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Section II

Independence

and

Good Habits

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INDEPENDENCE



Fly the Flag After the Victory Is Won

Chapter Nine

Independence



In our previous chapter, I emphasized the importance of children's learning to follow their parents' instruction. Obedience produces wisdom (Proverbs 29:15) and is imperative for children's protection, security, and well-being. The harmony of the home depends on their ability to do as they have been told.

However, obedience alone will not produce a well-rounded and responsible person. If a child's instructions and orders are always dictated to him, he will be a helpless individual indeed. Little by little, he must learn to be independent, stand on his own two feet, do his own thinking, and learn to make judgments when Daddy and Mother are not there.

What Is Independence?

Independence is "freedom from the control, influence, support, or help of another." It is a severing and separation. When a baby's umbilical cord is clipped, he is severed from the inward protection and surrounding he has received from his mother the preceding nine months. No longer is there a need for this dependent place. He is freed to independence.

In an autocratic family, complete severing from the parents will not be achieved by the children until they leave home and establish homes of their own. And, if we want to get technical, even then they are not completely independent of their parents. Remember we said that "freedom from influence" is part of independence? The influence of a child's parents will be with him in some way as long as he lives.

No matter how hard you may try, it's impossible to separate yourself completely from parental influence. You could have plastic surgery all over your body, invest a fortune in wigs, false eyelashes, and make-up; but the pigment of your skin, the color of your eyes, and your hair roots will always be what your parents gave you. Many other things will also be there, even though they are not so visible to the eye as the characteristics just mentioned. ♀  

Be Prepared

When this severing and separation time comes with a child's marriage, or with a job and an apartment of his own, parents want their child to be prepared. It is an honor to any set of parents to produce a child who makes a responsible husband or wife for the chosen mate, a dependable employee for his employer, and who is an asset to humanity instead of a liability. Responsible independence, however, is not an achievement to be only hoped for. It is a goal that has to be planned and worked toward.

What can parents do to assure themselves that their child will grow up to be an independent, responsible citizen, employee, marriage partner, and parent himself? I have entitled this chapter, "Fly the Flag After the Victory Is Won." I will use the remainder of the writing to suggest four ways we can gradually give small portions of freedom and thus help our children to develop an independence that will contribute to their becoming responsible adults.

1. LOVE HIM AND MAKE HIM OBEY

You will be relieved to know that you are already on your way to helping your child achieve independence if you are doing your homework, because the first step is to love him and make him obey.

I should like to re-emphasize what it means to love. Often people erect a facade of sentimentality and call it love. With this false view of love, they will let a child have his own way, find it easier to try to shield, to urge a more comfortable way, to grant everything that is within their power to grant, and to excuse rather than to expect. This is sentimentality; it is not love. Sentimentality is an image - - a man-made emotion, limited and constricting and, like all

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An autocratic parent must have a love that is courageous. A sacrificial love takes much self-discipline on the parents' part. It requires an inward strength that will help them stick to what is right and make their children do accordingly. A love that seeks obedience will build a child who is responsible for his behavior and actions. This kind of love will call a child to account day after day. He will be asked to give an account, "Why did you do this?" "Why did you do that?" Or, "You need a reminder to help you remember not to make that mistake again." All of this is building responsibility for his actions, and no parents will go to that trouble and time unless they are seeking the very best for their child.

2. RETREAT! LET HIM OCCUPY HIS TERRITORY

The second thing a parent must do to help his child obtain gradual independence is to retreat and let him occupy his territory. Our American flag waves to us each day to remind us of the freedoms and independence we have as American citizens. It is only because many battles have been fought and won that we have earned the right to our freedoms. Should we ever show irresponsibility in the use of them, Old Glory would be taken down, and another flag more worthy would fly in its place.

When a Child Conquers a Physical Skill of Life



1. Fly his flag.
2. Lavish the praise. (This ingredient makes a child stand six feet tall.)
3. Have a celebration.
4. Parents, retreat.
5. Let the child occupy his new territory.

Likewise, our children fight the battles of life and make constant achievements on their way to growing up. Any time they master a skill, whether great or small, they deserve the right to proclaim their freedom and exercise it freely. (As long, of course, as it is something right and good and would not be harmful to them.) On the preceding page are five steps autocratic parents should remember in relinquishing a portion of independence to their children.

Three Examples

Let's consider three examples in which a child makes *physical* achievements. For months and years he has depended on his parents for these things, but now he is capable of doing them for himself.

Example 1 - Baby learns to walk! From birth until nine to fourteen months old, a child has to depend on his parents to carry him everywhere he goes. Little by little, he begins to develop his strength and balance and tries walking on his own. In his efforts, he will fail and stumble time and time again. Soon the day arrives when he lets go of Mother's hand and toddles across the room by himself. When the baby wins this small battle, what should his parents do? They should grant him freedom to exercise that skill. They should (a) *Fly his flag.* (b) *Praise the baby.* (When you praise or show attention, psychologists say, you are reinforcing the action; Baby will want to repeat the performance because of all the attention that is lavished upon him.) (c) *Have a celebration.* Clapping, cheering, squeezing, and hugging will make the baby feel so important that he will love displaying his new skill. (d) *Parents, retreat.* No more must Daddy and Mother carry the baby everywhere he goes. (e) *Let him occupy his new territory.* The baby can now physically take himself almost everywhere he will need to go.

Example 2 - Three-year-old James learns to put his shirt and pants on. For approximately forty-two months, Mother has dressed and undressed James two, three, and often more times a day. For the past few weeks, he has been taking an interest in trying to figure out which is the front and back of his shirt and pants, where the zipper and buttons go, and which arm and leg go in which hole. Finally the day comes when James is able to put it all together. He

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proudly comes in, tells Mommy what he can do, and shows her what a big boy he is getting to be. He can put his clothes on all by himself! What is his mother to do? She must (a) *Fly his flag*. (b) *Praise James*. Give him all kinds of attention. This will reinforce, remember, and James will want to repeat his accomplishment tomorrow (c) *Have a celebration*. At suppertime, she can tell Daddy and the family what James did and what a big boy he is getting to be. She can even fix his favorite fried chicken to celebrate the event. (d) *Mother, retreat*. No more will it be a requirement for her to have to put James' shirt and pants on. He has proven that he is capable of doing it by himself. (e) *Let James occupy his new territory*. Allow James to exercise his new skill freely.

Example 3 - Five-year-old Alicia learns to tie her shoes. For the past five years, it has been mother's job to tie and double-tie Alicia's shoes. One day Alicia gets interested in learning the mechanics of tying shoes and starts practicing. Mother patiently demonstrates and explains each step. The morning arrives when Alicia squeals with delight, "Look! I tied my shoe all by myself!" What is Alicia's mother to do? She will (a) *Fly her flag*. (b) *Praise Alicia* for this marvelous accomplishment. (That is reinforcing the action, remember.) (c) *Celebrate!* Hug, squeeze, and have a love feast for Alicia. (d) *Mother, retreat*. (e) *Let Alicia occupy this territory*. No more tying Alicia's shoes.

All these children are learning responsibility - - achieving small portions of independence. "I don't need Mommy to carry me, dress me, and tie my shoes, because I can do it by myself."

Yum Yum, Doughnuts!

One time when one of our children learned to tie her shoes, we really celebrated. She had been working at it gradually for a few weeks, but was having a hard time with the last step of wrapping the string around the final loop. One morning she was sitting in the middle of the kitchen floor, patiently and diligently trying her skills. All at once she jumped for joy when she was able to perform every step. I was standing at the sink doing dishes, but, at the sudden burst of excitement, I stopped. She wanted to show me how she could tie

her shoe *all by herself*. Sure enough, she tied the prettiest little bow you ever saw. I lavished her with praise and we celebrated. We went to the phone and called Daddy at the office. He spread on another layer of praise and brought home her favorite doughnuts for lunch. I retreated, and she has tied her shoes ever since.

3. INSIST! MAKE HIM OCCUPY HIS TERRITORY

Now that your child has his flag flying, he's had the victory celebration, you have retreated out of his way, and he has a new responsibility, you will have to insist that he occupy his new territory. This step will be essential in order to help your child achieve greater independence.

I must caution you that children will be children. After the victory celebration is over and the new wears off, they have a terrible tendency to get lazy. It is much easier to let Mamma do it, and sometimes, I might add, it is easier on Mamma to go ahead and do it. But don't you do that! Instead of assuming your children's responsibilities for them, get your stinger out and see to it that they occupy their own territory. Expect the best performance they can give. They can do it. They have proven it. And since we are being patriotic, you might remember to tell them, "You can't be an American and say I can't." Amer I Can!

Our Pattern Is Falling Into Shape

Do you see how our TUAC pattern is falling into shape? Remember what we have learned about how one component sets the stage for the next? Daddy and Mother's relationship and responsibilities precede love. Love comes before obedience, and obedience must be accomplished before independence can fully mature.

If you haven't taught respect for your authority and your spoken word, how are you going to get James to put his pants and shirt on if he happens not to want to put them on? Or how will you insist that Alicia get her shoes on and tie them if she isn't feeling in the mood?

This is what happens much of the time - - James and Alicia know that Mommy is in a hurry to get to the meeting or to Bible class.

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They reason, "If I stall and procrastinate long enough, Mother will do my job for me." And, sad to say, that is often what happens. Always remember that you are hurting your child's respect for authority and hampering his development of independence when you give in and do his jobs for him.

