

FAMILY TIMES

A Home-school Newsletter for New Testament Christians
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June-August, 2003

Studying History Chronologically with Veritas Press

By Sally Anne Perz

We have been using Veritas Press History (www.VeritasPress.com) for the past three years and plan to continue to use it throughout high school. It is non consumable, and easy to use with several students of various ages. History is broken down chronologically over a five-year period: Old Testament and Ancient Egypt; New Testament, Greece and Rome; Middle Ages, Renaissance, and Reformation; Explorers to 1815; 1815 to Present.

The Complete History Homeschool Kit (\$220) includes all five of the history kits. One can also purchase the Homeschool Kits individually (\$44 each). Each Kit consists of a tape, a teacher's manual, and a set of 32 cards. The tapes are catchy tunes using the titles of each card, meant for easy memorization of the people and events studied. The teacher's manual consists of reproducible worksheets, tests, grammar activities, and crafts. The cards have works of art on the front, and a summary and list of resources for further study on the back. They recommend resources by priority, usually current and easy-to-find titles (Usborne books are wonderful resources to use with this). Since resources are purchased separately, it is up to the parent to choose supplemental material (primarily non-fiction and fiction that is relevant to the period).

Veritas Press specializes in "Classical Christian Curriculum," yet the individual subjects can be used with any method of teaching. We use the history with all five of our children from a very basic introduction to more intense study. When we were first introduced to it, their catalog had a page included with various timelines for study (it is no longer set up this way). One of those suggestions was to work through the entire chronological study in a five-year period. The first time through is geared for introduction and allows for various ages and skill levels. When the study is completed, one simply starts over providing for higher skill levels using more difficult subject matter and resources to accommodate the more mature students. It is unlikely to be repetitious, as it will have been five years since the first time the subject matter was studied.

Parents are responsible for setting expectations for each student. For instance, I do not expect my younger children to memorize dates or do extensive writing, though I do include scripture memory for them. They read along with the older students and do the activities. Often we read the fiction aloud. As the children increase in skill level, more is expected of them. This is not designed to be a student-led study (though I am certain some could adapt it to be less parent-involved with much ease).

It can be used as an overview in the early years — without worksheets, using lots of good books, and some activities. Older children can do the worksheets, writing exercises, in-depth studies, and more difficult activities. Older children can also use it as a starting point for in-depth studies in any areas of interest. The parent can pick and choose which things necessitate further study and which things can be glossed over based on individual priorities and interests. There are a few easy-to-find-and-correct doc-

trinal errors (in regard to the reformation and church history). Other than those, we highly recommend this material! Its benefits outweigh any negatives. Studying history chronologically makes it much easier to understand and thus, easier to enjoy!

Home Schooling in First Grade

by Melanie Bingham

I have a son just finishing first grade and thought I'd offer some thoughts. My Jesse is the fifth of five children - my baby. His oldest brother Joseph started home school first grade at four-and-a-half with Calvert Curriculum, with his little brother Micah (3 1/2) watching and listening and doing a lot right along with us. We schooled for a few hours a day and read and played the rest.

Let me assure you that this is a far cry from what Jesse did this year! Now I - the mother - am busy home schooling and monitoring the older children; keeping the house, meals, and laundry for 7; helping to fill out college and scholarship paperwork; running innumerable errands; teaching teenage girls' Bible class; and working a small home business to help pay for expensive teen years (food/car/school expenses increase dramatically here). Yes, my three teenage boys all work hard to help - both at home and at paying jobs - but it's still a lot of work for Mom (and Dad)!

What does Jesse do? He plays with Legos and Playmobile. He dresses up as some historical hero every day (sometimes that's Babe Ruth or Jackie Robinson!). He sets up battles in the living room floor and spends a lot of time counting, lining up, getting the sides even. He plays in the backyard and talks to the squirrels, builds tents, and hits the ball by himself or with a brother. He plays store, cards, and games with his big sister. He gets 1/2 hour on the computer many days, not every day, mainly because it's not available. He goes places with us: museums, music lessons, grocery store, concerts, etc. We take a bike ride or walk every few days. He goes to Cub Scouts on Monday nights.

