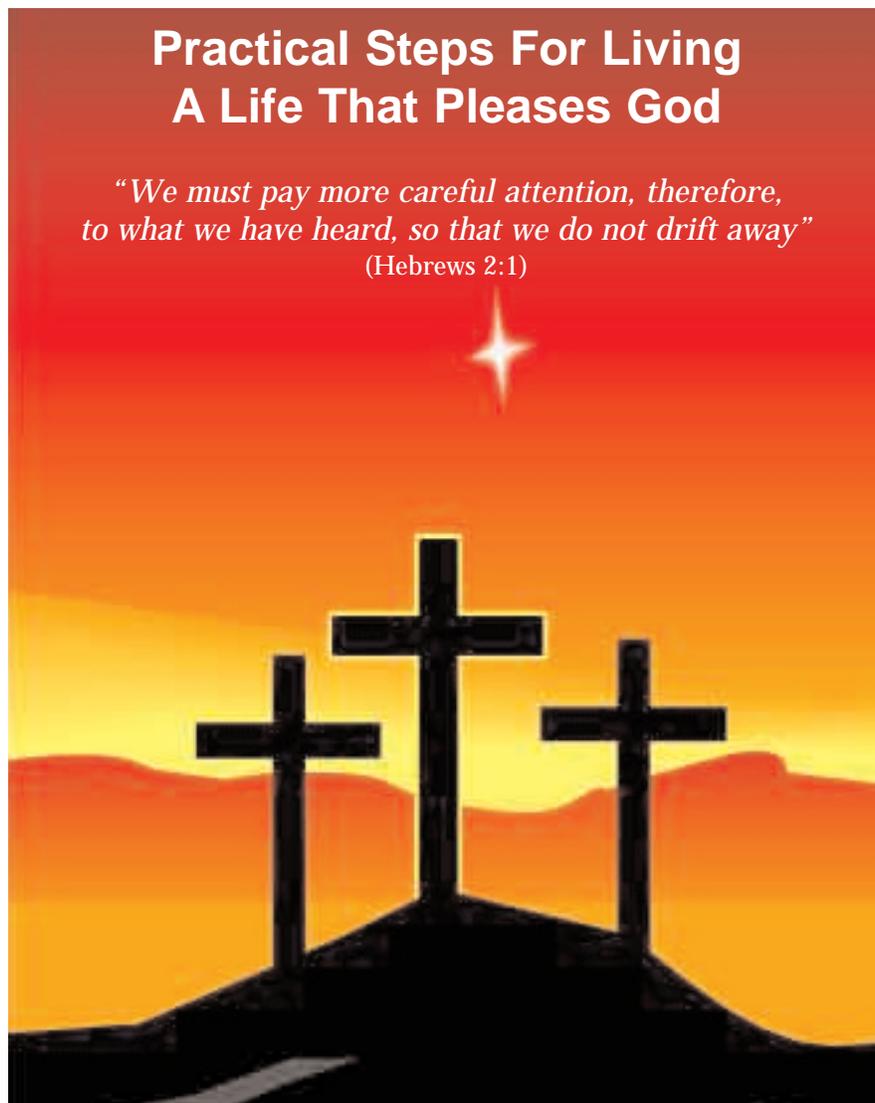


Lifebytes:

30. Your Home: Our Father's Primary Place For Combating Your Sin Nature



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Dear Friends,

You may be among the many who've repeatedly switched from one faith community to another. Maybe you've even changed denominations, hoping to experience what you read about in the Bible.

Christian pollster George Barna found that some 20 million people in the U.S. are yearning to restore the intimacy and power of the earliest Church. If you're among these hungering ones, be aware of this: that which you're seeking isn't OUT THERE some place!

Relational intimacy and spiritual power begin in your own home.

If you could see yourself and your home through the spiritual eyes of our Father, you'd perceive a completely different vantage point. The true issues which impact your life and your ability to experience the freedom Jesus offers are encountered in the *unseen world*.

A battle of tremendous proportion is raging in and around you. Engaged in this invisible war are the Holy Spirit, angels, demons, and even your own sin nature.

In our DVD series, *Certain Of What You Do Not See*, we discuss at length the unseen forces of the Holy Spirit, angels, demons, and your sin nature. We strongly encourage you to discuss this material with your spouse, your children and your extended spiritual family. Just because you can't SEE the invisible realm doesn't mean it isn't real!