Please, Daddy, Let Me Learn to Milk

How well I remember as a child watching my big brothers milk the cows. I wanted so much to learn to milk that I didn't know what to do. I couldn't wait until my daddy let me take a bucket and sit down on the milk stool. Finally the day came when he sat me down to our most gentle cow and showed me how to milk.

My basic motivation for wanting to learn this skill was that I had seen my brothers squirt the milk in a long stream across to the side of the barn where the cats were lined up. They would stand on their hind legs and leap in the air to catch the flying milk. I loved cats and I wanted to feed the cats that way too.

I worked and worked trying to get a stream of milk. I squeezed and squeezed and squeezed some more. Pretty soon, out came that first stream of milk. I could milk! My brothers really had a victory celebration. They raised my flag, praised me greatly, and they moved over. There was one more milker now!

It didn't take me long to catch on to the fact, however, that it wasn't all play, but was time consuming and very hard work. Typical of all children, I found that milking wasn't my favorite way of spending my time. But all the time I was in high school, my father made me occupy the territory when he needed me. My brothers did most of the milking, but in the summertime especially, when they were on tractors or bringing in the crops, my sister and I were the milkmaids. Because we had taken on this territory, our parents saw to it that we occupied the space.

One Final Reminder

At this point we need one last reminder: there are areas of children's development in which we need to remember to let them be children, and let them be themselves. If first baby learned to walk at nine

months, second baby is not necessarily required to do so. She may not be ready for that skill until she is closer to fourteen months old.

The fact that Jennifer was potty-trained at a year and a half doesn't mean Rich has to be. He may not accomplish that step until he is past three. Many parents get worried if they feel their child is a little slower in developing a new skill than they think he should be. They push, persuade, and try to hurry the child contrary to his pace; and it results in a nervous, fretful, and tense individual. Instead of the child's achievements getting progressively better, they get noticeably worse.

I should like to say a word about potty-training. This is a subject that used to bother me also. When and how do you get a baby to wet in the potty and not in his pants? How long should you give him the benefit of the doubt, and how can you be certain he is capable of having complete control?

When you should start potty-training is up to you. Some mothers start a little before age two, and others wait till later. The counsel I have received from winning mothers about potty-training, and what I want to share with you is this - - *Exercise patience regarding the potty. No spanking for dirty panties until you are absolutely positive your child is physically capable of controlling his bowels and bladder.*

Here is a tip: when you are ready to start potty-training, purchase either *I'm a Big Boy Now* or *I'm a Big Girl Now*, depending on the sex of your child. These little books are put out by The First Years division of Kiddie Products, Inc., Avon, Massachusetts 02322. Inside the packet is a marvelous little pamphlet of instructions for mother and a precious book to be read to baby.

One time I was exercising patience regarding the potty but was just about to run out of forbearance. Our little darling was over three years old and as smart as could be, but our toddler had wet pants continually. It was about this time that I was told about these little toilet-training picture books. I purchased one, read it to our child, and our little one had dry pants the very next day. It was simply marvelous! Completely potty-trained over night!

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Now I must not stop the story there and leave you with a false impression. It must be pointed out that our three year old had dry pants for a *few* days. When the new of the book and the precious little elephant character wore off, carelessness set in again and our little challenge reverted to the old habit of wetting the pants.

What the little book did for me was prove that our child had plenty of physical ability to control excretions. The problem had lain in the fact that I had just never demanded the control. I then started being more strict, used the rod a few times, and that stage of development was made complete.

Dr. Homan says mothers spend far too much time worrying and trying to teach things that, if the child were left alone, he would learn on his own. He advises not to spend precious time worrying about such things as when to potty-train, or when to take the bottle away. You never in your life saw a high school student in diapers or going around with a bottle. Dr. Homan says to leave the child alone; he will accomplish controlling his bowels and giving up the bottle in his own good time. Wash those diapers a little longer. It will pay rich dividends. You will have a happy, calm, and contented child in return. If you want to spend your time wisely with a preschooler, use it teaching him to obey you, says Dr. Homan. That will occupy plenty of your time.⁶

As a former school teacher and on behalf of all school children, I should also like to say, "Please don't push your child to a higher grade until he has well accomplished the grade he is in." Many parents consider it a disgrace if their child is retained. In order to save the "family face," they will insist that the teacher push their child ahead. Consequently, school develops into one big frustration, and an anti-education attitude is developed. Then, though the child may hate school, the truth may be he is a genius in disguise.

Please let your child develop his independence at his own pace. He can learn physical accomplishments and will occupy newly possessed territory in his own good time.

Let's Review

Up to now, I have discussed children's ability to conquer physical skills. I have said not to push them, but to let them learn at their

own pace. When they show an interest in developing a skill, encourage and praise the accomplishment made. Once they can do it by themselves, the parents must retreat and let them exercise their independence. When they get lazy (and all children will) and don't find it so much fun any more to make their beds, wash and dry the dishes, sweep the garage, mow the lawn, weed the garden, fold the papers for the paper route, or hang their clothes, parents must step in, insist, be strict, make them do their jobs, and not allow them to be quitters.

Helping children develop physical skills is relatively easy. They are, by nature, curious and want to try every new thing they see their parents do.

We are now ready, however, to delve into the area of training responsible mental independence in our children. This is a job that is much harder. They can learn how to do things physically, but their mental judgments are not mature enough to match. We must discuss the next step in helping our children to a mature life of independence.

4. USE YOUR HEAD TO HELP DEVELOP HIS HEAD

Apart from his being openly disobedient to your spoken word, there are many situations in which your child functions alone. He will be put in situations where he must make decisions by himself. He may fight, win, and have his flag flying as far as physical skills are concerned, but, without further help, he lacks the mental judgment to know how to exercise those skills properly.

For Example

Physically, a Child Can

1. Learn to walk.
2. Dress himself.
3. Learn to climb trees.

Mentally, He Doesn't Have the Judgment to Know

1. Not to walk into the street.
2. What apparel is proper to wear on all occasions.
3. Not to climb in Mr. Strickland's prized peach tree.

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4. Ride a bike.
5. Learn to take a bath.
4. Where and how far he can safely ride.
5. When or how often to bathe.

Learning mental responsibility is a much slower process than learning physical skills; and parents need to keep in mind that "a child's desire for freedom runs ahead of his capacity for freedom."* For open disrespect and disobedience, "spanking is the first response and not the last resort";* but on the occasions when a child is functioning alone and his mistakes are simply a result of his own poor judgment, there are other ways to teach him the consequences for bad decision-making.

Let's discuss five ways we can help our child to learn to use his head.

A. USE ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL

Exercising environmental control is an example of an ounce of prevention preventing a pound of problems. By planning ahead, wise parents can remove dangers before they cause harm, or temptations before they are conceived in the mind of a child. Putting gates at the top of stairs, storing valuables, keeping loaded guns and medicines out of reach, and having appropriate toys to occupy play time will eliminate a child's being put in a position of having to make crucial decisions.

I do not think it is wise to advocate that a new mother put everything away from baby and display a bare living room. Neither is it wise to recommend that she allow the beautiful and delicate figurine, that has been passed down in her family for four generations, to be displayed on the coffee table as a test of Junior's obedience. A crawler or toddler is quite capable of learning a few items that are "no-no's"; if, however, everything he touches brings a "no-no," your "no-no's" will lose their meaning, or you will be spanking your baby many times a day. Remember the saying that "many temptations cause many transgressions." Teach your child that some things are

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forbidden; then exercise environmental control and arrange everything else so that he can function freely.

Substitute a "Yes" in Place of a "no"

To balance the time that you have to be negative, say no, and forbid your children a certain privilege, try to provide a "yes-yes" in its place. You can say, "You may not play with the glass candy dish, but you may play with this plastic bowl." Or, "You may not get into these drawers and cabinets, but here are special trinkets for you in this drawer and cabinet."

Distraction is also an excellent way to help a child forget his frustrations. In worship, a noisy and fretful baby can be quieted quickly if you whisper, "Oh! Look what I have in my purse!"

Stop and Evaluate

Autocratic parents should stop often to evaluate their home situations. If you find yourself having to discipline frequently for the same offenses, perhaps some change in surroundings is in order. If the children are forever coming to the table with dirty hands or spilling their milk at every meal, maybe you need to purchase a stepping stool for the bathroom sink and buy a different size and shape of drinking glasses.

Muddy footprints are exasperating on a clean freshly mopped floor. Putting footscrapers and throw rugs at the entrances can save much cleaning and scolding. A night light will help a child who is developing fears of the dark and is frequently awakening you in the night with crying because of bad dreams.

One year I thought I would cut down on the beginning-of-school expenses; so I got the children a cheaper grade of underclothes, pants, shirts, blouses, dresses, et cetera. That was one frustrating year! I was kept busy patching holes and sewing seams, and I ended up having to buy another set of clothes to finish out the school term. The next year I exercised better environmental control. I bought the best grade of clothes and fabric I could afford, and I double and triple-stitched all seams with my sewing machine. Little patching had

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Use your head and exercise good environmental control. Take inventory, study problem areas, and see what changes you might be able to make to alleviate any unpleasant conditions that exist.

B. DEPRIVE

Depriving is taking away a privilege when you must.

If parents are consistent with their spoken word and always back their facts with proof, they build their children's trust in them. In the same way, children build a character that their parents can trust. When a child tells his parents something and his information is always accurate, or makes promises and consistently carries them out, his parents will begin to have faith in his word and actions. *When a child proves himself to be trustworthy, he should be fully trusted.*

Once your child proves to be trustworthy, fly his honor flag of trust. He has not only developed physical independence and has that flag flying, but now his mental independence is developed as well.

