

Cyber Truths By E-mail

32. Are You Trusted By Your Family? (November 1, 2007)



Restoration Ministries International

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Dear Friends,

More and more we're encountering parents and grandparents who *aren't trusted* by their own children or grandchildren. These older generations are abdicating their God-given responsibility to align the next generation's minds and hearts with the ways and will of God.

So many parents and grandparents are held captive in emotional prisons of *fear* that they'll be rejected by their children — that their kids or grandkids will cut them off if they authentically represent God's love and righteousness according to His Word. Sadly, many of these grandparents and parents deserve the distrust that the next generation has of their spineless approach to life.

In this Teaching E-mail we hope to show you a path out this prison. When *you're* freed from fear and apprehension, your children and grandchildren will earnestly seek you out for counsel because you're hearing from the Holy Spirit on their behalf.

Studies in recent decades have shown that the United States has gone from being a "child-centered" society to a "child-dominated" one. The causes are many. Some parents, immersed in guilt that they're too preoccupied with other responsibilities, give in to their child's demands to appease their own conscience.

Others recoil from the way they themselves were raised and choose to succumb to the plummeting moral laxity of this decadent culture. Still others have little or no support from righteous others, whether family members or extended spiritual family who offer Godly input. You can probably come up with other contributing factors yourself if you think about it.

Even many Christian homes are raising a generation of uncorrected, rebellious, hell-bound children who think God exists only to fulfill their own selfish desires and plans. And we grieve over the countless *grandparents* who are not only giving in to this insidious trend but are supporting it through passive assent or silence!

More grandparents than we care to count *lowered the bar* of righteous standards when they were raising their children. And, their adult children are doing likewise in raising the grandchildren. Why has unrighteousness been allowed to intensify with each generation while parents and grandparents have shrugged in surrender? Consider these realities:

- 1. The "church growth" movement has influenced much of Christendom for the past several decades. In the quest to fill pews, *tolerated sin* is pandemic among those who should lead the way in righteousness. Clergy who evaluate personal success according to the size of their congregation and the adulation they receive from professional peers have seduced the unwary by *appeasing their sin nature* rather than confronting sin. Confession and repentance have become archaic and outmoded in many congregations.**
- 2. Humanism, the religion of public education, has progressively convinced generations that a child is inherently good, effectively countering Scripture's declaration that every human is inherently sinful. Humanism theorizes that all a child needs is parental love and toleration of whatever the child does so that his "self-esteem" can be nurtured. Any form of correcting a child is perceived as rejection and must be avoided so that he won't "feel bad about himself."**

Humanism, the “religion” of the universities which produce today’s educators, exalts the child as the center of his life. God is a myth, having neither place nor influence as Creator and Redeemer. The child’s life purpose is to discover whatever pleases him and brings self-fulfillment, unencumbered by any moral constraints.

- 3. The majority of children of divorce are raised by single mothers, or by mothers who have remarried and whose husbands are relatively uninvolved in raising her children. The children not only suffer from abandonment (perceived or real) by a father who might enforce boundaries. They also may lack righteous standards because their guilt-plagued mothers have become their “friend” and given up their parental responsibilities. Parents who feel guilty “purchase favor” from their children by giving in to them. This is a curse of divorce.**

Even more staggering is this tragic statistic: Children who are under the age of 4 when their parents divorce have a 75% higher chance of becoming homosexual when they mature than do children raised with their father (or stable father-figure such as a grandfather or caring uncle). At this crucial season in the child’s life, boys in particular need to *disidentify* with their mother and *identify* with the masculinity of their father. Think about this before you consider divorce an option in your own marriage. This too is a curse of divorce.

- 4. Too many grandparents and parents alike have failed to understand *God’s way* of instilling trust in a child’s heart for his parents and grandparents. (We’ll discuss this at length shortly.) Many adult children consider their own parents the *last* people they’d ask for counsel. What a dismal situation!**

How would *you* recognize that your children or grandchildren trust you? One key indicator is that they *turn to you for guidance and direction*.

If you’re a shepherd leading a fellowship family, this same criterion applies to you. You and your wife can *righteously influence* your faith family as spiritual parents and grandparents in the arena of everyday problems and concerns.

Among our Hebraic forefathers, grandparents often had a direct and clear role in relation to raising and nurturing children. This interconnectedness has often been neglected within both the Nicolaitan religious system and the isolated nuclear family concept that plagues this nation. As those seeking to restore the fruitful way of life set forth in God’s Word, we need to regain and implement *biblical grandparenting* — older, wiser men and women who are trusted by the younger generations to counsel and guide them in righteous living.

Do Your Children And/Or Grandchildren Trust You?

In the past few months we’ve had the opportunity to lovingly discipline not only our own grandchildren but the grandchildren of others while we were visiting. In each occurrence the response of the child toward us deepened with trust! Rather than being fearful, the children grew in affection, often coming to us before their own grandparents and parents when they had needs or desires.