Your spiritual victory and the freedom Jesus promises you is won in this unseen arena, not in the physical world. And your HOME is your primary opportunity to be victorious.

Focus on this point as you go through this Lifebyte:

Your HOME is the primary place of spiritual development and victory. Your HOME is also the *basic building block* for all spiritual development in your transformation into Christ-likeness, and for you to experience the freedom Jesus promises.

Let's delve a little further into the evil, unseen force that's within you. It's a compelling drive that you were born with — your SIN NATURE. Why do you need to explore the influence of your sin nature?

Because it's an integral part of each person that's pretty much ignored. We may be convicted about the individual sins we commit, but few people pay attention to the powerful force within them that *entices them to sin*.

Yet our Father knows that your sin nature can reap devastation if you give it free rein! The chief aim of your sin nature is to entice you into a life of sin and keep you out of heaven.

Now, if your sin nature were a physical organ like your heart or your liver, it would go about its business unnoticed until something went wrong. But, unlike your organs, your sin nature has been doing a whole lot evil since you were born.

Let's look at what happened to you when you were conceived (see diagram on next page):

First, you received the *spirit* in you that gave you life from God.

Next, you received your *body* — your physical, genetic components — from your parents.

And you were also conceived with a *soul*, that is, your mind, will and emotions.



But along with your soul came your SIN NATURE. That's right! This is your inheritance that goes all the way back to Adam's defiance of God:

*Here is how it works: it was **through one individual that sin entered the world, and through sin, death; and in this way death passed through to the whole human race, inasmuch as everyone sinned** (Romans 5:12).*

Each of us was headed toward God's wrath because we all inherited a sin nature from Adam. It's important that you get hold of this:

You were conceived with an evil force in you, one that would like nothing more than for you to experience spiritual death. In effect, because of our inherited sin, we were ALL born condemned.

Paul makes plain the universal drive within humanity to seek after sin:

Indeed, we all once lived this way — we followed the passions of our old nature and obeyed the wishes of our old nature and our own thoughts. In our natural condition we were headed for God's wrath, just like everyone else (Ephesians 2:3).

So, if you've embraced the true Gospel and are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, there's a battle raging inside you! It's a battle over who will rule your soul — your mind, will and emotions. The victor will be either the sin nature you were born with, or the Holy Spirit Who now indwells the followers of Jesus.

That battle line is clearly defined:

*So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is **contrary to the Spirit**, and the Spirit what is **contrary to the sinful nature**. They are **in conflict with each other**, so that you do not do what you want (Galatians 5:16,17).*

Do you understand what we're saying? When you embrace the Covenant with our Father through Jesus, the sin nature you were born with FIGHTS against the Spirit our Father sealed you with. Your sin nature and the Holy Spirit are warring WITHIN you over who will rule your soul.

As you'll see in the truths we'll be sharing, your HOME is where your sin nature is first confronted, and life in the Spirit is first learned and practiced.

When you've completed this lesson, you'll never regard your home life the same again!

The Coordination of Your Sin Nature, the World and the Devil Against You

In Lesson 10 of our *Certain Of What You Do Not See* series, we discuss the evil coordination of your sin nature, the world, and the devil. Again, your sin nature is that part of your soul that you received through Adam's sin. That sin nature operates from WITHIN you.

The World may be understood as **ALLUREMENT**. When you became a follower of Jesus, you were commanded to DIE to the world's values, ways and goals:

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world.

The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever (1 John 2:15-17).

It's clear why our Father doesn't want His children entangled in the world's goals and values. Remember, Satan and his rebellious companions were thrown down to *the earth*. (see Revelation 12:7-9, Luke 10:18,19). They're not yet confined to hell! They're here on earth accomplishing their evil purposes. And one of their weapons against you is to entice you to *embrace the world's values*.

The governments of this world are under Satan's authority. Through them he wages spiritual warfare against the followers of Jesus. That's a painful reality our persecuted brothers and sisters around the world are undergoing daily (see Revelation 12:17).

God calls us as His children to SEPARATE our thoughts, decisions, values and actions from those of the world, because the world is enslaved to Satan. ***"We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one"*** (1 John 5:19).

