



Our children need desperately to know what they are good at, what their specific gifts are, how to use those gifts for God's glory, and a glimmer of God's vision for them. If we can train them in this way, **The Way** they should go, then when they are old, they will not depart from it! We do this as we get to KNOW our children's gifts, true talents, who they are, and where the Lord is taking them!

## Encourage Them in This Vision!



Yes! Impress THIS VISION upon them! But how? Take a look at Habakkuk 2:2. How does it say we can best impress a vision that God has for the lives of our children upon their hearts?

Have you recorded the things that God has given you as you have parented your children?

What about personal verses God has "made yours?"

Have you preserved them for your children?

Have you recorded insights that you have seen along the way about their gifts, talents, and bents?

How are you practically encouraging your children in "the way they should go?" How can you do so in the future?

## Finding God's Vision For Our Children...



Maybe this is something completely new for you. You have never even considered parenting from this perspective. You desperately want to know the vision that God has for your children. My beloved friend, you can go to God for His vision! He is easy! He clarifies in Romans 12: 1-2 how we may know His exact will and His exact way! Take a peek at that passage now (If you have an Amplified Bible, it is a super translation of this passage!). How does it say that we can learn God's perfect will for us (and our children)?

Want a vision for your children? This verse tells us how...

- **Present ourselves to God as a complete, living sacrifice....**meaning that all we have and all we do must be completely yielded, dedicated, and committed to Him and His Way! This means *all* that we are: our plans...ambitions...ideas...methods...techniques... fears... concerns... *all* must be presented to God as a living sacrifice. Think back to the story of Abraham. Remember how God asked him to sacrifice his best, his Isaac, as an act of worship? You may think that to be an odd requirement, but God cannot allow us to have anything that becomes more precious to us than worshipping *Him*. Abraham obediently took Isaac up to the mountain. I believe that Abraham *knew* that his heart was committed completely to God, but this was the test to see just *how* committed he really was. God asked him to present his best as his sacrifice, his Isaac. Here, we find that if we are desiring to *know* the good, acceptable, perfect will of God for *ourselves* or *our children*, we must first obediently present ourselves as a complete, living sacrifice. There may be things in our lives that must be burnt up as a sacrifice for God's best OR we may find that what we brought to sacrifice before the Lord was acceptable in His sight and can return home with us. However, the key is not in what God does with our sacrifice, it is in our heart coming before Him daily, presenting ourselves and all that we have before

His throne!

- **Forsake the world's standards, the world's ways, and the world's bondage...** meaning that as we search for God's standards, God's Way, and we find God's freedom. There is great freedom in God's design for womanhood. Only in God's design will we find direction for the path our children are to walk upon!
- **Be transformed by the daily renewal of your mind...** meaning that if you want a changed life, it begins as you sit at the feet of Jesus. As you daily immerse yourself in His Word, you will begin to be transformed. You will soon have different priorities...different beliefs...different ambitions...and soon, you will be able to prove what is good, acceptable, and perfectly in the will of God. If we never experience this transformation, we will always find ourselves burdened under a yoke of bondage. We will always find ourselves looking in all the wrong places for direction, approval, meaning, purpose, and rest!

As we humbly go to God for purification, we will find His vision for our children and minister to their hearts as we share that vision day by day!

## Minister to Them By SPEAKING the Vision



Another way that we *“train up”* our children in the way they should go is directly related to our mouth! The words that we speak over our children are very important. Words are important because there is power in words. Words can build up, inspire, praise, give direction, encourage, exhort, AND minister to the heart of our children! Can you think of a time when your parents built you up with their words? How did it impact your life?

Likewise, we must be **very careful** about words because they also have the power to criticize, destroy, dishearten, exasperate, frustrate, lead astray, abuse, and break the heart of your child. We must beware of what we say *to* our children and *about* our children. Can you think of a time when your parents hurt you with their words? How did it impact your life?

Yes. Words have power. Power to build up. Power to tear down. Power to minister to our children. Power to break the hearts of our children. So, how can we minister to our children with our words? Can you think of practical ways that you can minister to your children with words AND encourage them in the way they should go with your words? List your thoughts below...

There are very practical ways that we can encourage them through our words. Here are a few of my thoughts...

1. **Being Careful with Our Words...** Words, ah...the power of words! Beware of negative words. Give your children far more encouragement than criticism. Encouragement! Smiles! Hugs! Giggles! Fun! What are some ways you can be more encouraging with your words?
  
2. **Being Careful With Our Spirit...** Yes, OUR spirit. We can say all the right things...do all the right things...yet, still communicate to them thoughts and beliefs about them that we do not want for them to ever know because we do not like our thoughts and beliefs ourselves! What is inside WILL come out in little ways through our words, even if they are not directly spoken to our children!