Bookwork? He does do handwriting most days. I have him sit down for color or picture drawing time most days (undirected or monitored - except for "Oh, Jesse, that's GREAT!" or "Jesse, you weren't very careful today; what happened?"). I have a 1st/2nd Grade Wal-Mart math book with adding and subtracting and grouping, and he's worked through most of that. It's colorful and fun. He doesn't do it every day.

I ask him math concept questions a lot - in the car, in the grocery store, during a game - and he's very sharp. Emma lets him in on her math, and he "helps" her. He has learned the concept of multiplication this way and can answer most multiplication questions.

We have made an "Animal Book" this year by making a page for each letter of the alphabet (on card stock), then finding pictures in old books and magazines of animals whose name begins with that letter, and cutting them out. He reads about the animal when he finds it. (We glue it on the page - "Iguana on the I page.") We leave room at the bottom for a Bible verse that begins with that letter, too. We praise God for His great creation. We are not done with our book because we don't do it (nearly) every day, but it is nice, and we'll finish before the end of the year.

We read together at naptime, usually non-fiction. (I rarely miss this because it's my excuse to lie down every afternoon. He either has to nap 'til he's 18 or I'll need another baby.) We read at bedtime, usually Bible. We read fiction at sometime most days. However, Jesse is reading very well, so he reads on his own off and on all day long. Mark started reading the Chronicles of Narnia to him a few months ago, and Jesse ended the series of 7 books (because he just couldn't wait) by reading the final one on his own last week (in two days). I know from my own experience that not every 6-year-old can do this, and I thank God for my fortune here. However, I do tell you this to say that you don't have to beat a kid over the head with learning or drill him every day or make him hate school to get a smart kid.

When we were doing history together every day, he got a lot out of that, but I've let the older kids do American History on their own this year (we're racing to finish), and so I let the together-time go here. I miss it and will go to this next year, as it was so much fun.

My suggestions for first grade (or Kindergarten)?

- 1) **Don't spent a lot of money.** Save it; you'll need it later!
- 2) **Give lots of free time** for imaginative play. He'll have so much fun, and you'll have fun watching him.
- 3) **Be low on electronics.** Give him a *little* computer time each day if you want to, but it's hard on little eyes, and they need fresh air. Give him a little TV time each **week**, if you want to, but that TV time will cut into the time he would be learning to read or practicing his reading if he were free to do so.

No child I've had would choose a book over a movie if you gave him the choice, so I never offered the choice.

4) **Have books everywhere.** Horace Mann said, "A home without books is like a room without windows." Have them easier to find and to reach than the remote, the mouse, or the Game boy (I just had to ask the kids here what those handheld games were called; we've never had one!). :-)

5) **Build on natural curiosity.** Try to find books on subjects that interest them - like sharks or Indians or trees. Answer questions as they come with books and exploration. Usborne has a lot of Starting Point Science, Starting Point History, and First Nature books that we've used very successfully.

6) **Work on sounds and reading.** Make this low-stress. You want him or her to love it. Read often together. Make it a snuggle, fun time. Read good books - fiction and non. Mention sounds and talk about how exciting it will be when he can read on his own and not always have to wait for Mommy. Talk about how exciting it is to think of being able to read **God's** words to him on his own! Use a system like *Teach Your Child to Read in 100 Easy Lessons* or one of the other many choices, but just do it 15 minutes or so per day. I believe the structured reading lessons should be short and the real **time** spent on finding great books (go to library) and hearing great books. You want most of all for him to have a voracious appetite for books and reading; that's what will make him read. We were through only the first 1/4th of the above-mentioned book a year ago when Jesse **took off** reading anything and everything.

7) **A schedule like MOTH will help you accomplish what you need to and not neglect the things you want to do with your 6-year-old.** Give him a schedule, too, to make him feel involved and accountable, but make sure it has tons of room for games, reading, and being outdoors. We schedule time for Jesse to be with each sibling. One reads to him, one plays a game with him, one plays outside with him, one does crafts, etc. Jesse has to clean up his room, etc. before any playtime.