Satan uses worldly enticement to lure followers of Jesus away from their devotion to God. It's interesting to note that

we in Christ are called to live IN the world, but not be PART of the world's standards. Basic biology teaches that we're connected to the world around us through our five senses — sight, smell, taste, touch, and hearing. 89% of what we learn is through our sense of sight, while the remaining 11% is through our other four senses.

When we become followers of Jesus, we are called to switch our reliance from the physical realm to the spiritual. As Paul affirms, we ***"walk by faith, not by sight"*** (2 Corinthians 5:7)

As we discussed in our video segments on the ***Gospel of the Covenant***, our faith and the indwelling Holy Spirit arm us to *overcome the world's system* of values and ways. The Holy Spirit then equips us to *live out God's plan and purposes* in a way that pleases Him.

There's a profound interconnectedness between the allure of the world,... the propensity of our sin nature,... and the schemes of the devil. When you give way to ANY of these three, you're choosing to SILENCE the voice and the power of the Holy Spirit within you. In essence, ***you're surrendering ground in the spiritual battle, and stifling your growth in Christ's likeness.***

If you recall, the Greek word *ekklesia* [ek-luh-SEE-uh], which is commonly translated "church", literally means the ***"called-out ones"***.

So, what is it that we're called-out FROM?

Jesus gives us HIS answer:

If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you OUT of the world. That is why the world hates you (John 15:19).

Think about it.

Jesus calls us OUT of the world's way of thinking and acting. He calls us AWAY from depending on our five senses so that we'll *rely on His Spirit*. And because of this, the world will hate us.

Your conversion is really the BEGINNING of your pilgrimage OUT OF the world's values and goals, and INTO the Kingdom's values and purposes.

And the primary place for your spiritual and moral development is your HOME.

We encourage you to view and discuss our *Certain Of What We Do Not See* series (a free download). It will help your spirit AND your character grow in your own home.

Remember the insidious goal of the three evil forces — the world, your sin nature and the devil. They coordinate to seduce you AWAY from obedience to applying God's commands to your life, and deceive you into GIVING IN to evil desires.

If you don't succeed in your home, you'll never succeed anywhere else.

It's difficult enough that we enter this world with a sin nature. But in Part 2 of our *Freedom In Jesus* series, **Demolishing Strongholds**, we discuss demonic forces in your soul. These forces are called *spiritual strongholds*. They're demonic influences that occupy your mind, will and emotions in areas you haven't fully yielded to the Holy Spirit.

Many of us were born with generational strongholds inherited from our parents. Sue and I were born with a *stronghold of rejection* that went back for several generations in both our families.

We were married for 23 emotionally painful years before we became free of the influence of the spiritual stronghold of rejection.

The forces arrayed against each one of us seem sizeable: your sin nature, the demonic strongholds in your soul, and the allurements of the world. We'd ALL be doomed if our Lord didn't place His Spirit in His followers and help our HOMES to be the primary place we win victory in the battle.

Guard Yourself Against the World and the Devil:

Don't Outsource Your Responsibilities

Satan employs an especially deceptive strategy: He uses the WORLD'S WAYS against the followers of Jesus.

The enemy wants to lure us away from fulfilling our God-given responsibilities in our homes.

Our Lord has special specific purposes for marriage and the family:

Has not [the LORD] made them one? In flesh and spirit they are His. And why one? Because He was seeking godly offspring.

So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth. 'I hate divorce,' says the LORD (Malachi 2:15,16a).

The devil clearly recognizes what God desires for marriage — to produce godly generations. If you were Satan, how would YOU undermine our Lord's goal?

- You'd certainly have to be devious.
- The husband and wife would have to be blinded to your real intent.
- You'd have to camouflage your strategy so it would appear helpful to the cou-

ple and be widely accepted by other Christians. This would keep them from questioning or being suspicious.

This kind of subterfuge is how the devil seduced Eve into sin:

*When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was **good** for food and **pleasing** to the eye, and also **desirable** for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also **gave some to her husband**, who was with her, and he ate it (Genesis 3:6).*

The devil is still using that kind of deception today. He's succeeded in getting married couples to follow the world's ways because they seem rational and desirable from the *world's perspective*. Just as the world does, so many Christians outsource their God-given responsibilities for *others* to fulfill on their behalf.