Watch that spirit of...

*"Well, that is just--- that we are talking about."*

*"He is just too --- for us to let him..."*

*"He is just too irresponsible for..."*

Often, what WE believe of our children, they will become! Children are broken time and time again simply because their mothers do not trust them. It may be little things, but children truly desire to be trusted. Children want for us to believe in them. Children want for us to believe in their abilities. We must constantly watch what our spirit communicates to them. How are you doing here?

3. **Encouraging Them to Be ALL That God Has Created Them to Be...** Encourage individuality. This is the key to peace, contentment, and inspiration. Constantly exhort them to become *a//* that God has created them to be not what *we* want for them to be so that we look good or feel proud. Praise them when they succeed. Praise their character qualities as they mature and develop them. Let them know how special they are. Each child has his own bent...his own gifts...his own talents. Train them in this way...unique, no comparisons, no copying, completely individual...just like God wants for them to live as adults! What good things do you see in your child? Are you communicating this to them? Do you simply assume that they know?



**An Idea for You:**

Keep an ongoing list in your prayer journal of character qualities, talents, gifts, and interests as you see them develop in your children. Let them KNOW!

4. **Constantly Share With Them God's Plan And Purpose For Them!** There is no greater encouragement and accountability than constant reminders of what God has promised! Help your children to see how far they have come. Let them know that you SEE that they are moving toward the higher call! Constantly give them a glimpse of God's vision. Let them know what God has said about their value. Let them know how precious they are to Him. Help to encourage them toward God's plan for their lives! Take a moment to think over the last few years...what growth do you see in your child spiritually? Intellectually? Emotionally?



What areas do you see a need for growth? Write them down. These will be your praises later (NOT criticism or correction NOW! Save for praises later!!)

What are some practical ways that you can come along side of your children to help them grow?

# Inspire Your Children Toward Greatness...



*"whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister."* Matthew 20: 26

One of the things that is simply a "Gunter" thing (that is my maiden name!), was doing what I call now, "the little things." If I could note one thing that my parents did that really changed my life, I would have to say it came from our day-by-day lifestyle of living as a servant-minister to everyone we came in contact with.

My parents simply lived a life of doing "the little things" for others. I am talking about things that few people in this world would ever take note of...but I did! From an early age, I learned a secret to true greatness... ministering in the little things! Want for your children to become great? I have a couple of keys...

1. **Serve in the little things...** What do you think this means? Brainstorm through some fun "little things" that you can do with your children today...
  
2. **Little things change LIVES...** I once read that Friedrich Nietzsche said, *"I would believe in their salvation if they looked a little more like people who have been saved."* What are some of the little things that your family does that "looks a little bit more like people who have been saved?"

We read another quote in one of our favorite books a while back, It said, *"We never know the power of personal influence, especially of the unconscious, personal influence. You little know that I was near you, my boy, when you made the resolve to give the good farmer back his sovereign; and you little thought of the INFLUENCE that was having on me as a spectator, and so on the whole perhaps of your future life. Trifles are often the turning points of human history."* (*Clean Your Boots, Sir?*) Do you think this is true?

What are some of the little things, "trifles," that have influenced your walk with God as you have quietly watched the lives of others?

What are some practical ways that you can instill in your children a lifestyle of doing the little things? (Need a little help? See Deuteronomy 6: 4-6)

3. **Little Things Are the Key to Becoming Great!** But how does a mother inspire a child toward greatness through the little things? First, make it a priority to serve others in the home. Why? It teaches our children to find things to do that are never seen... opening a door for someone needing a hand... putting away clothes or a toy for a sibling for the millionth time (!!!) ...feeding their sister's pets...doing their brother's chore...listening to a beginning reader for mom ...reading a story book to little brother...playing a game with the little ones ...helping mom prepare dinner for guests...etc. These things are little things that serve others. Little things to the eye...but big things for the kingdom of God! Can you think of more?

Little things done in the home teach our children to serve with right motives. It is the little things that teach them to discern the unspoken needs of others. When one another feels poorly...when someone has nothing working out right that day ...when someone goes through a struggle in life. How do you already model this before your children?

These lessons are priceless! How many people struggle when they encounter those hurting in our culture? They want to help, they just do not have any idea of where to begin. As a result, many people are left to just hurt. Want to begin training your children to do those "little things" for others so they can learn how to truly become great?? Begin by ministering *to them* in little ways. Let them catch your enthusiasm as they *watch us* do little things that no one sees. Let it be a FAMILY thing (A RUSHTON thing! A Gunter thing! WHO YOU ARE!)