The following are five steps autocratic parents should take in relinquishing portions of mental independence to their children.

When a Child Proves That He is Trustworthy



1. Fly his flag.
2. Show confidence.
3. Trust the child's judgment.
4. Praise him.
5. Silently rejoice.

As long as your child shows good judgment, trust him in the area in which he has proven himself. Mentally fly his honor flag of trust. In case he should ever digress and show himself unworthy of being

trusted, you will have to *deprive* him and take his honor flag down. Give him some time to think, evaluate, and develop his mental judgment a little more. At a later time, give him another chance to prove himself again.

Two Examples

Example 1 - Little Pete has physically learned to manipulate crayons. His physical flag of skill is flying and, for his age, he can color very prettily. He has color books in which to color and drawing paper for his drawing. For some time the crayons have been located on a low shelf. He has access to them any time he wants them because he has always used good judgment in exercising his artistic skills. One day, while playing alone, little Pete gets overly ambitious and colors on the walls. What is his mother to do? She has had his flag flying, showed confidence and trusted him with the crayons. Now she will have to take the honor flag down and deprive Pete of free access to the crayons. Give him a few days to do some thinking, and after a reasonable depriving time, give him another chance. Put the crayons back on the low shelf. As long as Pete uses good judgment, (a) fly his flag, (b) show confidence, (c) trust him with the crayons, (d) praise him, and (e) silently rejoice.

Example 2 - John has learned to ride a bike. In his efforts to accomplish this physical skill, he was bumped, bruised, and battered. Now he can ride well, and his parents have tutored him on the safety rules and told him where he may and may not ride. For a long time, John has been responsible in his riding. One day some friends walk by, and he gets a sudden urge to show off for them. In his ecstasy, he carelessly dashes in front of an oncoming car. The driver slams on his brakes, and all of the neighbors rush to their windows to see what has happened. John barely missed getting hit! What are his parents to do? They must take his flag of trust down, take the bike away, park it in a corner of the garage, and deprive him of its use. After giving John a reasonable time to think it over, they can give him another chance to prove himself. Once they let him ride the bike again and as long as he shows good judgment, they can (a) fly

his flag, (b) rejoice.

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Any time children display irresponsible actions and are made to pay the consequences of their carelessness, they will be more reliable when their independence is granted again. Children who are consistently dealt with in this manner and are made to exercise their freedoms with responsible behavior, will develop into young people who can be trusted to act wisely in any situations in which they find themselves.

Make Depriving Relevant to the Misbehavior

When parents use depriving as a means to help their child achieve more responsible and independent behavior, they need to remember to make the deprivation relevant to the misbehavior if at all possible. If would be foolish, when Pete scribbled on the walls with his crayons, to deprive him of his milk for supper; or, when John rode his bicycle carelessly in the street, to deprive him of his lunch the next day. The particular item or privilege a child misuses is the object or activity of which he should be deprived.

No TV for Three Days

One mother who was faced with the task of keeping her children occupied with constructive projects during their summer vacation, came up with this plan. Her children loved television and, if allowed, would have spent most of their day watching any and every available program. She knew the wisdom of limiting children's TV viewing; so in their summer schedules she allowed only one hour of TV a day. They could choose one one-hour show or two thirty-minute programs from a list she made up (censored) from the TV schedule. The rest of their day was occupied with gardening, cleaning, cooking, painting, letter writing, reading, Bible study, library visits, playing, and relaxation.

A few days on the new schedule and everything went fine. It wasn't long, however, until the children's love for TV got the better of them. Their mother was working in the basement, and they watched a much longer time than had been allotted. Finally they shut the TV off and

immediately went to explain to her that the program they were watching was so good they just *had* to finish it. She listened quietly to their lengthy explanations but responded, "Well, I understand that it must have been very interesting to you, but the fact remains that you have abused your privilege. For the next three days, there will be no TV at all." There was weeping and much regret, but after that depriving period was over, they exercised responsibility with their TV time the remainder of the summer.

Try Depriving with Your Finicky Eater

Here is a psychological hint to those of you who may have a finicky eater. This idea has worked for several mothers, and for others it hasn't. You may want to try it and see if it works for you. It goes this way.

The next time you want to introduce a new and different food, just deprive your finicky one of having any. Whatever you do, don't make a scene about it; in fact, don't even mention it. Just don't put any on his plate, but serve it to all the rest of the family.

It will not take long for him to notice that he was left out. Recognizing this oversight, he will bring it to your attention by saying, "Mamma! You forgot me, and I didn't get any." You respond, "Oh, no, honey, I didn't forget. I'm sure you wouldn't like it; so I just didn't bother to give you any." Nine times out of ten, a child's rebuttal will be, "I'd like it, Mamma. I know I would." At that plea, you can say, "Well, all right. I'll give you *one* taste; and if you like it, I'll be sure to make enough for you next time." Most of the time a child will jump into the ring of togetherness and discover he likes the new food.

C. ISOLATE

Always remember that children are very gregarious, and to be set apart from everyone else is painful for them. They like to be in the middle of the activity for fear they will miss out on something.

There may be other ways of isolating, but I should like to suggest three ways you can set children apart. A child can (1) be sent to his room, (2) set on a chair, or (3) stood in a corner.

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If your four-year-old is in the back yard and is disrupting the children's play, you can bring him in the house and set him on a chair. Your explanation can be, "Now, when you think you can play nicely, you may go back out and show us." Most of the time, when this kind of explanation is given, the child will sit on the chair about thirty seconds and he knows he is ready to do better. When he rejoins the children's play, it is usually a repeat performance. If you must bring him in a second time, explain, "This time you must sit on the chair until *I tell you* you may get up."

To children, a thirty-minute stay on a chair is equivalent to about three hours. It does give them time, however, to calm down, think, and determine to behave better when given their freedom to try again.

One of my older brothers, who is a wonderful Christian man today, laughs as he recalls his childhood. He says the thing he remembers most is the multitude of times he had to sit on a chair. If isolation will help our sons to be as fine a man as he is, I highly recommend the idea.

If little brothers are not getting along, isolate them. Put one on a chair in one room and the other on a chair in another room. I didn't mention this in my previous illustration, but if your children won't obey you, you will be helpless in trying to make isolation work. Multitudes of mothers try putting their child on a chair, but the child will refuse to stay. (Again, obedience must be accomplished before independent responsibility can ever be achieved.)

D. LET NATURAL CONSEQUENCES WORK FOR YOU

So far in our discussion of using environmental control, depriving, and isolation, we have learned that we are going to have to do some planning ourselves. Exercising natural consequences is different. There is nothing at all difficult about letting this law work for you. "Natural consequences" means just what the words imply. You have little if anything to do, because nature is the one that takes over and sees that your child pays a price.

It is natural for all human beings to have to learn some things the hard way. All of the cautioning and warning in the world, from someone wiser, is simply not needed. How many of us learned that

the stove is hot and fire burns, without touching to see for ourselves? What child has been content to believe his parents when they told him, "The little green pepper will burn your mouth!"? He must try it for himself. Sure enough, it is hot! He gulps down a glass of water and isn't so eager for hot peppers the next time.

Don't Nag Children to Eat

Perhaps one of the best ways to use natural consequences to advantage is with the eating problem. Our little children, living in this great land of plenty, often play in their food, take an hour to eat, or just plain won't eat at mealtime. This ugly monster raises its head and plagues us every five or six hours.

It should no longer be a problem if you will let natural consequences take over for you. First, you must believe that nature will not allow your child to starve without his doing something about it if given an opportunity.

Here is what you do. When the family sits down to dinner, carry on the regular chatting, visiting, and enjoying the togetherness of the family. While everyone is enjoying the meal, there must be no harping, "Junior, eat your dinner." When sufficient time has been allotted for dining, the family is then adjourned. That means that *everyone* is to be excused from the table. With calmness and composure, even if Junior has not touched his meal, you remove his plate, and he is also excused from dinner.

About bedtime, "natural consequences" will take over. Junior is going to start pulling at the strings of your heart. He will say, "I'm hungry, Mother. May I have some milk and cookies?" When this happens, you must not give in! You will have to explain, "I'm sorry, honey, but there will be no more eating between meals if you don't eat your nutritious meals."

When the child gets hungry enough, nature will see to it that he consumes some food. The next morning he will eat breakfast. He may not clean up everything you put on his plate, but he will eat something.

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If you have an eating problem, let nature take over and don't give in to sympathy. If you give in, it will not be for the good health or good habit development of your child.

Remember that it is never a wise practice to let small children eat between meals. When a child is allowed to go around with a cookie, cracker, or candy half of the day, he naturally will not be hungry at mealtime.

A "No-Thank-You Helping, Please"

Many parents and grandparents remember the depression days when food was not so plenteous. Others of us simply understand that it is sinful to be wasteful. We may, therefore, have a tendency to be overly strict and demand, "You must eat everything on your plate!" Now, if a child has been granted the freedom of dishing up his own helpings of what and how much he wants, he should not be allowed to waste it. If he consistently gets too much, hopefully, in time, natural consequences will help him learn to be more careful.

But if you have the custom of Mother's dishing up and serving the food restaurant style, maybe this tip will help. Before you dish the food onto the plates, let the children see what you have prepared for the meal. If there is a particular food that isn't a child's favorite, he may ask for a "no-thank-you helping." A "no-thank-you helping" is one scant tablespoonful.

A grandmother once shared this idea with us in one of our TUAC classes. I thought it was such a good idea that I have used it and shared it with many people.

E. USE LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

Logical consequences are altogether different from natural consequences. With natural consequences, nature constructs the end results. "Logical consequences" result when the parent draws up a choice of outcomes.

