my family has been a part of for almost seven years. What started out as just "sitting out" of things we opposed, turned into not being able (Scripturally) to participate in most of the things that that were being offered. We joined this group early in our home-schooling years. We did learn a lot; and even through some of the conflicts, my children and I realized that testing can bring about growth.

AN EDITORIAL REQUEST

In the past we have requested readers to send articles they have written to be published in *Family Times*. However, besides actually writing articles for us, you can help by submitting articles that you may read from other sources. Most of you read home-school articles from various other publications. If you see an article that you consider to be worthy of being reprinted for our readers, please forward it to me. If you can send it in e-mail format, that would be ideal. But even articles in print would be helpful.

I am not looking for the typical newspaper or magazine article that gives an overview about home schooling and interviews 2 or 3 families. Those kinds of articles are becoming quite common. But I am interested in any article that gives new information or helpful suggestions that would benefit the kind of readers we have. In short, we are looking for any article that you read that you find especially helpful as a home schooler or a parent. If you can be our "eyes and ears," you can help us very much by forwarding such articles to us. Be sure to include the name of the author and the source of the article, so we can give credit. And even if the article is copyrighted, if you think it is really good, send it to us anyway, but we will need an address to contact to ask permission to reprint it. **Thanks so much for your help!**

Homeschooling Mothers: What is Our Standard?

by Sally Anne Perz

It is no secret that many mothers are plagued with thoughts that they should be prettier, more fit, more organized, more diligent, or any number of other traits. Often mothers are guilty of comparing themselves to one another - or even worse - comparing themselves to women of the world. The problem with this is that we will always be "better" than some and "worse" than others. If we compare ourselves to one another, the bible teaches that we are not "wise" (2 Corinthians 10:12). We need to search God's word for His standards. Sometimes we get so caught up in doing all of the things we perceive we are supposed to do that we lose sight of what is truly important! We can be beautiful, well dressed, and have a lovely home and smart children ... but if we fail to seek God's will and obey Him all will be in vain. We must erase the picture of the modern woman from our minds and replace it with the woman of Proverbs 31! This is simple to say but not so simple to accomplish, as we are confronted with the world's idea of the "modern woman" on a daily basis. We simply need to avoid trying to keep up with the standards set by the world and turn our hearts to God's word instead.

Many moms are plagued with the feeling that they just don't measure up. They find it hard to fight the pull of the world and their convictions weaken under the pressure to "be more." In addition to this, they become overwhelmed with all of the duties of being attentive wives, nurturing mothers, diligent teachers, and good homemakers. Rather than joyfully fulfilling their God-given roles, they buy into worldly thinking and cry, "Something has to give - I cannot possibly do it all!" They become so discouraged and disheartened that they plug along - too overwhelmed to cook, clean, teach and care for their husband and children. Some become unhappy and unable to rise above the constant demands of a busy home. Some genuinely want to do more but don't know what God really expects of them. Not only are they intimidated by worldly ideals, they convince themselves that the worthy woman of Proverbs 31 is unattainable. Their God-given role becomes a burden and they yearn for the freedom to find fulfillment elsewhere!

For some moms, obstacles can be a source of motivation. Call them rebels, but it is often negative feedback that provides the fuel they need to have the energy to "be all that they can be" (pardon the cliché). Tell them they can't do it and they will set out to prove you wrong! These are the moms that read Proverbs 31 and go about emulating God's example of a worthy woman. They observe successful wives and mothers and follow their example. When Satan tries to lure them into worldly thinking, they fight him off with God's word. They are driven and motivated to fulfill their roles. However, these moms can become alienated from their peers due to their strong convictions and tendency to intimidate others. Their strengths become their adversities if they become arrogant in their success and fall into the temptation to seek the praise of men, rather than the praise of God (Galatians 1:10; John 12:43).

Homeschooling moms come in all shapes, sizes, and personalities - what should they use as their standard? What does God expect? To put it simply, He expects our very best! This wisdom is found in Ecclesiastes 9:10, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." Moms who are plagued with feelings of inferiority should give their all and never fail to seek to do the most with their talents, and not concern themselves with the world's best (cf. 1 Peter 4:11). Moms who are driven to do it all and are tempted to flaunt it should remain humble and be certain that they are seeking the praise of God in their efforts, and not concern themselves with the praise of men. Fulfilling the needs of our families, caring for our home, and teaching our children will be an overwhelming task if we try to accomplish it without God's help. We need to give our all, to do our best, to seek to use our talents as God would have us, and to give Him the glory! We should only be discouraged when we know we are failing to give Him our best!