# Want To Inspire Your Children Toward Greatness?



1. **Begin young!** Begin while they are young. Teach them from infancy to minister and serve. How? Teach them to play quietly at Mommy's feet while Mommy listens to a weeping mother pour out her heart and offers biblical wisdom. Teach them to work hard together with Mommy to clean the house just for *Daddy!* Get them busy helping Mommy with baby brother while Mommy listens to sister read her story aloud. Give them a ministry of making cards for a family who has just lost a baby while Mommy and Sister make a meal. Do you have more ideas? List a few...

One thing is for sure...*ALL* children will love to minister and serve *if* it is our heartbeat and our way of life *and* if it is shared with them!

2. **Instill Spiritual Disciplines NOW...** Help your children to develop their daily Bible reading/study, meditation on Scripture, prayer (Prayer Journal), ministry, praise/worship, and Bible memory. How are they doing? Which area needs a bit of work now? How can you help them develop good spiritual disciplines?

3. **Use their spiritual gifts.** Which gifts do you see in them? How can you use them in your daily life now, not when they are older?

4. **Crucify ALL flesh NOW!** The home is also the perfect training ground for learning ministry while getting rid of the flesh. You can help your children develop maturity in the Word and dominion over their flesh. Want to see what one looks like when walking in the flesh rather than the Spirit?

- Encouragers...they are the first ones to be depressed.
- Prophets...they are the ones with words and judgment that cut to the bone.
- Servant...wants recognition and fame for what they do.
- Giver...won't trust God for a new venture.
- Discerner...picks everyone to pieces.
- Teacher...loud and offers insights without regard to the receptivity of someone's heart.
- Mercy...develops a co-dependency with those she could really help!

How can you help your little one to crucify his or her flesh? Do you see their natural weaknesses? How can you "help" them to overcome those weaknesses?

There is NO Greater Training Ground for greatness! *TRAIN THEM IN YOUR OWN HOME!* "whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister."

# Life and Death are in the Tongue...The Incredible Power of YOUR Words!



*"Death and life are in the power of the tongue..."*  
Proverbs 18: 21

*"She openeth her mouth with wisdom: and in her tongue is the law of kindness."*  
Proverbs 31: 26

Let's go back in time...back to the beginning. The very beginning!

If you can stretch your mind a little bit...

...think of no people

...no animals

...no flowers

...no trees

...no light

...no world

...NOTHING but darkness and the God-head.

...Imagine if you can the very moment before creation

...Then imagine

...God *SPOKE* "Let there be..."

...And it all began!

Words have power! Look again at the verse above from Proverbs 18:21. *"Death and life are in the power of the tongue!"* God, Himself demonstrated in the power of words in those first moments of creation...His Words had the power of Life! Think of that for a moment...there was nothing. Absolutely nothing in existence but God, Alpha and Omega, The Beginning and the End. Yet, God spoke all that we know and see, hear, feel, and smell into existence! What power in words! The power to create!

Not only can words bring life, but they also have the power to bring death and pain. A study on the tongue through Scripture shows us that there is much power, destructive power, in the tongue. Take a look at James 3: 3-8. Animals can be tamed...ships can be directed...yet, the tongue cannot be controlled (Well, without walking in the Spirit!).

Power, power...the power of words... Yes. There is power in those utterances from our mouth. Great power. Look up the following verses. Jot down in the blanks provided what you learn about words and their power (This may take a few days! ALSO...jot down any other verses you may find along the way in the blanks at the bottom.)...

- Proverbs 25:11
  
- Proverbs 15: 4
  
- Proverbs 15: 1
  
- Isaiah 50: 4
  
- Proverbs 15: 7
  
- Proverbs 15: 23
  
- Psalm 17: 3-4
  
- Psalm 34: 12-15
  
- Ephesians 4:29
  
- Proverbs 31: 26

- Proverbs 10: 19
  
- Proverbs 10: 19–20
  
- Proverbs 11: 11
  
- Proverbs 12:17
  
- Proverbs 12: 18
  
- Proverbs 12: 18
  
- Proverbs 12: 19
  
- Proverbs 15: 28
  
- Proverbs 15: 26
  
- Proverbs 15: 23

- Proverbs 15: 23

- Proverbs 15: 2

- Proverbs 15: 4

- Jeremiah 18: 18

- James 3:6

- Proverbs 25:15

Are you seeing the power of the tongue? Those little words that just slip out? Words have power! The tongue has the power of life or death.

Now take this home to your child. Your words to your child have power. You may praise and lift up your weary child with just a few simple words. Your seemingly, insignificant words may build up your little child from nothing, from obscurity to greatness. Those little words that you say all along the way, all throughout the years, are the words that speak approval, love, acceptance, and blessing!