Dr. Ginott calls this a "Voice and Choice" activity.²⁶ You give the voice, and the child takes a choice. In Chapter Eight I referred to using logical consequences as a good way to start little ones making wise decisions. We give a child a choice between two facts. You

could say, "Which of these two dresses would you like to wear today?" Freddie's mother could have said, "Which would you like to have for supper - - a hamburger or fried chicken?"

Other examples of the voice and choice activity are "Would you like a half glass or a whole glass of milk?" Or, "Would you like a half apple or a whole?" *The important thing to remember in using logical consequences is to make the child be responsible for the choice he makes.* If the child chooses a full glass of milk or a whole apple over the half portion, make sure he consumes it and it isn't wasted. If it was too much and he was unwise in his choice, he must suffer the natural consequences. Through this means he will learn to have better judgment next time.

Three Examples of How to Use Logical Consequences

(1) *Perhaps mealtime is always a headache.* It seems that every evening when dinner is called, some member of the household isn't there. You have to scout the neighborhood, and the family sits down to a cold supper. It is now time to create a logical consequence for the latecomer. Different mothers may think up any number of ideas for giving the *Voice*. Here is an example of what you might say: "From now on, dinner is going to be served at six o'clock. Anyone who is not here will have to do without." Jack now has a *Choice*. He can choose to be responsible and watchful of the time, or he can continue in his late pattern and miss his supper.

Let me emphasize again. *When parents create logical consequences, it is imperative that they carry through with their word and see that the child carries through with his choice.* If you said supper is going to be served at six o'clock, you be sure that it is on the table at that time. On the days that you know there will be a delay or dinner will be earlier, try to let Jack know ahead of time. The choice is left up to Jack.

(2) *Getting off to school in the morning is a problem.* If you are in the habit of nagging and trying to hurry your school children around, ruining the morning for you, use logical consequences. *Voice!* "The bus comes at 8:30. From now on, if you aren't ready, you will walk to school." The children's *Choice!* Be ready and out at the bus

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stop at 8:30 or walk to school and face the principal and teacher. Mother's responsibility is to furnish a reliable alarm clock, have the children's clothes clean in the drawers and closet, and have a nutritious breakfast ready for them to eat. The rest is strictly the children's responsibility.

One lady in a TUAC class told about an older sister who had formed the late habit. Her mother decided to put a stop to it. She created a logical consequence and washed her hands of bearing the responsibility for getting her out the door to school every morning. My class member said, "Sure enough, the first day on the new plan, my sister missed the bus." She was not driven to school, and since it was too far for her to walk, she had to stay home all day. It was not an enjoyable and relaxing day, however. In addition to being assigned hard work to do, she was also ordered to sit down and write a report to her teacher explaining why she had been absent. The next morning her mother accompanied her before the teacher with the note. The lady said her sister was never late to catch the bus again.

(3) *Your child is dependent on you to help with his homework.* You are weary because he always expects you to sit down and help him with it. You made a mistake when he was in the first grade and thought your helping him would make him feel more secure in school. Now that he is in the fourth grade, he still thinks his homework is part of your job. Use logical consequences. *Voice!* "I'm not going to sit down and help you with your homework any more. If you don't get it done, you will have to explain to your teacher." His *Choice!* Either get his homework by himself, or face the teacher without it. Your responsibility is to provide a quiet place for him to study, and the rest is left up to him.

Of course, any good authority will have respect for a fellow authoritarian. If your child is in trouble with his teacher at school because of his laziness or disobedience, you take the teacher's side, not your child's. My parents always made it clear to my brothers, sister, and me that if we got into trouble at school, we were in trouble when we got home. If we got a spanking at school, we would get another one when we got home.

Sometimes school situations are such that the children have little fear of their teachers. All they hear from their overseer all day is yelling and screaming, with never any follow-up or action. Some school systems have to be ultra careful not to administer corporal punishment or any sort of firm discipline for fear they will have a lawsuit on their hands.

One autocratic family had this kind of school situation for their children. One of their little ones got lazy with her homework and didn't feel any fear at all of facing the teacher without it. It was growing into a problem that was causing her to fall behind in her schoolwork. These parents insisted to the school authorities that they must build some respect for the authority of the school. They gave the principal and teacher written permission to spank their child. Once the child was called into the office and saw that the school personnel really did care enough about her to do something about her lazy study habits, the spanking didn't have to transpire. She understood that they really could be firm, and she became responsible for her work.

Summing It Up and Searching Our Souls

I call this lesson my soul-searching lesson. Independence needs to be handled as carefully as a medicine prescription. If you give too much too fast, it can be harmful. If you give too little too slowly, it can be just as harmful. We need to give the proper dosage of freedom at the proper time. And no one knows that dosage and time but you, the parent.

We have discussed some helpful hints on knowing when to give a dosage of independence. We have said that a child develops physical and mental independence. The physical runs ahead of the mental, making the child desirous of more freedom than he is capable of handling.

When he masters a physical skill, fly his flag, praise, celebrate, retreat, and let him freely exercise his talents. Then you should not only *let* him but, if you want him to develop a healthy independence, you must *make* him take over his new responsibilities. Never make a habit of doing your child's chores for him.

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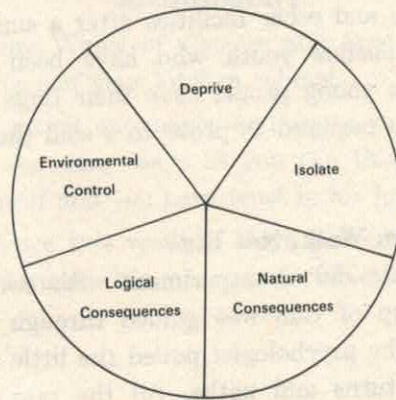
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Apart from spanking for open disrespect and disobedience, I mentioned five ways to help develop a child's mental ability and help him learn to think on his own.

WHEEL OF CHOICES



By consistently using environmental control, depriving, isolating, natural and logical consequences over a period of years, you will help your child achieve a life of responsible independence. He can later leave your presence and make it on his own. His foundation will be strong, his principles well grounded, and his character developed.

Once a child has proven he is mentally trustworthy by showing over and over that he can handle a situation, fly his flag, show confidence, trust, praise, and silently rejoice. Any time he digresses and displays irresponsibility in any area, take his flag down, give him time to think and grow, and then let him try again. When he proves at a later time that he can handle the situation, fly his flag once more.

I should like especially to encourage us as autocratic parents not to give too little independence too slowly. Those who work with disturbed young people say the failure to let children gradually mature is one of the greatest causes of teenage rebellion. We must let them physically develop and, when they show good judgment, let go, fly their flags, trust them, and with God's help they will mature into responsible, well adjusted, and happy adults.

Dr. Max Rafferty is speaking to the parents who give too much independence too fast when he says, "Independence and self-reliance are the last things in the world our offspring need to learn."* To know what he is talking about, all we need to do is notice the papers and read about the thousand of dollars it takes to repair the school buildings and other facilities after a summer of vandalism by roaming, irresponsible youth who have been given undeserved independence. These young people have their flags of freedom flying but have never been required to prove to a soul that they are worthy of trust.

Make Your Children Walk, Not Ride

A psychologist once did an experiment with two groups of white rats. The first group of rats was guided through a maze riding in a little rat wagon. The psychologist pulled the little wagon by a string through the many turns and paths. All the rats did was ride. At the end of the journey, their food was waiting for them to eat. This was repeated twenty times.

The second group of rats didn't have it quite so easy. One at a time, they were turned loose at the entrance of the maze. Through trial and error they worked their way to the exit where the food was waiting. They also had to do this twenty times.

At the conclusion of the experiment, the psychologist took a rat from group one and another rat from group two. He put them together at the entrance of the maze to see which could most quickly find his way to the food at the end. Rat two won, paws down. Why? Because he was made to use his head. Rat one had only gone along for the ride, and the psychologist had done his work and thinking for him.*

Independence builds within a child self-respect, self-control, and courage. Let's help our children walk to a victory of independence

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by (1) loving and making them obey, (2) retreating and letting them occupy their territory, (3) insisting that they occupy their new territory, and (4) using our heads to help develop their heads.

ASSIGNMENT

1. Make a miniature Wheel of Choices and tape it on the inside of the most used door of your kitchen cabinet.
2. Sit down with pencil and paper and write your children's names. Make a list of as many ways as you can think of in which each has proven himself and you have trust in his judgment.
3. Take special notice this week of ways you could exercise environmental control to make life more comfortable for the family.

