

## Righteousness...

That *Breastplate of Righteousness* is also totally necessary! We often look at tough times as a spanking from God. If we are to battle as a victor, we must learn the difference between chastisement from God and sifting attacks from Satan! The bottom line is our conscience—are we righteous? If we are, we can count on pruning from time to time, but during the pruning we can stand firm because we will know that pruning only results in a greater production of fruit! I feel this sounds like a parable so let's get personal!

I went through some very tough times a while back. I had my tubes tied after giving birth to Elisabeth. My heart was hardened by my own selfish ambitions and my desires to get on with *my life, my way!* (Now, note that in *NO* way is this meant to judge anyone for decisions or actions. I can *ONLY* testify of *MY* heart condition that led me down this path *AND* that this was sin for me since my actions were not *FAITH* actions. Even now, 12 years later than my reversal, God led me to have my tubes tied again after all of the losses—the difference was *FAITH* and *SEEKING* God's will. ) A long, long story—another book! ))

It took years before I finally surrendered my will to God's will, which meant repentance, turning from my way to God's way. The only problem was that this meant that we were in a predicament. My tubes were tied. Even though I was completely remorseful for not trusting God with this area of my life, I felt that there was still one more step that I had to do—get a reversal!

It would be several years later before all would work out for me to have a surgery to reverse my sterilization. God mightily answered my need by providing a miracle for me to have my reversal paid in full by our new insurance, as fertility treatment!!!!

I had felt a peace after repenting, but there was exhilaration as God provided *all* that we needed to undo my poor decision!

This was not the battle, but the battle was on its way. Only a few months after my reversal, we were blessed to find out that we were expecting a precious child! I was so excited that God was giving me the desires of my heart. It was a second chance.

Then, came the first attack of one of our greatest battles. I had one request of God when I had stepped out in faith to get my Tubal Ligation reversed. I asked God to bless that step of faith and preserve my tubes at all costs. This was my heart's cry to Him. Little did I know that this would be the battlefield for my faith in Him.

Well, as I shared, 3 months after reversal I found myself pregnant! We were ecstatic! This soon crashed as I found myself seemingly miscarrying. The heartbreak was beyond words. I could not understand why God was allowing this pain. He knew my heart. How could this happen to me? If a miscarriage were not enough, I felt even more forsaken by my dear Lord as we found that my pregnancy was ending due to a tubal pregnancy? I could not figure God out? Why would He allow such pain in my heart after I had done as He bid? Why didn't He protect me and give me the desire of heart? Actually, why did my Sovereign and Almighty Lord not step in and do something to change this situation?

I battled God, my husband, the situation, my friends, my family for months. No one seemed to understand my deep grief. No one could make it better. Not to mention, I had blows from those who were dearest to me. They really did not know how wrong they were because they were only repeating lies by our *enemy*. They would say things such as...

*"The Bible says you will have your womb blessed if you are righteous,"*

*"If you just repent from your sins, you would have a fruitful vine,"*

*"Have you ever thought that God may be reproofing you for your sins?"*

*"Maybe it is not God's Will for you to have any more children?"*

Of course, I had beat myself up with such thoughts! I could not understand what we were doing wrong! I remember the defeated feeling coming from those blows. But, God had not spoken yet.

The battle was waging. The words were cutting to the depths of my heart. But, they were not words from God, they were blows from the enemy!

One little moment with God gave me peace in the midst of that trial. His Word spoke differently in 1 and 2 Peter about our afflictions. I was reminded that our perfect example of sinlessness, Jesus Christ, suffered. (1 Peter 2: 21-22) Only this time, I saw this great truth in a new way!

*"For this is THANKWORTHY, if a man for conscience toward God endures grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? But if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For EVEN hereunto were ye called: because Christ ALSO suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps:*

*WHO DID NO SIN..."*

Yes, Jesus *suffered* for our sins! The debt was paid in full! Not only that... *He was sinless*. He had done *nothing* wrong, yet He still suffered. If this was so, then suffering is not always a result of sinfulness. Do you know what that meant? My little mind finally clicked! No! I was not suffering from *sinfulness* or as a *rebuke* because I was not good enough. I was suffering from righteousness—from obeying God regardless of the cost or loss. My suffering was part of the *race* before us! All of the heartache and disappointment and pain were just evidence that a battle was raging around me!

So often, we forget this. We fail to see *the battle* not only in our own personal lives, but also in our family and our homes. We have a bad day...or a bad year. We have a loss...or a period of testing and trial. Then, we think it is time to throw in the towel. We believe, like our dear cheerleading squad says, that what we are doing is not “right” because times are tough! We just want to quit...accept defeat.