8) **If you have time and energy and want to do something schoolish with him for 1st grade,** I highly recommend *Five in a Row* or *Konos* - both very fun, book-oriented, and rich! I've used them both. I would avoid bookwork curricula like A Beka or Bob Jones at this age. It will serve a very useful place later, though! And as for "lesson plans," those two curricula give great suggestions.

There are certainly things I would **love** to be doing with Jesse that I cannot, simply because of his placement as fifth child. He is having a ball, though. :-)

Hope this stream of consciousness helps someone.

Group Issues Sobering Report on Public Schools

By David Brody, Washington, D.C., correspondent
via Citizen Link Daily Update - 4/24/03

SUMMARY: A new report shows teachers, students and parents are extremely concerned about the state of public schooling in America.

The statistics are startling. Almost half of all teachers say they spend more time trying to keep order in the classroom than teaching. And more than half of the parents say students' disrespectful behavior is common.

Those are the findings of a new study conducted by Public Agenda on the state of public school education.

"Teachers and parents — and even students themselves — talk about how rough-edged the atmosphere is in high schools," said Debra Wadsworth, president of Public Agenda, of the findings.

Wadsworth said education reform has placed a lot of emphasis on standardized testing, and that's good, but parents frustrated with the results should first look in the mirror.

"Parents need to be more involved with what goes on at home," Wadsworth said.

She pointed to statistics showing that 78 percent of teachers say parents simply don't know what's going on in their child's education. She said parents must be accountable.

"They worry about the fact that parents don't seem to be setting limits or creating sufficient structure at home, which of course plays out in the way these kids behave once they come to school."

Mark Fey, education policy analyst at Focus on the Family, said times have changed.

"The days of parents just placing their child on the big yellow school bus are past, and we're at a point now where parents need to be involved in every step of the education process," Fey said.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Public Agenda's Web site contains more comprehensive information about their survey: <http://www.publicagenda.org/>.

Home-School Band the Hard Way

by Katy Jones

One of the most difficult and rewarding projects I have ever done has been to create and maintain the Hill Country Homeschool Band. I was a music education major (a flutist) in college, though I did not finish my degree.

When we put our oldest son in public school upon moving to the small town of Kerrville, Texas, I discovered that the high school band director was my old director. I soon started substituting for the band, including a three-month full-time stint during marching season, as well as giving private flute lessons to some of the students. This proved to be valuable experience for what was to come.

During this time my oldest son joined the band, but after his sixth grade year it became apparent that we needed to home school him again. Not wanting him to lose out on the important things that music - and band in particular - could teach him, I found other home schoolers who also wanted a band, including one of my former public school flute students.

We began with seven: my son on trumpet, two flutes, an alto saxophone, a trombone, one snare drummer and one xylophone player (who already played piano). Everyone had an instrument except one of the flute players, and I found an inexpensive one at a local pawn shop. Right away I realized that finding music to fit the needs of such an unusual ensemble was going to be my biggest challenge. Thankfully I had taken two years of music theory in college, so I started adapting songs to fit our group. Sometimes I would start with the score of a song at the band hall, but more and more began using piano arrangements and thinking "quartet" sound.

All the students in the band are so busy with other activities that we can only rehearse together once a week. The directors let us use the band hall after school, and because I stay in touch by teaching flute lessons and two weekly flute classes, they are very gracious to let us use percussion equipment, stands, and some of the simpler arrangements of music that will work with our group. Otherwise the cost of these items would be prohibitive.

One year there were 22 students in the band, but usually we have 15-20 each year. Some graduate, others move or go on to public or private school. But usually I have a core of good players, with at least one strong player on flute, clarinet, trumpet, and trombone. Occasionally we've had an alto saxophone, and one year an oboe and baritone, but I still think "quartet" in arranging the music.

When a beginner joins the band (some kids have been ready at age 8, others do better with a little more maturity), I teach them privately for a few lessons until I think they're ready to "jump in" with the group. We've never had a situation in which we could have two groups: more experienced players and beginners. In almost every instance, however, putting the beginners in with the older players has helped them progress faster. They are "challenged" to practice more in order to catch up, and the older players seem to enjoy helping the younger ones.