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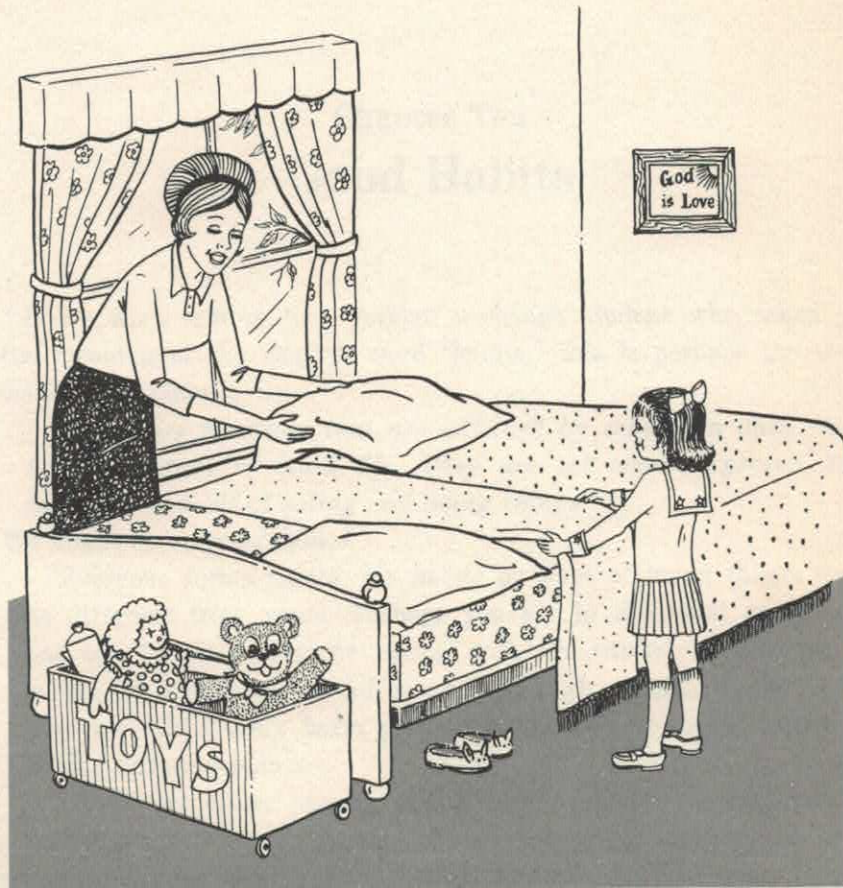
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GOOD HABITS



Must Be Taught and Sought

Chapter Ten

Good Habits

If we were talking to a foreign exchange student who asked us the meaning of the English word "habits," this is perhaps the way we would explain it . . .

Habits are practices that are enforced by repetition until they become a part of one's life. They are set ways a person has made for himself of acting and doing things."

We might go on to explain:

"Everyone forms habits. My habits or ways of doing things may be different from yours. Perhaps you are in the habit of having hot tea for breakfast, or eating with chopsticks. My life style is one in which I have coffee and eat with a fork. If you don't hurt me and I don't harm you, there is nothing wrong with our having different habits.

"Habits are either passive, positive, or negative. As long as my habits are passive and do not affect you in any direct way, or they are positive and influence your life for good, no objections could be raised to my living pattern. If, however, my activities interfere with your life and have a bad effect on or worsen your living conditions, that is not good; and you would be within your rights to request that alterations be made."

What I have said is that our habits are our business, but they become other people's business when they adversely affect their lives. You have heard others say, and have probably said yourself, "It isn't anyone's business what I do or don't do." Two conditions would

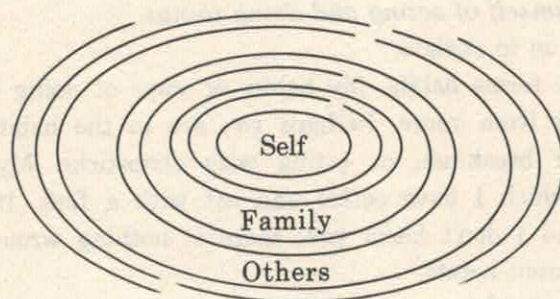
have to exist before that could ever be true. (1) You would have to recognize no higher authority than yourself; and (2) you would be required to live isolated on a desert island.

Yes, our habits and manner of living are very much a part of other people's business.

Our Habits Become Our Influence

Jesus referred to our life styles as being our influence. He compared this to leaven, to salt, and to light. Just as these items spread and influence other elements in a silent way, a person's habits work in others' lives. What an individual does and says spreads and influences. It's like throwing a rock into a pond. The water starts rippling in a small circle; then the circumference gets larger and larger. Our habits first affect ourselves, then our families, and eventually others.

Our Habits Influence



There is no way one can live completely to himself. Therefore, it does matter what we do and what relationship we have with other people.

Jesus Increased in Favor With Man

Autocratic parents who are interested in and concerned about the development and welfare of their children want them to like themselves and be liked by others. This can best be accomplished by training them to have good habits. When they touch others' lives, they will meet with a good and positive reception.

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When Jesus Christ was twelve years of age, the Bible says, He "*increased . . . in favor with God and man.*" Luke 2:52. From this passage we learn that Jesus' childhood behavior met with approval in the eyes of the adult world. Since there are so few passages in all the Bible that mention His childhood, the fact that God included this information is an indication He considers children's behavior very important. "*Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right.*" Proverbs 20:11.

Good Influence vs. Bad Influence

To illustrate how one's habits and influence can spread until they touch hundreds of other lives, let me repeat these two accounts.

Account 1. Max Jukes was a Dutch settler in New York. He had two sons who married into the same family. These boys' wives came from a family of six daughters. Five of the girls, including the boys' wives, had bad characters. Mr. R. L. Dugdale, appointed to make an investigation of the New York prisons, ran on to this Jukes family. He traced their history for five generations. From these two sons' marriages, this is what he found. Of seven hundred and nine descendants who were investigated, one fifth of them were criminals, nearly one fourth were paupers supported at government expense, and about one fourth of the children were illegitimate. Of the women, one out of six was a prostitute. Dealing with crimes committed by this family cost an estimated one billion three hundred million dollars. And, of course, no one knows the indirect moral and social evil that has sprung from their evil influence.

Account 2 - Jonathan Edwards was a minister and a strict disciplinarian in morals. Tracing his genealogical tree, we find twelve college presidents, two hundred sixty-five college graduates, sixty-five college professors, sixty physicians, one hundred ministers, seventy-five army officers, sixty prominent authors, one hundred lawyers, thirty judges, eighty public officers such as governors, mayors, and state officials, three congressmen, two U.S. senators, and one vice-president of the United States.*

* Accounts 1 and 2 adapted, with permission.¹⁵

As autocratic parents, we want our children to exert a good influence. If we guide them into a life of good habits, they will like themselves, be a joy to the family, and meet with favor in the big wide world. Good habits will build within a child a feeling of self-approval, self-confidence, and pride (the kind that will help him hold his chin up, but not stick his nose up.)

What We Do Is What We Are

From the beginning of this book, I have tried to impress the fact that a child's life is not shaped by mere chance. Rearing children properly is work, and it calls for adults who are willing to major in parenthood. This chapter is entitled, "Good habits must be taught and sought." This is simply another way of saying that children must be trained in good habits. Parents must show and tell their lessons, and practice them daily in their own lives. They must continue to exercise firm discipline and make their children do as they have done.

Parents can be early-morning risers, industrious, well groomed, and thrifty, yet fail to instill these good habits in their children. If they allow the children to lie in bed till noon, refuse to work, be sloppy in their dress, and spend their money foolishly, their values will never be a part of their childrens' lives. Whatever a parent allows his child to do is what the child will become.

Trainer, Teacher, or Traitor?

Educators estimate that a person remembers 90% of what he does, 80% of what he sees, 70% of what he says, and 10% of what he hears. Using these figures, we can see how much more effective it is to train. If you add the 80% a child sees, the 10% when he hears, and an additional 90% when he is made to do something himself, it will add up to a 180% influence.

When parents teach their children but fail to make them do, they will get the 80% for seeing and 10% for hearing, but will make only half as much impression as a parent who trains.

Being a *teacher* of good habits is certainly not good enough for an autocratic parent who is striving to be a *trainer*; but parents who do not set an example are *traitors* and destroy completely any good

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influence they may have had. Jesus called the people of his day, who said one thing and did another, hypocrites. He said, "*But do not follow their practice; for they say one thing and do another.*" Matthew 23:3.*

You don't have to explain the word hypocrisy to a child. He can spot it a mile away. Once there was a little girl coming home from school. She bounded up the steps of her house with her little friend right behind her. As they opened the door, they heard conversation. The little girl stopped, turned to her friend and said, "Mother has company. She is using her company voice."

Parents can tell their child to be honest and not to steal, but the child then observes that Mother never returned the sack of potatoes that accidentally was left on her grocery cart or the dollar too much change the checker gave her at the store. He also sees his mother pull grapes from the bunch on the counter in the supermarket, put them in her mouth, and never pay a penny for them.

Threatening a child is another thing that can turn a parent into a traitor and a hypocrite. I have, more times than I should like to recount, heard mothers say, "I'm going to spank you if you do that again!" The child does it again and again, but no spanking follows. The parent said, but she didn't do.

Here is another example of a way a mother can threaten. "If you don't come on, I'm going to leave you here." The child continues to run the other way or proceeds with his play. He doesn't come, and Mother doesn't leave him. Mother said, but she didn't do.

When a mother proposes these threats, she is constituting a logical consequence. With her voice and choice activity, she is asking the child to make a decision. Any time a mother does this, she must, by all means, carry out the consequence and spank the child, or leave him, if that is what he chooses. Being an authority and giving the facts would be preferable. It would be better simply to say, kindly but firmly, "Don't throw the ball in the house again," or "Come, it's time to go now."

* New English Bible

Habits are formed only when a person himself repeats an action over and over. How then must parents instill good habits in their children's lives? Is it by training, teaching, or being a traitor? The answer is that it can best be done through training. When a child watches and listens to his parents, he will, of course, be influenced. But to be trained in a skill, practice, or principle of great value, the child himself must be made to exercise it in his own personal life.

Invest in the Bank of P's

What are some good habits that will help make our children's personal lives better? Are there principles that will assist them in making their associations with family and friends more joyful and happy?

I should like to encourage autocratic parents to invest their time and energy in the Bank of P's. They will be paid rich dividends, not in penny profit, but in people approval. Their children will receive benefits far more valuable than anything money can buy.