Well, look at this example of Jesus Christ, Himself. The only “right” thing to fix the problem of sin was for Jesus, Himself to come, live a sinless life, and give Himself as a sacrifice for our sin. It took the sinless One to restore the relationship broken by sin—but not His sin, ours! The “right” thing did not feel good, was not easy, and was not even His Will. But, it was still right!

What about His Words in John 15?

*“I am the True Vine, and my Father is the Husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit He taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it (means to remove what is offensive, cleanse or purify by separating and carrying off whatever is impure, to clarify), that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the Word, which I have spoken unto you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in The Vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me. I am The Vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch (to be cast forth is to be cut off from God’s Power so that they must do it on their own!), and is withered (faded, dried up, shrunk, become dry, wrinkled, decayed!); and men gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned (in commotion, to feel the excess of the heat, hurt, or injured). If ye abide in Me, and My Words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit, so shall ye be My disciples.”*

Could it be that tough times have many different purposes? Some may actually be because we are being chastised. Some may be because we are in the flesh and not abiding in

Christ. But, what ministered to my soul is that some may be because we *are* bearing fruit and God *wants more fruit!*

Don't allow yourself to be beaten in the battle. You cannot be defeated because Jesus has already won! When you stand firm *in HIM*, the battle is not yours, but *His!* He is your righteousness. In the midst of your battle, stand in firm with your righteousness—Jesus Christ!

Peace...

*"And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace..."* This goes along with the other pieces of armor. Our society has a deep need for God's peace. You know that peace that passes all understanding. You can't really explain it! You may not like the battle waging, but you have peace in the midst like you would in a storm.

Why don't we all use that piece of armor that can bring peace in the battle? I think it is because we are so often given a whop-sided view of Christianity. We are taught an over-dose of lessons about God's grace, which is sufficient to sustain during every sin, every difficulty, and every battle. We are told of God's love, which is so deep that we cannot fathom how far it reaches. We are told of God's hope, which is worth walking every step of our lives in spite of how tough things can get. We are told of God's future, which will end all of this pain, suffering, and all of the battles one great and glorious day! BUT, we are not told a whole lot about battles, suffering, God's wrath, long and treatorous races, the narrow path, and the storms of life! In turn, just by a lack of preparation, we are caught by surprise as our enemy catches us unstable, wanting to delay the battle until another day, or totally oblivious to the fact that battles, suffering, pain, storms and tough times are inevitable.

Let's look at that verse again...from the Amplified Bible. *"And having shod your feet in preparation [to face the enemy with the firm-footed stability, the promptness, and the readiness produced by the good news] of the Gospel of peace."* The only way we are prepared for battle is to **expect for it to come.** We cannot do this with a whop-sided view of God and life. We also cannot do it alone. We must be prepared by His Spirit as we learn of the Gospel. This is done as we renew our mind through prayer and Bible Study. Want to stand firm in the battle...even on the toughest, roughest days? Stand in the gospel! Stand in peace firmly rooted in the Word of God!

### Faith...

It is nice to know that battles will come, to know truth to help give you strength, to know where you stand with God, to be prepared for battle...but when the fiery darts come to you from the wicked one, you must quench those darts with a **Shield of Faith**.

There are many prisoners of war from this Spiritual battle just because of myths and lies and deceptions and falsehoods spread about by the wicked one. We see this in some of what I shared above from my personal battle, but what about a mom at home? So many of us are getting wounded from the little darts of what determines happiness and success for a woman. We look at our husband and just know he is not perfect and could not appreciate us like **WE** deserve! We look at these little kids (yes, I used that word on purpose!) who do not appreciate one thing that we do for them or any of our sacrifices that are just to make their lives better. We just know that there is *something* better out there somewhere else! Do these sound like little "darts" that are shot forth with the sole purpose of destroying the fruits of the spirit in your Christian home? You can be sure they are!

Myths and lies from our enemy are going to be constantly shot forth. He aims for your heart, your mind, and your spirit. The only protection that will guard us with this constant attack is the *Shield of Faith*. Those darts bounce back broken from a simple faith in God's truth. Every myth and every lie from our enemy loses power as it bounces back from our *Shield of Faith*! For this reason, we need to constantly renew our minds through prayer and Bible Study. This will protect us in all battles that wage against us!