EDITORIAL NOTES

Once again we express our sincere appreciation to all who submitted material for this issue of *Family Times*. We want to thank Suze Tolbert for her family profile and Sherri Hope for her review. In addition, we want to express our sincere appreciation to our regular writers who submitted material: Martha Hollingsworth, Sally Anne Perz, Janet Metzger, and Wayne Walker. We were a little short on material for this issue, and they once again came to our rescue. Thanks to all of you!

Please, Tell Your Friends about Family Times!

Lamplighter Publishing: Joel, a Boy of Galilee

Reviewed by Wayne S. Walker

For a number of years, Mark Hamby and Lamplighter Publishing, a division of Cornerstone Family Ministries in Waverly, PA, has been quietly reprinting a number of "Rare Collectors" series of classic books, "family Christian literature from the 16th, 17th, 18th, & 19th centuries," primarily didactic and fiction works written for children which were wildly popular in their day but are practically unknown today. The enterprise undoubtedly takes its name from "The Lamplighter," a book by Maria S. Cummins written in the 1800's which they have reprinted.

Hamby writes, "Literature that instructs, inspires, and influences the way we think or act, particularly Christian literature, is often difficult to find. When found, however, it is a rare treasure that enriches one's life more than silver or gold. Here at Cornerstone Family Ministries and Lamplighter Publishing, it is our goal to find not only literature that is rare, but literature that will significantly make an impact on one's relationship with Jesus Christ. To enable God's children to be transformed literally through the renewing of their minds so that they might love Jesus Christ with all their hearts, is our desire. Many have asked what criteria I use when choosing a book. Simply, the book must draw me closer to my Savior. I am looking for literature that I can give to others with confidence and know that the book will make a difference in their life for eternity."

Some of the reprints in this "Rare Collectors" series include "Titus: A Comrade of the Cross" by Florence M. Kingsley, and its sequel, "Stephen: A Soldier of the Cross;" "Christie's Old Organ" by British author O. F. Walton, and its sequel, "Christie: the King's Servant;" and several books, such as "The Basket of Flowers" and "The Inheritance," by Christoph Von Schmid, who is often called one of the greatest authors of inspiring children's literature of the 1800's. All these books are printed in an attractive hardbound collector's format and most cost anywhere from \$11 to \$16. In addition to yearly catalogues listing the books which they have published, along with other materials that they sell, there is a free publication, "The Lamplighter Newsletter" which is available on request.

I recently purchased some of these books and just finished Joel, A Boy of Galilee, as a bedtime read aloud for our two boys. The author was Annie Fellows Johnston. I do not know exactly when she lived or when the book was first published, but Lamplighter's first reprinting was in 1998. The theme is overcoming bitterness and unforgiveness. The catalogue says, "This is a story about a crippled boy who must decide whether to hold on to the Healer of Nazareth or the traditions that foster bitterness and revenge. This is a treasure you will talk about for years." Our eleven-year old would agree with that assessment; he said that it was one of the best books that I have ever read to him.

We might call the book "historical fiction." Joel was a boy who lived in Capernaum during the time of Jesus' earthly ministry, death, and resurrection. While the events in his personal life are fictional, there are interwoven among them many of the events from the life of Jesus that are recorded in the gospel accounts of His life. In fact, at one point, while I was reading, Mark (the eleven-year old) said, "I can see where this is going," and sure enough the account led up to one of the well-known miracles of Jesus. I will not spoil the book by telling you what happens to Joel or how the story ends. But I will say that the author has a wonderful way of telling the story that may occasionally bring tears to the eyes.

The book cost \$16, but it was truly a great story! I am looking forward to reading some of the other books that I purchased from Lamplighter, and will undoubtedly buy even more. The address is P. O. Box 777, Waverly, PA 18471. The toll free phone number is 1-888-246-7735. The website is www.agospel.com. And the e-mail address is lamplighter@agospel.com.

Advice for College Students

by Phyllis Schlafly

[Editor's Note: The following suggestions are made to help students who attend universities, especially state universities. They are not necessarily meant to apply to people who attend small private colleges, especially religious colleges, though these problems could exist in any college or university. And they are clearly suggestions, not meant to be absolute or to apply to every situation. We reprint them because we consider them to be worthy of consideration by students and by parents who send their children to college - Dave Pratte.]

1. Pick your courses carefully. Since you are paying an enormous hourly rate for classes, don't waste your education dollar on trivial, non-academic courses, or rap sessions on highly specialized subjects of no interest to anyone other than a professor who is trying to meet academia's "publish or perish" rule.