When I first began the band, I envisioned growing larger and more accomplished and giving concerts to "advertise" home schooling. But because each year is a whole "new world" with beginners and rotating personnel, I've had to lower my expectations somewhat. It's worked out for the best, however, because we do all of our concerts at two local nursing homes with dining rooms large enough to hold us (and our sound). The residents eagerly look forward to our coming (we do 4-5 concerts at each place yearly). The kids practice diligently at home in order to play their best for their new friends. It's a win/win situation!

I try to organize the concerts along a theme, using songs that the kids will enjoy practicing and the residents will enjoy hearing. We do at least one patriotic concert every year (usually on Veteran's Day). But we've also taken the residents "around the world" (songs from other countries), on a journey through the "history of music" (songs from each era, beginning with the middle ages), "movie themes," "Star Wars," "remembering your childhood," and this spring, "Disney songs."

The main expense is, of course, the instruments, but so far we've been able to find decent used instruments at pawn shops and garage sales. Each child buys their own wire music stand to practice with and bring to concerts, and for uniforms I bought yards and yards of black and white music fabric and two other seamstress moms helped me sew vests to wear with white shirts and blue jeans/skirts. Theoretically the kids turn in their vests when they leave the band, but sometimes we've lost a few!

At first I only charged for private lessons, but I realized that people appreciate things more when it costs them something. Now I charge \$7.50 for each lesson and \$20 per semester to cover the cost of copying music and concert programs, etc. I do spend a lot of time arranging music and preparing for con-

certs and tryouts, but I don't expect to be compensated. After all, I started this for my kids' benefit, and band is much more fun when others play along, too!

To encourage camaraderie (and also to help them concentrate during our once-a-week rehearsals) we have regular pizza parties after band, so the kids can just visit with one another.

Most of the kids like to compete, but since we don't compete as a group, I have found individual try-outs in which they can participate. Through eighth grade, students can compete with public school students for chairs in the Hill Country Honor Band (we've had some make it nearly every year), older kids can try out for the Texas Music Educators Association All-Region band (so far one flute player made it two years in a row), and the local middle school hosts a non-UIL solo & ensemble contest for area schools. They let our kids participate, even those that are older than middle school age.

When they earn patches and medals, they wear them on their band vests. I also give each one a medal when they can play all twelve major scales and chromatic scale by memory.

I suppose not just anyone could start a band. It's been difficult trying to keep it going single-handedly. I was a flute major and had learned trumpet and a little clarinet, but I'd never touched a trombone before. (I found one at a pawn shop and taught myself.) And one hour before my oboe player began, I had a crash lesson with an experienced player so I could at least keep one step ahead!

For those interested in starting a band, I would recommend looking for a retired band director. Most of them are glad to be away from the headaches of the public school program but still miss teaching music to kids. If you would be willing to act as parent liaison, the director would probably be glad to share his expertise with the children. My oldest son no longer plays trumpet, but the musical knowledge he gained in his years of home-school band helped him become an excellent song leader. My youngest has five more years to play his trumpet, and then I plan to retire, too!

A Penny Saved and a Stitch in Time

by Janet Metzger

******This is a tip I read that I thought was worth passing on.**

Don't read advertisements in the paper. When I am ready to grocery shop, I will look at the food ads, not before. I do the same when I need other items such as appliances, clothing, etc. Advertisers work very hard enticing us to "want," "need," and "buy." If I don't know that I need something, I usually don't need it and don't miss it. Plus, I save money by letting myself, not the advertisers, control my spending habits.

******Insurance is becoming more and more unaffordable for many.**

If you or a member of your family has no insurance, check out www.healthcareadvantage.com. This is not a major medical policy, but it is affordable and has some good benefits. It is better than having no insurance at all. It is better in some areas than others, so you might want to check out the providers before signing up.

The providers available can be found at www.BeechStreet.com or www.multiplan.com. The individual plans start as low as \$44.95/mo. with maximum benefits going up to \$119.95/mo. This is the plan that I have. The maximum amount to cover a family is \$139.95/mo. and they also have lesser plans. This also includes one free dental cleaning per family member per year.

On the single plan there is \$25,000 accidental death insurance as well as disability insurance. The company has health care advocates who will work with the doctors on the plan to help find you the cheapest, most affordable services, for instance if you need to have a root canal or your gall bladder removed.