### Salvation and The Word...

Oh, don't go out to war without your last two pieces of armor! If you are not saved, this may sound very confusing. Or it may make perfect sense for you as you see the need to face the cares of life with some protection! J

The **Helmet of Salvation** and the **Sword of the Spirit, the Bible**, are the protectors of the mind. We must come to the truth of salvation and our need for God before we will be protected in our mind. Faulty thinking is inevitable without relying on God. There is instant defeat in the battles of life if we let our minds go unprotected.

The wicked one will yield a heavy blow to your mind by bringing accusations about God that are simply not true. He will bring accusations about you that are not true. He will whisper doubts and fears into your trembling soul. He will come against you at the very moment you lay down your *Sword* thinking that the battle is over or you don't have

to carry that *Sword* at all times. He just loves for you to try to fight on your own.

Christian mother, hold on to this part of your armor with all your might. Use it confidently! The days may get long. The battles may get weary. But, if we are faithful to keep on our armor by renewing our minds, we can stand against the wiles of the devil!

### The Battle...

Are you in the midst of the battle? Do you see your foe on the move toward you? There are comforting words for you! Take a look at 2 Chronicles 20: 15-17...

*"Thus saith the LORD unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's. To morrow go ye down against them... Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the LORD with you...fear not, nor be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them: for the LORD will be with you."*

Feel your enemy closing in? May you rest in the Lord! May you stand still and see His salvation! This battle...and tomorrow's battle are not yours, they are the Lord's! He will not leave you there alone. Get up. Get dressed in that armor. Wait on the Lord! He will be with you!

### *Psalm 121*

*I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.  
My help cometh from the LORD, Which made heaven and earth.  
He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: He that keepeth thee will not slumber.  
Behold, He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.  
The LORD is thy keeper: the LORD is thy shade upon thy right hand.  
The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.  
The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil: He shall preserve thy soul.  
The LORD shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth,  
and even for ever more.*

## Build Your Home...



*"Every wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands." Proverbs 14:1*

Just a few years ago, we began a project in our family that would change our perspective on life! We had always dreamed of owning our own home, but we were so picky that we never could find the "perfect" home for us. This left us with one option: to build our own home!

We dreamed. We prayed. We looked around at model homes. We read books. We shared ideas. We shopped for plans. We compared materials and prices. We researched *all* of the options. Then, finally in Spring of 1995, we took the plunge and bought our dream piece of land. We were going to set out on the adventure of building our own home!

For those of you who may have built your own home, you *know* that there is going to have to be a punch line! Building a home often brings out so much in our character. It also quickly shows our experience, or in our case, inexperience! J

Well, if you saw how I began as a wife, mommy and maker of my home, you would think that the two experiences mirrored one another! Building a home is an adventure whether you are talking about the physical dwelling *or* the atmosphere and relationships that we lovingly call home.

A *home* just does not come easy! There is much time and effort that goes into building it properly. There is much that building a home costs in time and hidden costs. There are always special memories to treasure and horrible memories that you would rather forget. There are just so many dynamics that make it all easy or rather difficult, but often we do not learn the easy way until we are in the midst of the demands.

So, we want to be like the wise woman. We want to *build* our home. We do not want to tear it down with our own hands! But how DO we build a godly home??

I would say that there are three areas that make a whole world of difference! Let's take a look...

## Build Relationships...

*"It is not good that the man should be alone;  
I will make him an help meet for him."*

*Genesis 2:18*

Have you asked yourself what God is all about? I mean, has it ever crossed your mind that there has to be some plan for man? Can we know such things?

I believe that we can. I believe if we go back to the beginning and look at the complete unfolding of God's history with man, we can see one underlying theme—relationships! First, of all, God created man for relationship between God and man. Then, we see creation of woman because *"It is not good that the man should be alone..."* Then, we see the fall, the first ramifications affected relationships. Then, as we come on down history, we constantly see God revealing *WHO* He is to man so man can have a personal relationship with Him. Then, the ultimate sacrifice, all of sin paid for in full by God so man could once again have restored relationships with God and others. Oh, and don't forget the end... *"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her Husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. (Revelation 21: 2-3)* True communion! Relationships!

Yes. The main thing is relationships! If we are going to build our home, the first place to begin is with the foundation! The foundation must be built upon relationships or the home will not stand!

## Relationship with God

Our relationship with God is primary! Without personal redemption and a life surrendered completely to Him, we find that nothing else works out. We can't be godly wives, godly mothers, or godly mentors without first being godly!