Why do you think this occurred?

All the verses which pertain to parenting could be summed up with this:

Parents must establish *righteous boundaries* of behavior and attitudes for their children, and consistently and lovingly *enforce them*.

[This same criteria applies to those who serve their fellowship family as a shepherd. We'll come back to this later.]

Many years ago Dr. James Dobson wrote that a child's sin-controlled mind is seeking *boundaries*. When boundaries are established and consistently enforced, the child feels secure. A by-product of that relational security is that their trust for the one who enforces the boundaries deepens. And as we shared in *Demolishing Strongholds*, two of the God-given needs in every person are *security* and *freedom within boundaries*.

Sue: When we'd been married about four years and were still childless, we befriended a family with three kids. I marveled how patient and loving the mother was with her children. She NEVER corrected them! Mike warned me that I was wrong in my evaluation and to not be attracted by her nonconfrontive parenting style.

One night they invited us over for dinner. During the meal their 2-year-old climbed up on the table and began to crawl around the serving dishes. The parents ignored him. That was too much even for me!

We were transferred soon afterward, but years later heard that all three children underwent professional counseling.

As an aside, when our son Mike was age six, a friend asked him why he loved his parents. He confidently replied, "Because they spank me when I need it!"

There's an important connection between *correcting* a child and *their trust* in the one who enforces Godly standards.

Elephants Without Deference

[From our Hebraic Article: *IMPUDENCE—Reflection of the Anti-Christ Spirit in Today's Church*]

A television broadcast on the *Dateline* program illustrated the devastation that

results when *mature influence and guidance* is absent. In Africa about 25 years ago, the National Park Service was faced with a ruinous overpopulation of elephants. To keep the animals from plundering valuable crops and defoliating the land, naturalists killed all the *adult* elephants, preserving only the young.

As these youngsters matured, the male calves in particular grew violent. Their fierce, aggressive behavior was totally out of character. It was as though the *restraint* common to elephants had vanished — or had never developed.

The naturalists realized that male elephants, young ones especially, have such high testosterone levels that they need the *restraining behavior* of older elephant males to keep them in control. It was the *mature males* who taught the young to spar with one another to relieve their sexual tension. In essence, the older males taught the junior elephants a pecking order of *deference*. When the naturalists imported *adult* males into the herd, deference was established and more orderly behavior restored.

If you're a parent with grown children, or are a grandparent, your children and grandchildren provide you feedback about your *own* parenting based upon whether they readily turn to you for guidance. Anchor this truth:

**Turning to you for guidance
is the KEY indicator of
your child's trust in you.**

Biblical parenting which includes role modeling, teaching, praise and correcting is designed by God to produce *deference* in your children. In Lifebyte 9. *The Book of Daniel* (Chapters 1-3) **Personal Responsibility— Deference — God-dependence**, we explore deference:

- Deference is shown when you *avoid choices and decisions* that would offend those who serve in authority over you.
- Deference causes you to fulfill your responsibilities with a *willing heart* rather than as a burden of obligation.
- Deference is linked with *humility*, giving honor and esteem to those who have a right to them.

Deference is the foundational character quality of anyone who would follow Jesus. And instilling deference is God's means for your children to learn to trust you. In order to accomplish this relational need, you need absolute confidence in the righteous standards of behavior and attitude you desire to instill in your child.

Only a working knowledge of the Bible made *alive by the Spirit* and your willingness to *apply it to your family* can bring this to fruition.

As your children come to realize that the standards you lovingly and consistently enforce emanate from the Bible rather than your own whim, they gain confidence in your applications *and* they can grow in trust in you as their parent.

If you're a grandparent or parent who has fallen short in this dimension, you can get back on track by asking your children to *forgive you* for having failed them through your negligence. Then *together* you can begin to establish biblical applications for your lives — *halakhahs*.

This is where you grandparents can intentionally serve your children. You can help do the leg work in developing biblical applications for your family!

If you're a father with daughters, remember this: Studies have consistently demonstrated that a girl's loving trust in

her father is *the single most important influence* that keeps her from fornicating.

- **If you're a parent or grandparent whose children are struggling in their marriage or even considering divorce, do you love them enough to intervene and help them reconcile?**
- **Do you love your children enough to do your part in reconciling with them for the sake of your grandchildren?**

A true story we heard years ago concerns a family on the mission field in the jungle and epitomizes the trust relationship of a child toward his father:

A young boy was walking toward his father. As he was about to pass under a hanging limb the father yelled, "**Son, duck!!!!**" The boy immediately, without hesitation, fell to the ground. There in the tree hanging on the limb was a poisonous viper.

- **If God told you to 'duck', would you ask Him "Why?", or "How low?"**
- **If God told you to 'jump', would you ask Him "Why?", or "How high?"**

Pause for a moment: Do you really trust our Lord, or only believe in Him?