The man I spoke with is named Eddie, and he may be contacted at (888) 440-9002. He is very helpful and would be happy to answer any of your questions. He is there Monday-Friday during office hours. Everyone is accepted. There are no exclusions for any pre-existing conditions. Again, this is not a major medical policy; however, Eddie said he has an affordable policy with Allstate for something called a catastrophic plan with a very high deductible that would cover him in the event of heart surgery, cancer, etc. The combined total of the health care advantage plus the Allstate policy is much less than the \$800 plus it would cost to cover his family on most plans.

Time to Renew Your Subscription?

Regular mail subscribers, if your mailing label does not show "(04)" above your name, it is time for you to renew! E-mail subscribers who need to renew should receive a special reminder by e-mail.

Review of Homeschooling Magazines

by Wayne S. Walker

There was a country song a few years ago which said, "I was country before country was cool." Former Texas Senator Phil Gramm made a play on that and said, "I was conservative before conservative was cool." People who were homeschooling back in the time "before homeschooling was cool," often remark about the almost total lack of resources for assistance and encouragement that existed in those early days. In contrast, there is such an absolute plethora of these kinds of resources available today that it is somewhat confusing and almost dizzying. Just type in "homeschooling" for an internet search and see what you get! Then type in "home education" and see how many other items come up!

This same thing is true regarding homeschooling magazines. Once, there were none. Then, there were just a few. Now, there are many. I like magazines. Homeschooling magazines can provide a lot of useful information for homeschoolers. A recent cartoon showed the effect that computers and the Internet have had on traditional print media. A teenager picks up a magazine at a newsstand, looks at it, and says to his friend, "Wow, dude, it's already downloaded and printed out!" While I have benefited from many resources on the Internet, I prefer a magazine that I can hold in my hands, sit down in my easy chair, and peruse at my leisure, rather than something that I must sit at a computer monitor on my desk and look at while online (I spend enough time doing that in my work!).

A couple of homeschooling magazines have already ceased print publication and gone entirely online: "Homefire's Journal of Home Schooling" and "Home Education Learning Magazine" (now called "Educational Freedom Press" Magazine). I realize that magazines can be expensive, and most homeschoolers would have neither the money nor the time to subscribe to them all. I do only because I enjoy reading them. However, I would encourage every homeschooling family to subscribe to at least one homeschooling magazine to give them that shot in the arm that we all need every once in a while. Most state homeschool organizations, many local support groups, and even some homeschool-related businesses have magazines or at least newsletters for their members, but this list consists of those homeschool magazines that are intended for a nationwide audience.

* "Home Education Magazine," published bimonthly by Mark and Helen Hegener, P. O. Box 1083, Tonasket, WA, 98855-1083; phone: (509) 486-1351; e-mail: HEM-info@home-ed-magazine.com; website: www.home-ed-magazine.com. Unlike so many other home education magazines, this one does not come from a specifically "Christian" perspective, although it is not specifically "anti-Christian" either. It tends to lean more toward the "unschooling" philosophy of John Holt, but it is nice to get a different perspective on things, and there is always some good material in it. The subscription price is \$32.00 for a year (six issues).

* "Home Educator's Family Times," published bimonthly by Jane R. Boswell, P. O. Box 708, 51 W. Gray Rd., Gray, ME 04039; phone: (207) 657-2800; e-mail: famtimes@homeeducator.com; website: www.HomeEducator.com/FamilyTimes. In newspaper format, this is a general homeschooling publication. The subscription price is \$8.00 for first-time subscribers and \$12.00 for renewals for a year (six issues), although it will be sent without charge to those who cannot afford to subscribe or donate.

* "The Home School Court Report," published bimonthly by the Home School Legal Defense Association, P. O. Box 3000, Purcellville, VA 20134; phone: (540) 338-5600; website: www.hsllda.org. This magazine is designed to provide news and information for members of the HSLDA and is free to them, but I understand that it is available to non-members for the price of a subscription, which is \$15.00 for a year (six issues).