When there are problems and our homes seem to be falling to pieces and we seem to be plucking down our home with our own hands, we need to look at our relationship with God. Do we know Him? Do we have an understanding of Him, His ways, and what He has to say? Are we responding properly to Him? If these things are out of order, all else will crumble around us.



Commit to God anew! Commit to get to know Him! Commit to know His Ways! Commit to find out what He says about every area of life! Commit to live totally for Him!

### Relationship with Your Husband

*"The woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man."*

*1 Corinthians 11: 7-9*

I have gone through entire years of focusing on different roles that I must fulfill to the detriment of my main calling—to be a wife! I remember the first year of homeschooling my children. As the last days of the school-year rolled around, I realized that in my enthusiasm of turning my heart back home toward my children. I had not nurtured my marriage as I should have! A WHOLE year! Ever found yourself like this?

There are so many different facets of womanhood. It is so easy to get so wrapped up in one area that we lose sight of all of the others! Our main calling as women is to the awesome role as a helpmeet for our husbands. We are to bring glory to our husbands so they may in turn bring glory to God. Isn't this beautiful? We are those hidden women who reflect back to our husbands...who build up our husbands...who do all that we do to help them subdue and have dominion over the world!

Where there is a beautiful marriage, all else falls into place. Two become one. There is security and stability in the lives of the children. There is a ministry to the world. This is the means that glory goes to God. Others see God's perfect plan for man and woman! There is hope. There is abundant life!

The catch here is that beautiful marriages do not just happen. Great marriages take work! They take commitment! They take priority!

Want a great marriage? Don't hold anything back! Give your all to your marriage—all your gifts, talents, bents, knowledge, understanding, and wisdom! Be a real helper to your husband! Give him assistance during the tough times. Protect his heart and his name. Step in the gap and pray hedges of protection around him in all that he sets forth to do. Adapt yourself and your whole life to him—to God's plan for him. Be his best friend!

Die to your ways and your ideas and your plans! Decide now that you will live your

whole life as your husband's chief support. Be the one who gives him that respect that he needs. Be the one who knows all that he is and yet still admires him more than even his little 2-year-old boy! Be the one who loves him unconditionally, enough to give up all life could possibly offer you to build him up! Die to all you had in mind for your life and commit to promote *him*.

Contribute to his growth, his enlargement, his excellence! Patiently nurture him and encourage him to develop interests (Bible Study, competitive shooting, hunting, SWAT team, metal detecting, sailing, e-mail...*he needs down time too!*) that will help him to re-fuel, re-charge, and become strong. Be the one to affirm him and his manhood. Get excited about his leadership, his masculinity, his sexuality, his work! Reassure any insecurities. Be the one who believes in him. Inspire him to greatness! Have the vision for all God wants to do in his life. Encourage him. Be his teammate as he works toward that calling. Relieve him where he needs relief. Always ask yourself, "Where can you come alongside to help him??"

See a weakness? Pray. Fast. Cry out to God. Make it easier (any way you can) to help them succeed! Love them *in* their weakness! Be joyful and positive, always uplifting and encouraging! Let God supply your needs, not your husband, things will relax. You may change *your* heart!

Decide now to pour yourself into your husband. Build your marriage! Let the little things go so that you have time to get to know your husband, so you will have time to minister to him in little ways! Take that time for the relationship and you will find that all else will fall into place!

### Relationship With Your Children

Let the world pass on. Children are only little for a little while! There is only a little while to minister to their little hearts. Only a little while to teach them about who God is. Only a little while for you to instill a vision for all that God wants to do in their lives. Only a little while for you to light a fire in their soul that will give them a passion to be great—to step up to the call. Treasure every moment! Grab every second!

### Build Memories

*"And it came to pass, when all the people were clean passed over Jordan, that the LORD spake unto Joshua, saying, Take you twelve men out of the people, out of every tribe a man, And command ye them, saying, Take you hence out of the*

*midst of Jordan, out of the place where the priests' feet stood firm, twelve stones, and ye shall carry them over with you, and leave them in the lodging place, where ye shall lodge this night. Then Joshua called the twelve men, whom he had prepared of the children of Israel, out of every tribe a man: And Joshua said unto them, Pass over before the ark of the LORD your God into the midst of Jordan, and take ye up every man of you a stone upon his shoulder, according unto the number of the tribes of the children of Israel: That this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean ye by these stones? Then ye shall answer them, That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off: and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever. And the children of Israel did so as Joshua commanded, and took up twelve stones out of the midst of Jordan, as the LORD spake unto Joshua, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel, and carried them over with them unto the place where they lodged, and laid them down there. And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests which bare the ark of the covenant stood: and they are there unto this day." Joshua 4: 1-9*

What do you think of when you think of home? What gives you that cozy feeling? Is it the smells drifting from the oven in the kitchen into the very crevices of your bedroom?? What about those family stories that you heard over and over and over? What about those bedtime stories and late night talks all cuddled up in Momma and Daddy's bed? Could we go on and on?