The following are six areas of life in which parents can train good habits:

Train a Child to Have Good Habits Concerning His

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 public approval

1. TRAIN A CHILD GOOD HABITS FOR HIS PERSON

When a child is trained to take care of his person, it will help him be more conscious of his physical well-being. He will be healthier and basically a happier child. The Bible says, "*Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?*" I Corinthians 6:19.

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In order to train a child to take care of his body, we can see to it that *he does* the following nine things:

(1) *Keeps a regular bedtime hour each night.* To maintain good health and a happy disposition, a child needs ten to twelve hours of rest a night. After a child gives up his afternoon nap, an early bedtime hour should be set for him. A drink (unless bedwetting is a problem) and going to the bathroom should always precede the tucking in bed. That will eliminate any alibis of needing additional attention when the lights go out.

(2) *Eats three well-balanced meals a day.* Good advice to young mothers is not to make eating a virtue. Prepare healthful, attractive, and well-balanced meals, and after you make the food available, let natural consequences work for you. If your children have difficulty eating at mealtime, don't allow cookie, candy, and cracker snacking in between. Pre-schoolers may do better if they are allowed to consume their nutritious food in four or more sittings, instead of the customary three. Sometimes their little tummies cannot hold enough to tide them over and keep them healthy.

If you feed your children healthful food and daily give them natural vitamin supplements, you can save hundreds of dollars in doctor bills.

(3) *Bathes and puts on clean clothes.* Daily baths are a good idea, and essential in the summertime. Oftentimes very young children develop a perspiration problem. These children will need special emphasis placed on keeping themselves clean and changing their clothes daily.

(4) *Washes hands and flushes the stool after going to the toilet.* At school registration, many kindergarten teachers will ask if a child is trained to do these things. Spreading of germs and sickness can be cut down immensely when children are taught these two good sanitation habits.

(5) *Brushes his teeth regularly.* Clean teeth will make a pretty smile and fresh breath and will also eliminate much dental work and expense.

(6) *Dresses, washes his face, and combs his hair before play.* All one has to do is talk with a milkman or mailman to see how frequently they meet mothers in their housecoats, slippers, and nightcaps at

noon. It just makes good sense and builds self-esteem to get up, dress, and groom yourself the first thing in the morning. (It will help make you a 3A woman, too.) It gives you an incentive to accomplish more and is an outward sign of inward diligence. Children should not be allowed to run around for hours in their pajamas. They should be trained to put their clothes on, wash their faces, and comb their hair the first thing in the morning.

(7) *Keeps his body covered with modest attire that is proper and decent.* In the days in which we live, modesty is almost a forgotten word. Many mothers, from the time a child is small, will strip him naked in the living room and in front of anyone who happens to be around. His modesty and human decency is further destroyed when he is allowed to parade naked through the house or go about in scanty attire.

Boys as well as girls must be taught to be modest. But the basic fact of human life, that God made males to be sexually aroused by viewing a female body, makes it all the more important that we train our little girls to be modest in their dress.

Now we realize, of course, that intense sexual excitement has not fully awakened in children younger than twelve years of age. Still it is important that the importance of modesty be instilled at an early age.

I have known Christian families that have handled the dress of their little girls in different ways. Since small children are less aware of sexual differences, some Christian parents will allow their little girls to wear shorts when they are small. They will explain to them that when they have their twelfth birthday, they will then be grown up enough that they will not be allowed to wear shorts any more. All children are eager to grow up; and if that is an indication of maturity, little girls who have been taught respect and obedience will willingly relinquish the attire.

I do not remember a hard and fast rule that my parents used about any certain age my sister and I had to quit wearing shorts. I think my father made his judgment based on when we started developing our womanly features. My sister tells of how well she remembers one summer when it started getting hot and she dressed

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Other Christian parents feel it is wiser never to allow scanty attire at all. From the time their girls are little, they dress them modestly. Shorts or brief tops are simply never a part of their wardrobes. If swimming is a sport the family enjoys, they arrange to swim in private places and wear cut-offs in the pool.

(8) *Plays and exercises.* Children normally do not have to be coaxed to play, but the full-time TV entertainment that is available can be detrimental to children's play and exercise activities. Some children would be content to sit and be entertained by television all day and would never create recreation for themselves. Sometimes they must be encouraged to exert their physical energies.

I used to teach remedial reading in elementary school; it is surprising that more and more children are needing help with reading. I believe too much TV is often to blame. Brain development is associated with good coordination, and good coordination comes from play and exercise. A child who plays and exercises will develop a good body balance, which will in turn enhance his ability to be alert mentally.

(9) *Washes his hands before and after eating.* Washing hands before eating helps keep the food, dishes, and silverware sanitary. Washing hands after eating will aid in keeping the furniture, doors, and walls clean. It is absolutely amazing how jelly can travel and make its way through the entire house if sticky little hands are not submerged in water. And again, this one good habit can eliminate sickness and the spread of germs and disease.

2. TRAIN A CHILD GOOD HABITS FOR HIS POSSESSIONS

Training a child to take care of and respect the things that belong to him will assist in making him a thankful and appreciative person. A child should show deep gratitude when he receives a gift or an added possession. One way, however, to destroy a child's appreciative nature is to gift him with too many things and give him everything he wants. A girl with three school dresses will take care of them and

be much more appreciative when she receives an occasional new dress than a girl with thirteen dresses she seldom gets to wear. Children who have a room full of toys will appreciate and care for them less than a family of little ones who have only a few things with which to play.

One key bit of wisdom for parents to remember about developing a child's good habits with his possessions is to provide him with the essentials of life and conservatively give him some of the non-essentials.

Train a child to do the following seven rules:

(1) *Make up his bed.* Some mothers say they begin to train their children to make their beds as early as two years old. You may choose to wait a little longer. The important thing I like to remind mothers about is not to forget the teaching program. You must not walk into your child's room on the morning of his fourth birthday and announce, "You are old enough now to make your bed. Starting today, I will expect you to do that job!" A mother setting out to train her child to make his bed will first of all be sure she is diligent in making her own and is setting the example of doing it one of the first things every morning. Second, she will bit by bit work alongside her little one and teach him over a period of days and weeks each step of making a bed properly. After he can do it all by himself, Mother can fly his flag, celebrate, praise, retreat, and let (or make) him occupy the territory.

(2) *Hang up his clothes.* This, too, is something a child can start learning to do early. If your husband is skilled in carpentry, he may install a low rod in the closet. If this is not feasible, the child can be instructed to hang his clothes on the door knob and you can place them in the closet later.

As soon as a child is able to get his coat off by himself, there should be a door knob or hanger low enough for him to go directly and hang his coat up when entering the house.

(3) *Pick up his room and keep it orderly.* A special time of the day should be designated for this chore. Before school is an ideal time and will make coming home more delightful.

(4) *Pick up and put away his toys.* Two years old is not too young to start training a child to place his toys in a toy box. And

may I remind you, the fewer toys (good, durable ones) a child has, the less tedious will be the task of caring for them. Furthermore, when an occasional new toy is added at birthdays or Christmas, it will be more treasured and adored.

(5) *Feed and care for his pet.* My husband has a deep regard for helpless animals. When he was a boy, his mother trained him always to feed his animals before he fed himself. He recalls occasions when he would sit down to the table to eat a hearty supper and would be promptly excused to go feed a helpless and forgotten animal.

(6) *Wake up to his own alarm.* The day your child starts to school, purchase him an alarm clock. Be sure the alarm is loud enough to awaken him easily. This early training at age six can save you years of calling to get children off to school.

(7) *Respect others' possessions and property.* Train your children to leave each other's possessions alone unless they have received permission from the owner to use them. Mother's purse or Daddy's change on the dresser are possessions that must be respected and a "hands off" policy established. Another area where a child can be trained to respect the rights and joys of others is at birthday celebrations. A child must learn to appreciate and rejoice on these occasions and not be allowed to sulk or cry because he is not receiving gifts when his brother or sister is being remembered.

Perhaps there is no child who has not been guilty of stealing something outside the home. When this happens, the theft should be corrected immediately and on the first offense if possible. Take the child back to the store or wherever the item was taken, and make him return it with an apology. Usually one experience like this, along with a little shaming, will prevent its ever happening again.

3. TRAIN A CHILD GOOD HABITS FOR HIS PASTIME

The story has been told about an elderly woman who had spent the major portion of her life rearing five sons. Her hopes and dreams had always been that they would enter the ministry. Much to her disappointment, none of them became preachers. Each one went to sea. One day while she was entertaining a visitor and reminiscing

about the past, she shared this disappointment with her guest. Later in the visit, the guest observed all the water scenes her hostess had hanging on her walls. Over the years, the boys had been impressed with life near the water by the pictures they constantly viewed.

Perhaps that story can be a lesson to us to be careful of the things to which we subject our children in their pastime. The following are six suggestions on how to supervise a child's spare time:

(1) *Supervise his TV time and programs.* Television, like most things of life, can be either used or abused. It all depends on us. Some mothers allow the television to become a built-in baby sitter for their children. They allow it to run all day and let it become a harmful tool that robs their child of his ability to be creative and develop his own entertainment. It also teaches him to be a time waster. The limited amount of TV programs allowed for a day should preferably be educational, or at least wholesome entertainment. Some autocratic mothers think thirty minutes of children's TV programming is enough for a day, and others will allow an hour.