2. Take engineering, math and science. You learn things that are true, not things that are false and must be unlearned later.

3. Take courses taught by qualified professors rather than by Teaching Assistants. T.A.s are underpaid graduate students who know very little more than you do.

4. Avoid taking advice from college counselors. They are working for the college and are looking out for the financial interests of the college, not the students'. Counselors frequently channel students into a schedule that ends up requiring five or six years to get a bachelor's degree. Because of federal grants and loans, it is profitable for the college to keep you on campus an extra year or two, but your degree isn't worth a penny more even if it costs you 25 or 50 percent more.

5. Don't believe everything you read in the college catalogue. Many college catalogues are dishonest advertising because up to half of the courses listed are not really offered, or may be offered only once in ten years.

6. Don't think that the title of the course is a guarantee of what the course really covers. So much of the college curriculum has been politicized by the liberals and the feminists. The title may indicate a traditional course of study, but the famous DWEMS (Dead White European Males), who wrote the great books of Western civilization, may have been censored out and replaced with third-rate feminist and minority writers who paint themselves as victims and attack Western civilization as sexist, racist, and oppressive.

7. Make sure you don't get trapped in a course taught by an instructor who doesn't speak intelligible English. Many important and necessary college courses - especially in math and science - are taught by immigrants who can barely speak English.

8. If you take Economics, seek out the professors who teach the successful free-market economics according to Adam Smith or Milton Friedman. It may be hard, but try to avoid professors who teach the failed economics of socialism.

9. If you take English, beware of professors who believe in Deconstructionism. That means there is no such thing as intrinsic merit in a work of literature and that what matters is what you think about the author, not what he actually wrote.

10. Avoid women's studies. They are usually just propaganda courses for radical feminist, and often lesbian, ideology and behavior. Avoid courses that betray their bias and nonacademic content by including in their titles words such as Feminist, Gay, Lesbian, Sex, Gender, Race, or Ethnicity.

11. Seek out courses (if any) that teach the true history and achievements of Western civilization and the United States rather than Multiculturalism, which is a code word for downgrading America as the worst of all cultures. Avoid instructors who impose their anti-Christian bias by demanding that students replace B.C. (Before Christ) and A.D. (Anno Domini) with B.C.E. (Before the Common Era) and C.E. (Common Era).

12. Look out for crime on campus. Most colleges conceal the actual amount of crime that takes place on college campuses.

13. Prepare yourself morally and psychologically for freshman orientation, which may be a culture shock. You might be asked to role-play what it's like to be gay, or told that if you object to coed bathrooms you need psychological counseling.

14. Seek out companions who share your values and beliefs. Join a conservative student support group. If your roommate is on drugs, has sex in your room, or engages in obnoxious behavior that interferes with your studying, demand a change.

15. Don't think you can get into a first-rate college because you are smart. Michele Hernandez, Dean of Admissions at Dartmouth, says you have a better chance of being admitted if you are from a ghetto, a barrio or an Indian reservation, or if you can be someone they can feel sorry for, even if your academic qualifications are lower.

16. Avoid the more than three hundred colleges that have speech codes. Speech codes are Political Correctness run amuck and an offense against the First Amendment.

17. Try to avoid paying student activity fees. They are usually controlled by student leftists and used to promote leftwing causes, speakers, publications, and politics.

18. Don't think you are getting a good education just because you get good grades, because the grading practices are corrupt. It's called Grade Inflation, and it's an insidious system designed to make you feel good about the exorbitant tuition you are paying.

A Penny Saved and a Stitch in Time

by Janet Metzger

******Homemade 'Oxygen' Cleaner**

Make your own from a mixture of 1 cup hot water, 1/2 cup baking soda, and 1/2 cup hydrogen peroxide. It removes even old blood stains! Just soak the clothing in it for 20 minutes to overnight, and then wash as usual. This will not harm colors either. (Make sure all water has filled in washer to dilute the mixture before adding clothes.)

******Free videos and DVDs**

Most libraries will let you check these out free of charge for a couple of days. There are also books on cassette and CD's available as well---great for trips.