God knows that one of the things that build a strong home is memories. Memories give us identity—we find *our* story. Memories give us security—they provide us with the anchor that holds us when the sea is raging. Memories give us strength—they remind us that we made it through other trials and we can keep on, keeping on through this one!

Memories pull it all together. Our homes can have relationships. Our homes can have structure. Our homes can have direction. But, without memories we lose the tie that binds!

If you want a strong home, build your home by tying strings, strong cords, with your family. Make the effort to establish *your* family traditions and rituals—bedtime stories, tea, long discussions, walks in the woods, read alouds, adventures, family stories, prayer journals. Work together—in and around the home, in ministry, in business. Take time for fun. Oh, never forget that one. Make an effort to have fun!

The memories that you build in these days are the "stones" that **your** children will

come back to use in teaching their children about priorities, about commitment, about life, about marriage, about the ties that bind. Pick up the stones and leave them for your children. They will be the memorials that will reach out for generations to come!

### Build Your Influence

*"Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD. Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes; For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited."*

*Isaiah 54: 1-3*

Do you see many families that seem to fall right before your eyes...or lose influence almost as soon as they begin? Wonder why?? I believe it is because they begin with this area, trying to build influence, to the detriment of all of the other things that we are called to do. A personal ministry, work for the church, or busy-ness in the community shift into being the priority--the first thing they begin to build when God has a different process! God has a different plan! God has a different focus!

The godly woman is the woman who is happy to be "barren" of outside "accomplishment" and "influence." She gives up trying to create her own ministry. She stops working to build her own influence. She is the one who actually bears more fruit! Does this perplex you? God's ways are certainly not our ways. His ways are much more powerful!

God's plan for the home is for the woman to pour all she has into those within her "tent." He wants for the godly woman to be content in her ministry within her own tent. Her real influence comes from within her tent! It is God Who brings the increase. It is God Who uses her to influence. He brings fruitfulness on all sides and influences countless people through her obedience!

Want influence? Do it God's way! Rest in Him. Don't strive or struggle to be seen. Be content in your own home. Build those relationships with God, your husband, and your children. Center all around your family. They need to be "in order" so others can see how God's Word can affect a home. Those relationships need to mirror the beauty and peace that is available for all of us in God's ways!

Build memories. Strengthen the ties that bind. You will very soon be lengthening those cords. They must be strong enough to hold as you stretch forth your influence. Cutting them too early only collapses the tent. If they are weak or tattered, they can't hold growth! Build those strong ties, they are essential for enlarging the tent!

Enlarge the tent. You can be a woman of influence within your own home. Don't swap this power for an artificial substitute! You are the *maker* of your home. You set the thermostat. You set the pace. Slow down so you can make your home great. Slow down so all in your home can endure. Slow down so you can build your greatest work, your home!

### Build Your Home!

*"And I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in mine heart and in my mind: and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever."*

*1 Samuel 2: 35*

How do you build a godly home?? Will you be faithful? Will you be content to stay within your tent to become a woman of influence quietly? Will you forsake all of the snares that are in our world to keep us from the greatest work we could ever do?

This may frighten you as you think about how overwhelming the task at hand really is! However, you have a Lord Who will be with you. He will guide you the right direction. He will direct you in the process. He will provide all that you need to be victorious! Yes, He, the Lord God Almighty, will help you build a home, a sure house. A house of the Lord!

*"Now, my son, the LORD be with thee; and prosper thou, and build the house of the LORD thy God, as he hath said of thee."*

*1 Chronicles 22:11*

# How to BREAK Your Child's Heart...



# How to Break Your Child's Heart in Ten EASY Steps!



Got your attention?

Before I get into this chapter, I have to tell you about Elisabeth's reaction to this chapter. It was *probably* much like yours as you turned this page! J

One evening, I took Matthew and Elisabeth out to dinner. As we were dining, they wanted to hear about the ideas in my new book. Oh, it was one of those 'holy-moments' as my darling children poured forth their ideas to add into the pages of *our* book.