How Does A Shepherd Gain The Trust Of Those He Serves?

The principle for gaining the trust of the people whom our Father has entrusted to your care for nurturing and guiding is the same as parenting.

- It **begins** with with your confidence in His Word as you obey it in His Spirit
- **and** your willingness to *apply* His Word as your spiritual family's standard
- **and** your *readiness* to uphold the biblical applications [*halakhahs*] that your faith family establishes.

The faith family you serve needs confidence in the *biblical applications* you all uphold. If neither you nor they are confident that you've developed a biblical application in the way that's intended by God's Word, then their trust that God is using you to lead will diminish and disappear.

Remember, prayerful *discussion* is the Hebraic method of pursuing truth and applying it. The rabbis of the Hebraic Stream taught that whenever two or three *discussed* God's Word, the Holy Spirit was with them to give *understanding and application*.

Jesus commends the union of mutual discussion and agreement by promising His particular presence when this takes place. This is His declared method!

*I tell you that if two of you on earth **agree about anything** you ask for, it will be done for you by My Father in heaven. For where **two or three come together in My name, there am I with them*** (Matthew 18:19,20; see also 16:18,19).

The presence of Jesus in your midst as you pursue applying the Bible makes all the difference in your interconnectedness as *family in Him*. His promise to *be with you* is what gives you confidence in your biblical applications. This biblical process removes control and manipulation, and stirs confident trust that the ones serving as shepherds will uphold the applications you've *mutually* established.

Jesus speaks of *binding and loosing* in Matthew chapters 16 and 18, the only two times He mentions the "called-out ones", His church. In these passages our Lord was *taking away* halakhic authority from the religious leaders — the Scribes and Pharisees — and *giving it* to His followers who trusted in Him as Lord.

You, your family, and the extended spiritual family of your home fellowship would benefit from discussing our booklet, *Christian Halakhahs—Loving Jesus Through The Way You Apply His Word* (a free download). You'll be encouraged to realize that our Father has provided an *ancient means* for His people to recognize and put into practice His wonderful ways!

- Each biblical application (*halakhah*) you establish is in reality a "*Thus sayeth the Lord*" for you. Your *halakhah* is God's specific command for *you and your family*. To break it is sinful *for you!*
- A *halakhah* given through His Word is recognized by God as your response of *obedient trust* as you apply it.
- The Bible reveals God's general revelation for all mankind. A *halakhah* is His specific principle *for you* that He desires to become part of your personal and communal character in Christ's likeness.

Concluding Recommendations

Do you *want to be trusted* by your children and/or grandchildren as a righteous resource whose direction and instruction are backed by God? Do you *want to be trusted* as a shepherd who serves your faith family in Spirit and in truth? Then you need to *hear* His Spirit and *do* as the Bible commands.

You must role model, teach, commend and correct with all confidence the ones you love. And, your role is to help them establish appropriate *halakhahs* and then lovingly and willingly uphold them. Trust is always earned as the motive of the one who is serving is revealed.

The questions below are for both parents and grandparents to answer and *discuss together* if possible:

1. Do your own children readily turn to you for guidance and direction? If no, why not?
2. How do you correct your children? Is it effective? Does it end with them asking forgiveness and you forgiving them and not bringing up the matter again? Do they turn to you in trust for counsel and help?
2. Do you correct them immediately? after one warning? two warnings? three or more warnings? If you correct them only after two or more warnings, why do you wait so long?
3. When they're acting rebelliously, do you *negotiate* with them — trying to persuade them to change? Or, do you readily confront the rebellion?
4. Do you fear your children's rejection? If yes, has it caused you to give in to them rather than correct them?
5. Do you use the Bible as a reference for the standards of behavior and attitudes you're trying to instill in your children?
6. Do you correct you child(ren) because they've violated a biblical standard, or because what they're doing annoys you?
7. In your own parenting style, are you trying to prove to *your* parents that you're a better parent than they were?
8. How do your children evaluate your parenting? Has your parenting approach resulted in increased love and trust for you?
9. If you're a grandparent (whether spiritual or biological), how are you actively helping your children and grandchildren follow the way of the Lord? How are you

providing *purposeful direction* for them? Are you *proactive* in recognizing the areas of development they need and actively guiding them? Or, are you *reactionary*, only lending help when things go wrong?

10. As a grandparent (spiritual or biological), are you aware of your biblical responsibility to guide your grandchildren in the way of righteousness? Use your concordance to explore the many passages that command *intergenerational responsibility* to train up following generations. Discuss these with your children and grandchildren.

Are you headed for the Narrow Gate yourself? If you are, you have a glorious welcome from our Lord Jesus in store for you! And until you die, your primary responsibility to your God, your children and your grandchildren is to see that you leave this world with *them* headed for the Narrow Gate too. There's no greater legacy you can give them, and *your* joy will be complete when you see them again on the other side. (3 John 4)