Do you know what outsourcing is?

Outsourcing is when someone else does your work for you.

If you look throughout Christendom today, you see parents letting others educate their children. They even outsource their families to religious establishments for SPIRITUAL training. It's all taken for granted that this is the way it should be.

But this isn't GOD'S way!

Satan's goal for you to outsource your children is to *undermine parental responsibility*. He doesn't want you fulfilling God's commands in your OWN HOME. The Atomistic culture in which we live has taken over much of Christendom. This emphasis on individual rights and expectations has seduced parents into irresponsibility.

You may not even realize that your responsibilities have been usurped, and

that OTHERS are indoctrinating your family to live by their sin nature.

It took less than a century for our society to move from the Trustee family to the Atomistic design that permeates western Christendom today.

(See *Discussing How To Restore The Early Church: Lesson 3* for more on the Trustee, Domestic and Atomistic family.)

Satan uses his systems in this world to entice parents to increasingly outsource their children for others to train. Most parents have been deceived that schools and even religious institutions would instill moral values in their kids.

And when you look at the moral condition of both this country and Christendom, it's tragically obvious that generations of parents have been wrong.

Do you think that your children are receiving NEUTRAL information in the public school system? Followers of Jesus need to come to grips that Public schools promote **HUMANISM**. Humanism DENIES GOD and puts MAN at the center of all things as an idol.

Is this what you want your children to learn? Do you think YOU can counteract this indoctrination that makes self an idol? NOBODY does...

So if your kids are in public school, they're being indoctrinated to pursue self-gratification without concern for either morality or the commands of God's Word.

Recent studies indicate that 70% of public high school students admit to cheating on tests. *And they don't see anything wrong with it!* By their own admission, they've just responded to the world's goals of doing whatever's necessary to gain wealth and success.

The founders of public education in the United States were intent on NEUTRALIZING the influence of parents on their children, especially the role of fathers. In that way, the children's loyalty would lay with their nation's leaders, and they'd be willing as patriotic citizens to serve in the military.

Society then is controlled by the sin nature of both its leaders and its populace. The humanist LIE that man is basically good has brought about a society devoid of morals. It's called "tolerance". We're now reaping the LAWLESSNESS that humanism has sown.

From a biblical standpoint, public "education" is better understood as humanist "indoctrination": ***the individual is the center of his world.***

Through the humanist propaganda that's instilled in vulnerable young minds, the individual is encouraged to pursue his own desires WITHOUT being hindered by moral boundaries and absolutes.

The Humanism agenda underlies the goals of the National Education Association. Parental influence, especially that of fathers, is offset by classroom teachers who've been steeped in humanist goals which they present daily.

Sixteen years ago family authors James Dobson and Gary Bauer warned of the Humanist takeover in their book, *Children At Risk*.

Listen to this chilling point:

"The campaign to *isolate children from their parents* and to *indoctrinate them with humanistic ideas* is being waged primarily in the public schools. That is where eventual victory or defeat will occur."

As a parent and a follower of Jesus, you need to know that the goal of

Humanism is to ELIMINATE the absolute moral standards that are set forth in God's Word. And when you outsource your children to public education, you're steering them AWAY from God.

The goal of humanism to INDOCTRINATE today's youth, even Christian young people, is tragically succeeding. The morality of church kids has been found to be no different than those who have no faith.

If you have any doubts about this, read the *Humanist Manifesto* of 1932 which was endorsed by the National Education Association. This propaganda UNDERMINES the sanctity of marriage and the personal responsibility of each generation to instill in the next the values of godly marriage and childrearing.

For more insight into what you as a family can do, we encourage you to print out and discuss our Hebraic article: ***He Has Showed You.***

The agenda and methods of public education have also heavily influenced the Sunday schools and youth programs within Christendom. As we've mentioned: the moral values of many who call themselves "Christian" are NO DIFFERENT from those of UNbelievers.

How can this happen?

First, because parents are failing in their responsibility to personally instill a biblical way of life in their home. They outsource their children to others in opposition to God's Word (for example, see Deuteronomy 6:7, 11:19).

And second, Sunday schools and youth programs ENCOURAGE parents to outsource their kids for others to teach them about spiritual matters.