Not far from the end, Elisabeth excused herself to use the restroom (very typical of her!). While she was gone, I changed modes into this section of the book. As she came back, she had *no* clue about my transition of modes from ministering to the heart of the child to "breaking the heart of the child in ten *easy* steps!" She sat patiently listening... then had a horrified look on her face...finally after hearing a few points, she interrupted gently to say, "Momma, *THAT* would break the heart of a child! This is just unbiblical teaching! I cannot approve of this teaching!"

Matthew and I realized that this must have startled this darling little girl, who the whole book is dedicated to since God used her to teach me the great value of ministering to the hearts of our little treasures. We began to laugh and explain through the tears of laughter that this was *just* the point!

We certainly don't want to break a child's heart, but these are the little and big ways, which children are shattered into pieces day by day! In the following points, maybe you can find those little snares that lead to the heart of rebellion so that you too may minister to the heart of your child!

ATTENTION: This is funny (I know, I know...a SICK kind of funny!!) In NO way is this intended to be based upon any REAL family that I KNOW OR that anyone could imagine knowing! AND this has NOT been tested in OUR home!

SPECIAL NOTE...The suggestions below are not intended to take the place of God's Word or leading. If you have a concern, please contact your husband or mental health professional for guidance. Again, Mom's do not TRY this at home without the CONSTANT supervision of a man with a straight jacket or hand-cuffs! These steps might just work...and we will not be held responsible!!!!

### Assume That They Are ONLY Children!

Assume that they are *only* children...*even* if they are fifty! My goodness, how on earth can a mere child understand *anything* about life?? We all know that children are just going to make the exact same mistakes that we have made and we *must* protect them from those errors since we are their parents! Of course saying this, we all must realize that they are probably *not* going to listen to us (just like we did not listen to our parents!) or appreciate our gracious input into their lives (just like we have never truly appreciated our meddling parents!). The only difference is that we *know* that they are only children...they do not have the abilities, understanding, or vision that we have since we are now older and more mature! Of course, that is because you know how those 'kids' are these days!

### Don't Believe In Them!

Don't believe in them...*you* know what I mean! Goodness, we are talking about Johnny here. You know what I mean, especially *if* you have a Johnny in your home. Those children are the most undependable, forgetful, troublesome children there are. They are our "special" children and they need to *know* that! We, being the godly parents that we are, *know* that they are just going to disappoint us, so we have to work real hard on the others. Johnny is just a lost cause. Yes, lost cause! You know you cannot do anything with one of those wild children with no initiative...silly dreams...raging anger...constant forgetfulness... and of course, an excuse for everything! I say don't believe in them, but I have to note that you *can* believe that there is *nothing* on earth that you can trust little Johnny with...he is a lost cause. But of course, that is just Johnny...we all know that he is special!

### PUSH Them!

Push them...they *need* to develop godly character somehow! There are few really easy steps to help you as you try this technique. The first is to be sure that your children never miss those opportunities that you missed growing up...down to that *Easy Bake Oven* that your parents did not buy you because they thought you would make a mess (*Can you imagine??!!*)!

Also, think hard about their education...a rigorous education is a *must*! You have 2



very effective options: You could enroll your child at the closest school. I say this because children *need* for you to be close so you do not have to go far to get them to all of those 1,001 wonderful extracurricular activities *and* so you can be sure to be close enough to control—oh, I mean *run* all of the school activities! Now, if you are concerned that “school” won’t challenge your little genius’ enough or provide enough options for activities, then why not try homeschooling? Homeschooling gives you time to dig into *all* that your community and church offers. Surely they would not offer these wonderful activities if it were not God’s will for us to do them, right? Taking full advantage of what is available might just help fill those holes that might unravel if you homeschool...after all, you are *just* a mother!

Another very effective tip is to push them just a little beyond what they think they can do! It will make them tough! That is what children need to be in the real world. That gentleness is for babies!

The final tip actually branches off from the last point...stay on the go! Children just need to get over that whining! Keep them on the go...there are just too many excellent activities and good deeds that only *we* can do! Not to mention, we *really* need to be at all of those church meetings, support group activities, and community meetings to be sure that everyone stays on target, gets along, and doesn’t pass around any gossip, I mean prayer requests, without *us* knowing the *rea*/story—to keep it all godly—of course!

### Critique The Little Critters...

Critique the little critters...it will make them better! There is no greater way to make our children better than to constantly point out those things that they need to change. Surely they will eventually get those habits down. You know...how they speak, their manners, their posture, their writing!!! You be picky! They only have one mother! If you are easy to please, what will they become??? Use more correction than affirmation, you only have just *so* many years left. How will they know all that they need to know if you do not tell them?? Be attentive, there is a fault hidden in every little thing that they do!