(2) *Supervise his records, radio, and reading material.* Music from records and radio can set the tone of a home. I remember liking loud music as a teenager. The noisier it was, the better I liked it. The noise didn't bother me at all. But my mother would tolerate only so much. When we children would abuse the use of our one radio in the house by selecting poor music or turning the volume too high, we would receive immediate instructions to turn it off. Now that I am a mother, I understand what a priceless ingredient quietness is for a family, and how important it is to do your best to maintain a peaceful atmosphere.

A mother should start reading to her little ones very early. A Bible story should be included in the schedule every day. *The Bible in Pictures for Little Eyes* by Kenneth N. Taylor is an excellent book to begin reading to a two-year-old. When the children learn to read for themselves, a Bible reading should be a requirement for their daily routine. Making children memorize the scriptures when they are young is the best way to implant the Word of God on their hearts, where it will live forever.

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(3) *Have your children's friends into your home for playtime and meals.* When the neighborhood children play in your yard or family room, you can be there to supervise. You know what is going on and to what your children are being subjected. If there is another autocratic mother on your block, it would be only fair to trust your children at her house part of the time. But it is far more commonplace for children to be unsupervised and allowed to run free. You will be a blessing if you can help in a small way, once in a while, to direct these children's spare time.

Let Sunday be a special day when your children can invite their church friends home for lunch and an afternoon visit. These occasions will build memories that will last a lifetime, and your children will be so proud to prove that their mother really is the best cook in the world.

One tip to remember about children's playing well together is to divide them into pairs. Rarely, if ever, will three children play harmoniously. Two will invariably team up against the other. If there are two brothers, let each one bring a guest home for dinner.

(4) *Encourage getting homework at a designated time.* School homework can develop into a procrastinating project that can cause a daily headache and be dragged on until the wee hours of the night. Remove that possibility by establishing the fact that homework must be finished before or directly after supper. Your child will learn promptness as well as maintaining good study habits.

(5) *Know where your children are at all times, and insist upon promptness.* If you allow your ten-year-old daughter to walk ten blocks to a girl friend's house, have her call you when she arrives. Give her instructions as to how long she may stay and exactly what time you expect her home. If she is home early, that is wonderful. She is showing grown-up responsibility. If she is late, then depriving will have to be implemented for a period of time.

One family was having a problem with their children taking too much time in walking home from school. Their loitering was allowing them time to get involved with quarrels and unnecessary confrontations with other children. The parents solved the problem by giving a fact that they had fifteen minutes from the time school was dismissed

until they were to arrive at the front door. These children lived far enough away that it entailed their having to run part of the way in order to make it home on time. It solved the problem, and there were no more torn coats or broken thermos bottles.

If parents expect their children to call and report their whereabouts, the parents should reciprocate the thoughtfulness. Also, if there is a delay or change in schedule, parents should understand that children get worried too. A call or note explaining when mother and daddy will be home will ease the children's minds.

(6) *Encourage your children to exercise and develop their talents.* Each child in a family will be endowed with different talents. Some may have more than others. No child needs to receive more abundant praise, however, simply because he possesses more talents. As long as children are diligent to exercise their one or dozen and one talents, each should be honored and praised. If the one child with many talents is glorified and honored above all, it will often cause the others to feel inferior and resent the gifted one. The tip that I gave to remember about husbands applies also to children. Every child is ignorant - - only on different subjects. Discover the subjects for which each child manifests an interest, and encourage and praise him in those areas.

Every child is gifted in his head, hands, or feet. He may be educable, personable, mechanical, musical, artistic, athletic, or domestic. Children under twelve can be introduced to many unexplored challenges. They can learn to sew, paint, cook, embroider, crochet, knit, sew on buttons, put in hems, patch socks, sing, play musical instruments, build, garden, raise show animals, give magic or puppet shows, be an artist, author or authoress, poet or poetess, actor or actress, play ball, run track, and on and on we could go.

4. TRAIN A CHILD GOOD HABITS IN HIS POLITENESS

A polite child is loved and appreciated by everyone. If a child is to be courteous, however, he must live with courteous parents. He will be polite to others because his parents are polite to him. In order for a child to show good manners, he must be taught to observe the following eleven kindnesses:

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(1) *Respect others' privacy by knocking on their door before entering.* If Mother and Daddy expect the children to knock on their bedroom door, they must treat the children in the same way.

(2) *Say "please," "thank you," "you're welcome," and "pardon me, please."* Again, a child will develop these habits if his parents say them to him consistently. Nothing can tone down a parent's authoritative voice and cause a child to enjoy obeying spoken facts faster than a kind, "Honey, would you please go do this or that?" And after the child has promptly obeyed, he receives a gracious, "Thank you, sweetheart; I appreciate that."

(3) *Address older people as "Mr." and "Mrs."* It will never be old-fashioned to teach a child to address anyone old enough to be his parents as "Mr." and "Mrs." Sometimes older people do not want to be addressed in this way and prefer that even young children call them by their first names like "Joe" or "Bernadine." If that be the case, you may be forced to respect individual differences. One lady said that in these cases, her mother still insisted that she and her brothers and sisters show respect by addressing them as "Mr. Joe" and "Mrs. Bernadine."

(4) *Say "yes, ma'am," "no, ma'am," "yes, sir," and "no, sir."* A child can be taught to respond with a "yes, ma'am" when he is called, just as easily as he can learn to respond with "what?" And, of course, when the children call Mother from somewhere in the house, she will also answer with respect.

(5) *Recognize a visiting guest or older person by speaking.* Many young people are so preoccupied with their peer groups and personal interests that they show no respect or politeness to older people. Children should be taught always to be polite, speak, and make friendly conversation with older people or house guests.

(6) *Do not interrupt when adults are speaking.* Waiting their turn to be heard is a courtesy that is difficult for most children to learn. One way to help a child wait patiently when you are in a conversation with another adult is to work out a hand signal with him. Children sometimes feel that adults don't notice them and they therefore have to make their presence known. If a mother will tell her child to tap her lightly on the arm, she will then clasp her hands on

his, and will recognize him as soon as she can pause in her conversation without being rude.

(7) *Boys should open doors, help with chairs, and let girls go first.* It makes no difference how hep the age, it will never be out of style for a young man to be a gentleman. When he is older, he will be highly favored by the girls who are interested in behaving like ladies.

(8) *Ask, "May I be excused, please?" before leaving the table.* A hostess will be delighted with a gracious child that is appreciative enough of her hospitality that he does not rudely jump up and vacate the table when he has finished his dinner. To sit quietly and listen to adult dinner conversation is not only polite for children, but it is a valuable learning experience as well. Occasions such as this are excellent opportunities for them to learn how to participate in conversation and exchange thoughts with grownups.

(9) *Always serve your friends food before yourself.* Children can practice this graciousness with their special Sunday guests.

(10) *Bad or unpleasant attitudes are not allowed.* Disagreeable and ugly actions often begin when a child starts to walk, gets angry, and throws himself on the floor for the first time. Such a little episode is commonly referred to as "throwing a fit." When things don't go his way, the child may kick, scream, bang his head on the floor, and even hold his breath until he begins to turn blue in the face.

Many child psychologists advise parents not to let these little incidents bother them, but simply to ignore them and go about their work as if nothing is happening. They further caution that, if you do make a big thing of it, your expression of concern will simply reinforce the action and cause the child to repeat it over and over. They promise that if the little actor or actress can not attract an audience, he will soon give up the performance. They further relieve the parents by pointing out that it is impossible for a child to hold his breath until he dies. He may turn blue, but he will soon pass out and he will naturally begin to breathe again.

Winning parents don't agree with those tactics. The parents of the offensive child may be able to exercise a strong enough determination to ignore such shameful behavior, but it is certain that no one

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else will. Any observer will get an unpleasant opinion of a child who behaves in such an ugly fashion.

An autocratic mother would be wise to nip fit-throwing during the first episode. She should certainly notice it, remove the child from the floor, express emphatic disapproval of such actions, and apply the rod soundly. If the inflicted discipline is properly administered, she can be sure her child will not consider the attention she shows to his behavior a reinforcement which encourages him to repeat that sort of tantrum very soon.

Some young mothers ask, "What is an appropriate way for a child to be allowed to vent his anger?" Some educators will suggest that, when a child is angry with Daddy or Mother, he should be given a doll representing Mother and allowed to poke it full of pins, or that a paper silhouette of Daddy be tacked on the wall at which the child may throw darts. Such suggestions as these are absolutely absurd! *A child must be taught to control his temper.* The Bible teaches that anger should be repressed. "*Cease from anger, and forsake wrath.*" Psalms 37:8. Other Bible passages that command to restrain anger are Proverbs 14:17, 16:32, 19:11, and Ephesians 4:26. It is not necessarily wrong to get angry, but it is wrong when you do not know how to control it.

A child should never be allowed to slap, kick, or tell his parents, "I hate you," "I'll kill you," "I won't do it," or "No!" Neither should parents practice tit for tat with their child. The child hits, pinches, pulls hair, scratches, or bites his parents; they should *not* hit, pinch, pull his hair, scratch, or hit him back. Children should be absolutely forbidden to say or do anything hateful or abusive to their parents.

Any time a child develops a bad attitude or doesn't control his actions, he should be disciplined with a rod. Nothing can sweeten a sour attitude or straighten up uncontrolled behavior faster than a switch.

(11) *Write thank-you notes for gifts received.* A child should be trained, as soon as he is able to write, to express his gratitude for gifts he receives. If grandparents, older brothers and sisters, or aunts and uncles love a child enough to go to the time and expense

of sending him a special gift, the child should be trained to have the courtesy to write a note and express appreciation for it.