* "Home School Digest," published quarterly by Wisdom's Gate, P. O. Box 374, Covert, MI 49043; phone: (800) 343-1943; e-mail: WisGate@CharacterLink.net; website: www.homeschooldigest.com. Wisdom's Gate was founded in 1988 by editor Skeet Savage who had homeschooled her six children since 1978. The magazine is committed to equipping parents to train their children in godly character, disciple them to follow the Lord, and understand the world around them from a Biblical worldview. It is an unabashedly Biblical publication. The subscription price is \$18.00 for a year (four issues), but when you subscribe you can sign up a friend for a one-year gift subscription absolutely free!

* "Home School Enrichment," published bimonthly by the Lewis Family, P. O. Box 163, Pekin, IL 61555; phone: (800) 558-9523; e-mail: info@HomeSchoolEnrichment.com; website: www.HomeSchoolEnrichment.com. This is a "new kid on the block." The publishers give as their purpose

“to provide encouragement and information to the Christian homeschool community.” The subscription price is \$18.00 a year (six issues).

* “Homeschooling Parent,” published bimonthly by Rick and Cyndi Simmons, 13258 Overlook Ct., Conroe, TX 77302; phone: (936) 756-2226; e-mail: editor@homeschoolingparent.com; website: www.homeschoolingparent.com. The editor says that their “primary platform” is to “provide Homeschooling Parent as a ministry of encouragement to the homeschooling community nationwide” with “a belief in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior.” Many homeschooling organizations and support groups often give free copies of this magazine to members. However, if you want it mailed to your home, individual subscriptions are \$14.95 for a year (six issues).

* “Homeschooling Today,” published bimonthly by James and Stacy McDonald, P. O. Box 436, Barker, TX 77413; phone: (281) 492-6050; e-mail: editor@homeschooltoday.com; website: www.homeschoolingtoday.com. This magazine was started in 1992 by two couples, Debbie and Greg Strayer and Dale and Susan Simpson. Maureen McCaffrey came on board in 1997 and later became the sole owner. Recently, it was purchased by Family Reformation, LLC, owned by the McDonalds. It is designed to provide homeschoolers with the tools to teach culture and literature as well as a number of other subjects, all from a Biblical perspective. The subscription price is \$21.99 for a year (six issues).

* “The Link,” published bimonthly by Michael and Mary Leppert, PMB 911, 587 Ventu Park Rd., Suite #, Newbury Park, CA 91230; phone: (805) 492-1372; e-mail: the.link@verizon.net; website: www.homeschoolnewslink.com. The publishers are also the authors of the “Homeschooling Almanac.” This homeschooling newspaper seeks to provide a broad range of information and resources to all homeschoolers without promoting an agenda relative to religion or homeschooling style. And the best thing about it is that it is absolutely free. All you need to do is send them your name and address and ask to be put on their mailing list. The entire cost of printing and mailing is borne by the advertisers.

* “The Old Schoolhouse,” published quarterly by Paul and Gena Suarez, P. O. Box 185, Cool, CA 95614; phone: (530) 823-0447; e-mail: publisher@TOSMag.com; website: www.thehomeschoolmagazine.com. The publishers of this magazine definitely come from a Biblical background, but it aims to have material that will be beneficial for all homeschoolers. I happen to be the state coordinator for the Missouri page of “Homeschool Nation” on their website. The subscription price is \$19.00 for a year (four issues).

* “Practical Homeschooling,” published bimonthly by Home Life, Inc., P. O. Box 1190, Fenton, MO 53026; phone: (636) 529-0137; e-mail: inbox@home-school.com; website: www.home-school.com. Mary Pride, author of *The Big Book of Home Learning*, her husband Bill, and their family began this magazine in 1993. Their purpose is three-fold: “(1) to continually advance the frontiers of homeschooling, (2) to make it as easy as possible for parents to homeschool, and (3) to encourage parents to raise their children to become Christian heroes.” They are continually researching and investigating promising educational models, strategies, and products in a sort of “Consumers’ Report” for homeschoolers. The subscription price is \$19.95 for a year (six issues).