### Discipline Them Carefully!

Discipline them carefully. You only have two choices! You will be either permissive or you will be harsh. It really does not matter which way you go. Kids are just kids...they will rebel anyway! But don’t worry, God promises that when they are old, they won’t depart from the life we live before them! They will treat *our* grandchildren with the same love and kindness that we treat them. Of course, this will be so ingrained in them that

they are not too likely know why they do what they are doing. Prayerfully, they won't ask why!

### Stay Busy!

- Stay too busy for time with them *or* to listen to them! You only have just *so* much time to live your life. Pursue your interests! Go for those opportunities that come your way! If you do not let God use *you* instead of your family, how on earth will you ever reach your dreams??? Also, because there is *no* time for fun, be sure that you stick to your schedule so you can attain all of your life pursuits and responsibilities. The key to having life in the fullest is finding a *ministry*. Build it like a business and don't let *anything* or *anyone* distract you along the way! Oh, if this seems a little harsh for you, then by all means don't feel guilty as you put off a minute here and a minute there with your children...you will have time when they are grown to have time with them. Surely they will
- have their priorities in line so they will spend time with you then!

### Toughen Them Up!

- Toughen them up! If there is one thing that no one can stand, it is one of those whiny little brats! The answer for those little twirps is a good dose of reality! Well, wouldn't you like to just slap a kid like that...especially in the face?? Oh, if that would leave a mark, surely words won't hurt! Stirriness will bring compliance. Poking a little fun will teach them to take a joke! Calling them names won't hurt either...they need tough skin! If they are not toughened, we will find them later going around all over the place blaming *us* for the sin in their life. We all know that there is no reason for them to judge us! A little exaggeration or a little white lie is no problem and kids just need to get over it! Probably the biggest problem with children these days is that they are just a little pampered. Showing them that you mean business when you discipline them will teach them quickly who is boss! If they don't get it, then nag...scream...and slap them until they get it! Ohhh, before I leave this point, we need to remember that children do not need that pansy talk that these plastic Vacation Bible School teachers dish out! You can do more good in the life of a child is you tell it like it is...and show *no* mercy!

### Don't Listen to Them!

Don't listen to them! Doesn't it just make you soooo sick when a parent stops to listen to a little child? What do they know? If we are going to take time to listen to a child, the least we can do is constantly point out ways that they can say it better and we simply *must* critique what they are saying, because it is necessary that our children learn to say

the right things at all times! This is all for their good. Children need to learn from an early age that we expect perfection *and* when they are older, we will have more time to listen!

### Don't Worry About Your Witness!

Don't worry about your witness! The most important thing that you can do in life is show your children how to act in public. It is really no one's business what you do at home...especially not your child. There is just too much bondage in thinking about living like a holy-roly! One-day children are going to see that *all* families have a skeleton in their closet. They need to learn forgiveness and grace! They will get over your fake face to the world!

### Don't Let Them KNOW You!

Of all my great tips, this is the *number one* point! Want to really break their heart, don't miss this one! Don't let them *know* you! It is very important that you set your tone in your home. The parent who is a friend and companion to their child runs a risk of that child knowing too much about the parent and their life. You can *ruin* a child that way! Instead why not live your life privately. Children do not need to see a parent who is passionate about *anything*...those parents are unduly shaping the life of their children to their own twisted beliefs! Children do not need to sit around under our feet trying to be just like us! They need to get out there in the real world and find their place...their job!

Again, another word on homeschooling. The biggest problem associated with homeschooling is the great risk that children will be tuned into the emotions of the parents. God-forbid that the child be exposed to the grief, pain, sin, struggles that foolish parents so commonly expose homeschooled children to! *They might grow!* Nothing is more annoying to the world than children that can carry on a conversation with adults... they need to stick to people their own age! If that is too annoying, have you ever noticed those children that seem to glow? They seemingly absorb the joys, delights, strengths, power (in the Word and in prayer), heartbeat, and life-message of their parents! Shouldn't kids just be kids?? Parents do not need to impose their faith on the child or their children will one day resent their interference. Things need to be just like they have always been!

### Don't Like ANY Of These Ideas???

NO! Don't put this book down yet! There are *options!* You *can* minister to the heart of your children! So, if this last chapter is *not* your heartbeat. You think that your child is

*indeed* worth the effort. Turn the next pages and be inspired to minister to *their* heart in little and big ways. You won't regret it! J

# Ministering To Their Hearts in Little and BIG Ways...



## Minister to Their Heart in Little and BIG Ways!



Back to our story with Elisabeth...