36 Ways to Reduce Stress

(author unknown) [slightly modified - editor]

1. Pray
2. Go to bed on time.
3. Get up on time so you can start the day unrushed.
4. Say "No," to projects that won't fit into your time schedule, or that will compromise your mental health.
5. Delegate tasks to capable others.
6. Simplify and unclutter your life.
7. Less is more. (Although one is often not enough, two are often too many.)
8. Allow extra time to do things and to get to places.
9. Pace yourself. Spread out big changes and difficult projects over time; don't lump the hard things all together.
10. Take one day at a time.
11. Separate worries from concerns. If a situation is a concern, find out what God would have you to do and let go of the anxiety. If you can't do anything about a situation, forget it.
12. Live within your budget; don't use credit cards for ordinary purchases (unless you pay off the entire balance monthly in order to earn 'rewards'.)
13. Have backups; an extra car key in your wallet, an extra house key buried in the garden, extra stamps, etc.,
14. K.M.S. (Keep Mouth Shut.) This single piece of advice can prevent an enormous amount of trouble.
15. Do something for the Kid in You everyday.
16. Carry a Bible with you to read while waiting in line.
17. Get enough exercise.
18. Eat right.
19. Get organized so everything has its place.
20. Listen to a tape while driving that can help improve your quality of life.
21. Write thoughts and inspirations down.
22. Everyday, find time to be alone.
23. Having problems? Talk to God on the spot. Try to nip small problems in the bud. Don't wait until its time to go to bed to try and pray.
24. Make friends with godly people.
25. Keep a folder of favorite scriptures on hand.
26. Remember that the shortest bridge between despair and hope is often a good "Thank you, Lord!"
27. Laugh.
28. Laugh some more!
29. Take your work seriously, but yourself not at all.
30. Develop a forgiving attitude (most people are doing the best they can).

31. Be kind to unkind people (they probably need it the most).
32. Sit on your ego even when others try to tear you down
33. Talk less; listen more.
34. Slow down.
35. Remind yourself that you are not the general manager of the universe.
36. Every night before bed, think of one thing you're grateful for that you've never been grateful for before.

Raising Godly Children – A Series (continued)

II. CONSISTENCY BETWEEN WORDS AND DEEDS

by David Pratte

Parents need to adhere steadfastly to the same principles both in what we **do** and in what we **say** we will do. This is especially important in the rules we make and in how we enforce those rules.

A. SOME PARENTS MAKE THREATS OR PROMISES THEY DO NOT KEEP.

We tell our children they must do certain things. Then they stall or manipulate or flat out rebel, but we don't make them do it. We may threaten a punishment or offer a reward, but then we don't keep our word. "If you don't ..., I'm going to ..." (or "If you will ..., then I will..."). But we don't do what we said.

Some parents make ridiculous threats that everyone knows they don't intend to carry out (and if they did carry it out, it would be sinful). "If you don't do what I say, I'll break every bone in your body." Such threats may be made in humor, but often the parent appears to be quite serious and hopes the threat will lead the child to obey.

Such statements often occur when parents are trying to control children by threats and anger, instead of by action (consider our earlier discussion about "Motivation"). In the first place, we need to consider whether it is right to threaten to do something that would be sinful if we did it. But in the second place, we need to consider whether it is right to make threats or promises which we do not keep and in many cases have no intention of keeping.

B. BIBLE PRINCIPLES INVOLVED

Hebrews 10:23 — God is our example of a perfect Father, and He is faithful to His promises. We are motivated to obey Him because we know He will always keep His word. If we could not trust Him to do what He promises to do, we would have little respect for Him and little reason to obey Him. Parents should be faithful to their promises for the same reasons.

Romans 1:31 — Listed among those worthy of death are "covenant-breakers" (NKJV — "untrustworthy"). People who make promises they don't mean or who give their word but don't keep it, are covenant-breakers or untrustworthy. Note that this is true whether we promise to give a reward or a punishment.

James 5:12 — Let your yes be yes and your no, no. Do not lightly say you will do a thing. If you don't mean it, don't say it. If you say you'll do it, then do it. This is true of both your "yes" and your "no."

We tend to think we are obligated to give the rewards we promised our children, but it's OK to forget the promises of punishment. After all, the children don't want us to keep that kind of promise! But a promise is a promise, whether we promise a reward or a punishment. We must keep our promises; otherwise we are not being true to our word, and our children will not truly respect us.

Colossians 3:21 — Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged. Failure to keep their word is one way that parents commonly provoke their children and discourage them. One time they keep a threat or promise they made, but the next time they do not keep their word. Their children do not know whether to believe and trust such parents or not.

There are times when we make a poor decision and promise something, then later we realize it would be best for everyone if we change our mind. In that case, let us apologize for our mistake and explain our reason for changing. But don't lightly make threats or promises and do not lightly break them.

HSLDA DISCOUNTS

The *Family Times* group discount can save you \$15 per year on your membership to the Home School Legal Defense Association. If you are interested, e-mail us at truth@gospelway.com or write us (see our address in the heading). And don't forget to forward any good articles about home schooling for future issues of *Family Times*!