Who knows? Some quiet moment, in the midst of your busiest day, may be the moment that you speak the words that inspire them toward greatness. Your words, dear mother may be the very words of instruction that finally sink in to help them to succeed! Your words may be the words that serve as a rudder throughout their life to keep them on track as you help them to move toward their calling.

Now...think about other ways that words may affect our children. It only takes a word to break a heart. Those little words that we *really* don't mean can pierce through the soul of our precious child. Just one little word, that is all it takes, can wound the spirit of a child. A multitude of words never seems to make up for that one little word. The sting of words has the power to

build or tear-down.

Perhaps few women set forth with a desire to tear a child to pieces, yet the same moment that could build-up a child can quickly turn into a demolition of a soul! Power! It is because of the power in our words that we must be very careful to minister to the heart of our children with words.

## Keys for the Mother Wanting to Minister to the Heart of Her Child through Words...



- **Learn the Value of Praise and Encouragement!** Doesn't it just feel good when you *know* that you are right on track? Doesn't it fire you up to have just a little acknowledgment of the little things that you do? Think about a child and the impact that a little bit of praise can have in their lives. Remember a recent experience? How did they respond?

Our children struggle through their trials and often need just a touch of praise and encouragement to light the fire of enthusiasm to keep on trying hard to succeed! Children try so hard. They need for those little successes to get as much attention, or more so, than their failures! They need to be praised at least ten times as much as they were corrected or reprimanded.

Our greatest needs as human beings are...love...affirmation ...nurture ...meaning ...purpose...to be cherished ...to know that we are good ...to know what we actually are doing *right!* (maturing, growing..)

Our children are just like us. BUT even more tender than we are. They need *constant* assurance that they are on the right track, little affirmations in word will carry them through when they are struggling along. Just a little praise (makes a real difference in

their lives...the difference between success and failure, mistakes and trying again, confidence and insecurity, contentment and frustration, peace and strife, broken heart or a child with a heart for God!

Learn the value of praise and encouragement! Build your child with your praise and encouragement that comes from the depths of your heart and flows right into their ears!



**An Idea for You...**What are some areas that you see great things from your children? Jot a few areas below. ALSO begin a section in your Mommy Journal that continues the list for each of your children. (There WILL be days that you will need it...and so will they!!)

Do your children KNOW that they are doing great in these areas?

Make a point today to let them know anew!

- **BEWARE of Exasperating Them!** Yep! Exasperating THEM! Take a look at Ephesians 6:4. If I am reading this passage correctly, we can exasperate our children into rebellion. List a few ways that you have found yourself exasperating your children...

It is key for us to realize how easily exasperated our children can become. In the footnotes of my Bible after the above reference, I love what the author notes,

*"Fathers can **provoke** their children to **wrath** by injustice, loss of temper, undue severity, cruelty, favoritism, suppression, sarcasm, ridicule, and misuse or abuse of authority. **Nurture** basically means "training," here denoting spiritual education. **Admonition** is instruction that points out one's responsibilities and duties."*

Doesn't this get personal? If you did not find yourself in that list, you are truly an exception to the rule! In spite of my heart's desire to minister to the hearts of my children, I fail! This is a heavy responsibility...to nurture and admonish without exasperating our children!

I believe that God is this straightforward because He truly *knows* the children and their deepest needs. They are tender. They need our affirmation, nurture, and encouragement even more so than our correction or instruction! It is vital. Very little correction or instruction will sink in if we are exasperating our children.

## How DO We Keep From Exasperating Our Children?



Live a Crucified-Life...

Take a look at Romans 12: 1. What do you think is meant by presenting yourself as a living sacrifice?

List below some areas of SELF that you must sacrifice on a daily basis in order to avoid exasperating your children...

We need to live a "crucified-life." This means that if we ever want to become that *hidden woman of the heart* that ministers to the heart of our children, we must go to the cross each and every day to crucify our flesh. Our flesh is so exasperating, even more so for our children than for us! They need to see us crucifying "self" each and every day. They need to see us learning how to lay down our life, lay down our desires, ask forgiveness, admit when we are wrong, and daily crucify our pride and willfulness! Unless we do, we will find that our children will want very little to do with our beliefs...our lifestyle...our convictions...our God. They will become

exasperated.

### Deal With Problems...

Another area that seems to practically "breed" exasperation is when a parent does not deal with problems in the family. Think through the Bible. List some of the situations from Scripture that you immediately come to mind as you think of a parent who did not deal with problems in the family...

What was the outcome?

Need a little help? Look at David and Absalom... Jacob and Esau... Tamar and her father-in-law. It is extremely frustrating, to the point of exasperation, for a child to have a problem in life that is not dealt with by the parents that they are looking to for justice. Have there been any similar situations that you have faced with your children?

Did they lead to exasperation? Why? Why not?