Most programs for kids are entertaining. They appeal to the flesh—their sin nature — but they have little godly

impact on their spirit. The whole concept of “Serving God” is transformed into an opportunity for self-gratification.

And almost any kind of activity that attracts kids in the world is being used in Christendom. The pitiful fruit of all these church-sponsored programs and activities is that less than 23% of church-ed sons and daughters follow in their parents’ faith.

Youth programs are less than 3% effective in equipping young people to continue in Kingdom purposes with Jesus as Lord of their lives. Something’s tragically wrong, but so many feel helpless to make any change, even in their own home.

If YOU’VE been duped into outsourcing your family for the religious establishment to train, you need to carefully consider Peter’s warning:

There will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves. Many will follow their shameful ways and will bring the way of truth into disrepute...

For they mouth empty, boastful words and, by appealing to the lustful desires of sinful human nature, they entice people who are just escaping from those who live in error. They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity—for a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him (2 Peter 2:1,2,18,19).

As we’ve shared earlier, Christian pollster George Barna discovered that Christians AND non-Christians in the United States have the same moral, worldly values.

Do you think our FATHER is pleased about this?

Take a look at yourself:

Were YOU raised by parents who were indwelled by the Holy Spirit and who taught you God’s way in your home?

If not, then you’ve inherited attitudes and behaviors that FEED your sin nature.

Can you clearly discern which of YOUR motives and behaviors align with God’s Word? This is what *sanctification* is intended to do:

To transform you into Christ’s likeness, and to enable you to DIE to your sin nature and to LIVE by the Spirit.

This transformation process is ongoing, and it’s developed in your own home first:

For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you keep putting to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God (Romans 8:13,14).

Our God ordained the HOME to be the *foundational place* for all spiritual development. Not a congregation, not a Sunday school, youth program, not even a Bible study — but your HOME.

If you’re married and a parent, your interaction within the refuge of your home is the primary place for the character of Jesus to be developed. You need to scrutinize your spiritual responsibilities to your spouse and to your children.

You may not realize how many UNbiblical standards and deceptive practices the generations before you have passed along.

And, you'll never confront these effectively if you outsource family members for others to teach.

Your Home and Extended Spiritual Family Help Combat Your Sin Nature

You may be a child of unbelieving parents, the child of divorced parents, or a product of public education.

Maybe you were heavily involved in youth ministry programs when you were growing up.

If so, we're going to help you take a close look at what our Father calls for in your home. He wants your marriage covenant to honor HIM, and for you to raise your children to *love* Him and *serve* His Kingdom purposes.

His highest desire is for ALL of you to be welcomed into heaven.

If you AREN'T married, you can still be a great help to the families with whom you interact, especially if you're in the extended spiritual family of a home fellowship. You have a lot to *offer* as well as to *receive*!

In our series, ***Discussing How To Restore the Early Church: Lesson 26***, we share how very important it is for you to cooperate with OTHERS in your spiritual development.

Sanctification is a COLLECTIVE process for each of us. Paul makes this clear to his spiritual children in Philippi:

Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose (Philippians 2:12b,13).

In this passage, "YOUR salvation" is plural. This means that we need to keep

helping ONE ANOTHER grow in the changes God wants to make in each of us. His desire is that "you'all" live in victory TOGETHER by His Spirit.

The information we're sharing in this Lifebyte is for your *collective* understanding as family and extended spiritual family. We trust YOU'ALL will be blessed as you discuss and put into practice that which penetrates your heart.

Do you get the picture here?

We're talking about FAMILY, and the help that's offered by *extended spiritual family*. These are your *family* of brothers and sisters in Jesus who don't live under your roof. Your extended spiritual family stirs a strong sense of belonging and acceptance in you because you're on the journey *together*.

You know that you'll make yourself available to willingly come alongside each of them to help in the Spirit's sanctification process. Upholding each other as extended spiritual family DOES help you in your own transformation into the character of Jesus.

But that mutual responsibility is also a means to UNDO the individualist, Atomistic influence that's penetrated each of us in western culture.

Each adult can be a brother or sister to the other adults, and spiritual aunts, uncles or grandparents to the children in the extended spiritual family. Your true identity is found in your *collective commitment* to each other. Biblically, that's what Paul means by "family" interaction.

Extended spiritual family who "bear the load" with you are a great *intergenerational* resource. They can come alongside to extend love and relational connectedness to you and your family!