Harold and I were very grieved about Elisabeth's comment. Why? Isn't that just a little thing?? Doesn't sound like much, huh?

We have been thankful that as a couple, we were able to blend together two families. As we did so, we developed who we are as parents based upon those things that our parents did "right." Yes, our parents are some pretty fantastic people! And they *did* do things right! Before you think we are living with rose-colored glasses, we are completely aware of what they did wrong too! We really evaluated the things that they messed up along the way. This is Biblical. Evaluating the good and bad has given us strength and wisdom that our parents so desired from their experiences, good and bad.

As a result, one of our heartbeats that we really wanted to instill in our children was that we believed in them. This little moment that we shared about Elisabeth showed us that there was a little problem brewing. She needed for us to minister to her heart...to build her up...to instill in her that we *did* believe in her and her abilities...that she was a vital part of *who we are* as a family.

Of course, we first went to God pouring out our hearts. He knew of our desires. He knew of our priorities. He knew of our heart at this point. After we poured out our need for direction in this situation, we were blessed beyond measure with God's answer! This is where God began some new lessons!

It is through these new lessons that we now have this book. The rest of this book will be dedicated to sharing some vital areas of ministry to the heart of children. Whether your child is in the depths of rebellion. You feel as though you have lost all hope. You are not sure where to begin or whether it would help this late in the game. Or you are sensing that something is just not right. You have lost that enthusiasm. They are a little sullen from time to time. They pout a little. They are beginning to have those "looks" you have

always feared. *Wherever you are*, this book is for you! May the next few pages bless you and give you insights that will help you minister to the heart of your child!

# Leading Little Ones To The Heavenly Father... Instilling a Passion for God!



*"Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation,  
and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him...  
For I know him, that he will command his children and  
his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord,  
to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon  
Abraham that which he hath spoken of him."*

*Genesis 18: 18-19*

*"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD. And thou shalt love  
the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul,  
and with all thy might. And these words, which I command  
thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach  
them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them  
when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest  
by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.  
And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand,  
and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And  
thou shalt write them upon the posts of  
thy house, and on thy gates."*

*Deuteronomy 6: 6-9*

Motherhood is a tremendous calling. As we step up to our calling there are so many responsibilities that often I just want to know *what is* the main thing—what is the most important thing I am to do??

Looking at these passages, I have to go no further. The number one priority is to lead my children to the Lord. To instill a passion, a heart passion, for our Heavenly Father. Of course, I cannot do this unless this is what is on *my* heart. Unless I *know* Him well



enough to introduce Him to my children day by day as we go along the way. Knowing God makes the difference in our lives of how we live...how we respond to situations...how we respond to people...and whether our life is depressing, mundane or abundant! It is crucial that we get to know *Him* and that we introduce our children to our Lord!

A while back I was studying in the book of Exodus when I found a treasure! I had read over this awesome statement over and over and over countless times before, but this time it became *my* treasure! You probably know the story of the beginning of God's dealings with Moses.

### Back to Exodus...

You know about how God preserved His people during the great famine by carrying them into Egypt. As years go by, God's man, Joseph, dies and is forgotten by the Egyptians and the new Pharaoh. The Israelites become slaves to the Egyptians, only they continue to grow. The Egyptians begin to hate and oppress the Israelites hoping to keep them in "their place." Hatred soon grows more and more abundant until the Pharaoh orders that the babies of the Israelites be put to death. This is the time that Moses is born.

You probably already know about how miraculously God preserved this young man's life. He had a greater call on his life! Moses' mother places baby Moses in a little ark made of bullrushes, placed him in the river, and left her little girl to watch to see what happened to her little baby. Miraculously, this little baby was saved by the daughter of Pharaoh. Even more miraculously, his own mother was called to nurse him until he was ready to live in the Pharaoh's house.

Preserved, but that is not all. He was chosen to be the deliverer of his people. He had the perfect preservation and the perfect provisions. He was soon taken to the top! It was there that God began to bring him into his calling.

Of course, Moses, very much like you and I, had a heart for his calling. But also like you and I, he stepped out on his own and made a very bad mistake. He killed to protect the people. His flesh had gotten in his way. Very typical huh? Enthusiastic, but independence from God always brings failure.

The guilt and the shame were too much for this young leader. He spent the next 40 years in the backside of a desert, running from the Lord.

As we enter his life here on the backside of the desert, we find out something that I