As we are talking about training a child to be grateful for presents he receives, I am reminded of a problem area that is frequently mentioned in TUAC classes. Many young mothers have asked me to say something about problems with grandparents. Before I write anything negative, I want to express something positive. I personally believe that every little boy and girl should experience the joys that accompany a warm relationship with grandparents. Granddaddy and Grandmother often exhibit more patience and understanding, and have much more time for individual attention, than Daddy and Mother may give.

I believe it is the over-indulgence of good gifts that young mothers resent. There seems to be a never-ending supply of toys and clothes. It is hard to know what to get the children for Christmas or their birthdays because the grandparents have already gotten it for them.

When grandparents live in the same town, down the street, or next door, this can pose real problems. How does a young mother limit the time Junior and Sis can spend at grandmother's house without hurting her feelings? The only suggestion I know to give young mothers with the problem of over-indulgence of things and time from grandparents is to talk with them about it frankly. Preferably, the spouse whose parents are being overly generous is the one who should ask for a friendly conference. The principle of giving too many material possessions is as unwise for grandparents as it is for parents. The more a child receives, the less he will appreciate it.

5. TRAIN A CHILD GOOD HABITS IN HIS PEACEFULNESS

Being a peacemaker is commended by Jesus in the seventh beatitude. As we look at the world, it is very evident that the easiest course to follow in life is to be at odds with someone or in a constant state of confusion. But peace is one of the fruits of the spirit - - love, joy, PEACE, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. (Galatians 5:22 and 23)

Before a child can be a peaceful person, he must be trained to exercise self-control in his daily life and to practice ruling his

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spirit. Parents can promote peace by insisting on the following seven guidelines:

(1) *No fighting is allowed in our family.* Fist-to-fist confrontations, kicking, slapping, biting, or physical combat in any way, should never be permitted among the children in a family. Sometimes brothers and sisters will playfully scuffle and test one another's strengths, but anger should never be a part of their game. Any time warlike conditions arise, autocratic parents should discipline with a rod and let the fact be known that this kind of behavior is not going to be tolerated.

Parents should not, however, mistakenly think one spanking will take care of the fighting problem. It won't! Children will be children and will not always be able to restrain themselves. They will occasionally attempt to take care of their differences behind the barn or in the alley, but if Daddy and Mother ever hear of it, or see battle scars, the children will know beyond any doubt that they are in serious trouble.

Ugly and unkind exchanges of words should also be curbed. If the harsh verbal confrontations are not halted in a short time, they also should result in discipline from Daddy and Mother.

How many families do you know who are at peace and have strong loving bonds? There are many, but it is more common to see families that are constantly involved in a running family feud. There are sisters who haven't spoken to each other in years, and brothers who live in the same town and never visit each other. When these people's aged father and mother pass away and the family estate is to be settled, a deadly battle over the inheritance usually ensues.

Brothers and sisters must be taught to love and care about each other. Eliminating fighting and fussing, as much as possible, will help strengthen their bonds of love. And, Mother, the fighting problem is one more reason you should stay with the home.

A young mother in one TUAC class told how her mother handled the fussing problem when she was a girl. She and her brother were often assigned to do the dishes together. It seemed that every time they started their project, they managed to get a verbal battle going. She said one day her mother finally had had all of it she could

stand. When their words were getting quite heated, she made them stop the dishes, dry their hands, and come with her. She took them into the living room and made them sit on the couch and start loving and kissing each other. They were raging mad, but their mother insisted that their statements of "I love you" be sincere and loving. After thirty minutes of genuine expression of love for each other, they were allowed to return to their dishes.

She said, to the best of her remembrance, they never quarreled again. And, in their adulthood, she and that brother were closer than any of the four children in their family.

(2) *Always tell the truth.* The best way to help a child be honest is to avoid setting up opportunities for him to be dishonest. When you notice that the new book you bought Sally last week is torn and the pages are scribbled on, you should not say, "Did you tear and write in your new book?" If a parent knows the answer, he should not ask the question. And if he has no evidence or proof of wrongdoing, he should not be a false accuser. When you can prove that Sally is guilty of a wrong, then you can approach her by saying, "I see that you mistreated your new book. I should like for you to tell me about it."

Sometimes the situation is one in which the parent has evidence of disobedience, but no proof, of who out of two or three children is the guilty one. What should a parent do in such a case when all of the children stand together in their denials, and the two cover up for the one who is in trouble? One solution is to isolate them on chairs in different rooms and out of view of each other. Explain that they will all have to sit on their chairs until the one who is guilty is willing to come forward and confess his misdeed. If that doesn't work, then make a trip to the tree and explain that if the one who has done wrong will not admit the misdemeanor, you will just have to discipline all. The next time, the ones who are innocent may more readily refuse to be an accomplice of the one who was in the wrong.

(3) *Get permission before using someone else's property.* This gesture of thoughtfulness will also cut down on sibling misunderstandings. A headstrong child, whose own bike has a flat tire, may not take "no" for an answer when his brother says he can not ride

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his bike. He will continue to ask until it is obnoxious, irritating, and causes strife. This child should have it explained to him that he may ask his brother once and never more than twice to use his things. Any time he does not abide by that policy, he will be disciplined.

(4) *Forgive and ask for forgiveness.* The art of not bearing grudges and hard feelings seems to be natural with children. As they get older, however, it doesn't hurt for them to express their intentions verbally.

(5) *Say, "I am sorry," and "I was wrong."* There are multitudes of husbands and wives who would give a sizable sum if their spouses had learned as a child to admit wrong and say, "I am sorry." Some people are always right, even when proven wrong, and would never humble themselves to express regret over any wrong action or unkind words they might have uttered. Training children in these human kindnesses will help them to solve misunderstandings and to be loved abundantly by those who know them best.

(6) *Talk to God in prayer.* An inner peace will rest with a child when he is taught to pray to God and ask for His forgiveness. (More will be said about prayer in Chapters Thirteen and Fourteen.)

(7) *As brothers and sisters, be content to play together or to be alone.* Children living in towns and cities often think they have to be out on the streets, or have the neighborhood children in their house playing, every spare moment. Children who are allowed to do this without limitations grow up being discontent to stay home. When they become teenagers, they feel that home is a bore, and that they must be going somewhere all the time.

An autocratic mother should limit the time her children spend with other children. One to two hours in the morning or afternoon on designated days is plenty of time for them to be influenced by children from other families. Brothers and sisters should learn to be content playing and working together. When they tire of each other's company, quiet time alone is very much in order.

6. TRAIN A CHILD GOOD HABITS FOR HIS PUBLIC APPROVAL

Many parents are embarrassed and make excuses for their children's bad behavior in public. The truth of the matter is that a child will

act away from home the way he is allowed to act at home. It will not be difficult to get him to adhere to your spoken facts in public if it is a daily routine at home.

It is true, however, that children will occasionally try to take advantage of their parents' goodness in front of others. They will test to see just how far they can go and what they can get by with. When a child is misbehaving in public or in front of company, autocratic parents should not feel at all hesitant to excuse themselves and their child and go to a private place and administer corrective discipline. They should then bring the child back to face the people and see if he can correct his behavior. When a child learns that his parents do not fail to correct promptly his wrong actions before others, he will not be so swift to take advantage the next time.

Every good habit that we have talked about thus far will improve a child's life, make family living delightful, and make a favorable impression on outsiders. As a direct help to your child in meeting with favor in the outside world, you can train him to:

(1) *Be prompt for appointments.* Being sure that your child keeps time commitments with you is an excellent way to prepare him for the future. Being responsible for getting to school on time and to bed at a certain time each night, and for returning home on time from playing with a friend, will help him to be more responsible in getting to his job when he is a teenager.

(2) *Have good telephone manners.* It is never a good idea to let preschoolers have telephone privileges. Almost everyone has had the experience of making a long distance call and paying for a minute or two of lost time talking to a small child. When a school-age child is allowed to start making an occasional phone call, the call should be rehearsed with Mother ahead of time. Mother can pretend to be the party who is going to be called, and see if her child can adequately deliver the message. This is fun for a child and makes the call a profitable conversation.

(3) *Be sure not to stare and point at people.* Looking at people with amazement, gesturing, and making verbal comments about them is an honest and natural reaction for children. You can train them to be more socially acceptable by simply speaking to remind them that

they may hurt the person's feelings. Talking is usually all it will take to help a child overcome being rude in this way.

(4) *Let older folks have his seat.* Any time a child is occupying a seat on a bus, train, or in a crowded room or assembly, and an older person is standing, the child should be trained to relinquish his seat to the aged.

(5) *Never yell or run in public buildings.* Injuries to other people and to the child himself can be avoided when running is prohibited in public buildings. This, like everything else with a child, takes constant training. How marvelous it would be to tell him on one occasion not to run in public buildings and have it be remembered for ever after, but it doesn't work that way. The temptation is always there, and he must be reminded each and every time the enticement presents itself.

(6) *Cover his mouth when coughing and sneezing.* This is a polite thing to do because it is one more way to eliminate the spreading of germs and diseases.

In Closing

As I close this chapter on the training in good habits, I like to remind young mothers of one last thing. *Always remember that you are making that little boy that his wife can never change.*

ASSIGNMENT

1. Read a "good manners" book to your children and yourself this week. *My Little Golden Book of Manners* is a good one.
2. Explain these two statements to your husband by using the knowledge you have of training.
Sentence 1 - You can't train a good habit by being a poor teacher.
Sentence 2 - You can train a bad habit by being a good teacher.
3. Encourage your children to invite a guest home with them from worship service this week. Fix a delicious dinner, and help your children concentrate on all the good habits that apply to this occasion.