Let's sum up God's purpose for your home:

- NO ONE can resist their sin nature by themselves. The earliest followers of Jesus understood this clearly, and saw themselves as a collective *body*.
- Although your home is the primary place for combating the sin nature, the HEBRAIC stream of Judaism also fellowshiped in each other's homes as added support in righteous living.

People need HELP in combating the unseen sin nature within them. Jesus understands the struggle each of His followers faces in breaking free from their propensity to sin. That's why He offers this command to restore those who DO yield to sin.

And if your brother sins, go and reprove him in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed' (Matthew 18:15,16).

On their pilgrimage to salvation together, a married couple is the primary resource for helping each other resist their sin nature and live according to the Spirit. That's why it's so important that we not get UPSET over the darkness we see in each other.

Remember, Jesus died for SINNERS.

And if He died for your spouse, shouldn't YOU be willing to cooperate with our Lord's goal to see your partner walk in righteousness?

This is also the essence of godly parenting — training your children to resist their sin nature through loving instruc-

tion and consistent biblical correction. This is why you teach and role model for your children the *freedom and boundaries of God's Word*.

This pattern of helping each other RESIST our sin nature is foundational to all true fellowship. But it must begin in your HOME with your marriage and family, and be supported by your extended spiritual family.

Everything else in Christendom must support the purposes God established for your home. Outsourcing for OTHERS to fulfill your responsibility is NOT an option in His sight. No one should undermine God's requirements for each home, nor compensate for IRresponsibility in someone else's home.

Let's review what we've shared in this lesson:

For purposes that none of us will ever fully understand, our Father has ordained that each individual begins life with a sinful nature.

When you're born again and enter Covenant union with our Lord, you receive the indwelling Holy Spirit.

At that moment a war takes place over Who or what will rule your soul — the Holy Spirit or your sin nature.

Your HOME is the arena in which all the Scripture that applies to parenting comes in! During that time BEFORE your child is born again, he or she is still without the Spirit of Jesus. But the Bible gives specific commands for parents to confront the sin nature of their children.

"Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline will drive it far from him" (Proverbs 22:15).

"The rod of correction imparts wisdom, but a child left to himself disgraces his mother" (Proverbs 29:15).

If you back off from this necessary confrontation or are inconsistent while your children live at home, that powerful sin nature will later be ruling your ADULT children. And that will hurt all their other relationships, including their marriage.

The failure by parents to biblically confront the sin nature in their children has contributed significantly to the high divorce rate in Christendom today.

A person with an unconforted sin nature goes through life seeking only self-gratification. The needs or concerns of others are addressed only if the SELF isn't inconvenienced.

Keep in mind that married followers of Jesus are the "front line" of loving influence to help each other combat their sin nature and live by the Spirit. Both the husband and the wife need to confront the sin-based motives and behaviors that they brought into their marriage.

This is the path to developing Christ's likeness in your marriage. And, the Holy Spirit can prevail with the *shalom* of wholeness and harmony in your home. Rather than DESPISING the darkness we see in each other, we need to help each other PENETRATE it with the Light of Jesus.

You may be familiar with this saying:
What one generation tolerates in moderation, the next excuses in excess.

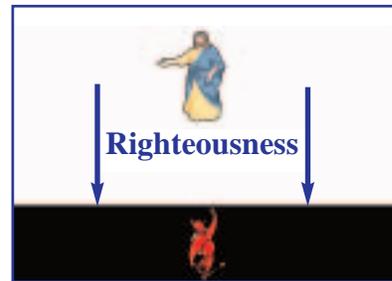
Picture the struggle each generation goes through to determine what it will pass on to succeeding generations. Each life adds to either the *darkness of prevailing sin*, or the *light of righteousness*.

What happens if the parents of one generation DON'T help their children confront their sin nature and live in righteousness as followers of Jesus?

Those children will increase in a darkness that will be picked up and intensified by succeeding generations.



If the parents of one generation CONFRONT the sin nature of their children and help them resist,



that generation adds to the light of righteousness that will be passed on to the generations to follow.

We hope that you'll be among those who add light, and that these teaching segments will help you accomplish this.

May you and your children LIVE by the Spirit of God in your home, and find yourselves welcomed together in heaven.