* “The Teaching Home,” published bimonthly by Pat and Sue Welch, P. O. Box 20219, Portland, OR 97294; phone: (503) 253-9633; e-mail: tth@TeachingHome.com; website: www.TeachingHome.com. I will go ahead and mention this venerable magazine, which was founded in 1980 to “provide information, inspiration, and support to Christian home-school families and Christian home-school state and national organizations.” Unfortunately, they have run into some financial problems. The last issue that I received was Jan./Feb., 2001. However, I have received communications from them which say that they hope to raise money by selling back issues and other items to resume regular publication. They still maintain an excellent website and have a free e-mail newsletter. If you would like more information, you can contact them.

There. You have a pretty good list from which to choose. It should be understood that neither I myself nor anyone else associated with “Family Times” would give unqualified endorsement to everything that is said in any of these magazines. The only thing that we can recommend as completely infallible is the Bible. However, each of these magazines will have some information that you should find useful. The trick is locating the one that best meets your needs. My suggestion would be to look over the list and subscribe for a year to one that really sounds good to you. If you like it, stay with it. If not, then after a year try another. Happy reading!

Seven Keys to Raising Godly Children (A series continued)

III. CONSISTENCY BETWEEN CHILDREN

Parents should not play favorites with their children, but should “steadfastly adhere to the same principles” regardless of which child they are dealing with.

A. SOME PARENTS ARE PARTIAL TO A PARTICULAR CHILD.

Sometimes parents just like one child better than the others or play favorites for some other reason. As a result they may be more lenient with one child. The favorite can do what is forbidden to others. When one child violates the rules, he or she is not punished as severely as another child is for the same violation. The favorite may receive gifts or favors that the others do not, etc.

Note that this does not mean all children must have the same rules despite different circumstances. Sometimes children quickly and unfairly accuse parents of favoritism simply because one child is allowed to do what other children are not allowed to do, etc. But sometimes rules are justifiably different because of different circumstances.

For example, if one child is older, he may get to stay up later or go places the younger ones cannot go, etc. The point is that rules should be the same for all children in the same circumstances. And the rules should not be different just because we like certain children better than we do others.

Favoritism harms all the children. The ones who are discriminated against become rebellious. They are jealous of the favorite and angry at the parents. They feel unloved and may deliberately disobey parents to get attention.

But the favorite is also hurt because he grows up thinking he deserves special treatment. He thinks he is more important than other people and can break the rules and get away with it. But he will have great difficulty adjusting to real life, because the world won't treat him that way. And God certainly won't treat him that way.

B. BIBLE PRINCIPLES INVOLVED.

Bible examples show the consequences of favoritism.

Isaac and Rebekah each had favorite children. Isaac loved Esau but Rebekah loved Jacob (Gen. 25:28). This resulted in such strife and deceit that Esau sought to kill Jacob, and Jacob to have to leave home.

Genesis 37:3,4 — Later Jacob also played favorites, which caused hatred between his sons. His favorite son was Joseph, so the others sold Joseph as a slave and almost killed him because of their jealousy.

Acts 10:34,35 — Our heavenly Father, who is our perfect example of a father, does not play favorites. He does not respect persons, but treats us entirely according to how we act toward Him. Especially regarding rewards and punishments, God's treatment of us is based entirely on our conduct with no partiality shown (Rom. 2:11).

James 2:1,8,9 — Likewise God forbids us to show respect of persons. Partiality violates the Royal law, which requires us to love our neighbor. Partiality is sinful just as surely as murder or adultery, yet many people are guilty right in their own homes!

Colossians 3:21 — Again, we must not provoke our children to discouragement. But one of the surest ways to discourage them is to treat them unjustly and unfairly. And one of the surest ways to be unjust is by practicing favoritism. [Matt. 7:12]

by David Pratte

EDITORIAL NOTES

Once again we want to thank so many who have contributed material for this issue. First we want to thank our regular contributors: Sally Anne Perz, Janet Metzger, and Wayne Walker. And thanks also to Melanie Bingham and Katy Jones. We invite all of you to continue submitting articles. We appreciate them so much. If you sent an article that we did not have room to use, look for it in the next issue!

Several people have responded to our request for reviews of Internet filters. If you have used some filtering service or software to protect children online but have not written to us yet, please send us your review. We hope to summarize the results in our next issue.

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