



Summer 2010

Family Devotions

Week 2

June 28 - July 2

Written by Chuck Bassett and Gary N. Nichols

Monday, June 28

Preparation:

- Gather construction paper, crayons or markers, scissors, and other craft materials your family may enjoy using

Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers. ~ Galatians 6:10

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Family has a powerful, sometimes even illogical bond. Tell your children about arguments, tussles, or fights you had with your brothers or sisters. Tell how you would defend them if anyone outside the family picked on them. Indeed, there's a wonderful, unique, curious, beautiful bond of family.

It's very easy to fall into an almost numb routine, whether it comes to our "blood" family or our "Blood" family (other Christians).

Let's declare this Do Good to Family Week. Ask God to show you how you can show some good to your "home" family and your "church" family—even those random acts of kindness. It may turn into Do Good to Family Month...or Year. Who knows?

We may develop a good habit...which could turn into a character trait.

Lead each family member to make coupons using the construction paper (or other materials). The coupons will be presented to other family members who can redeem it for the service/ministry offered by the person who made it. Ideas: free hug, clean up my room without complaining, clear the table after dinner, wash dishes, sweep, mow, wash the car, be quiet. Get the idea?

Tuesday, June 29

Preparation:

- Ask each family member to bring a favorite, comfortable pair of shoes to the devotion time.

I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth. ~ 3 John: 4

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John, the “apostle of love,” looked at his fellow Christians as his “children,” as he grew older. Is there a greater human love than a caring parent for a child?

- Ask each person to describe the shoes he brought and why. What makes them so comfortable? Are they just old enough to be comfortable? Are they molded to the shape of the wearer’s feet? Where are they worn? Are they for dress-up or play? What will happen when they are worn out and no longer wearable? How will you replace them?
- Tell how you became a Christian. If you were a child, who influenced you? How did you know it was the right decision at the right time?

No one walks in truth naturally. We are born with a natural bent toward selfishness and sin. In the early years, children are taught right from wrong, hopefully by their parents. Other adults, such as school teachers and Sunday School teachers, may help out, but please remember this: parents (not pastors or church leaders) are the primary ministers/disciple makers to their children. That is a privilege and a holy responsibility.

Sometimes, children come to faith in Christ apart from any parental influence; but it should not be that way for Christian families. God’s plan is for Christ-loving parents to nurture their children in the faith, until Holy Spirit convinces the child that he needs to accept the Savior. However, the parents’ responsibilities do not end there, not by any means. Then, parents continue to set a Christian example by having family devotionals, praying with their children, etc.

It should give Christian parents joy to know that their children are walking in the truth, even THE Truth (John 14:6), even as the parents.

Wednesday, June 30

Preparation:

- Locate pictures of Picasso artwork online or check out a book from the public library.

You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everybody. You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. ~ 2 Corinthians 3:2-3

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While visiting a beach in the south of France one day, Pablo Picasso was approached by a small boy carrying a blank sheet of paper. The youngster had been sent by his parents to get an autographed drawing.

- Show some of Picasso's most abstract drawings or paintings (use discretion). Ask why he did such weird stuff. Then show some of his more realistic paintings like *Petite Fleurs*. Ask which they like better.

Instead, Picasso tore up the paper, drew a picture on the child's back, and signed his name under it, before telling the boy to go show his parents.

We—and our children—are spiritual paper on which God can write his letters to the world, about the wonderful redemption in Christ. We should offer ourselves as such writing material (Romans 12:1), and we should facilitate our children to become walking epistles of Christ, too. We want to be a beautiful picture of the love of Jesus

This is how Christian families change their culture and optimally benefit their own lives.

Thursday, July 1

"I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty." ~ 2 Corinthians 6:18

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Here is yet another proclamation by God and his affinity with families, as reported by the Apostle Paul.

This writer has reached the conclusion that the highest calling—even above pastor, missionary, etc.—is the call to being a Christian parent. Not only is the greatest gift you can give to your children, but also it is the greatest gift you can give to your community and your world. To nurture your God-given children in the Christian faith and graces pleases God to no end.

As a public-school teacher for 31 years, I could usually tell within a few weeks which students' families were stable and loving...and in many, many cases, Christian. The students were salt and light in the classroom and in the school. These students were an inspiration, they inspired me.

I applauded parents who gave up certain careers because they felt it would be beneficial to their children. (Jesus did that, in a way: Read Philippians 2:3-8.) I admired parents who sacrificed to send their children to Christian schools. I smiled when I saw parents give up their afternoon, evenings, and weekends to support their children's various activities.

You would not have a family, if God had not invented the concept. You would not have children, if God had not allowed it. Your family is a gift that God has entrusted to you. It is the highest calling a parent will have. Never let a day go to waste in that calling.

- Ask your family what they enjoy doing together. Ask: what do we do well? What is your favorite part of our family? What can we change to make it better?

Friday, July 3

What-not

Preparation:

- Ask family members to bring to the devotion an object, or objects, that remind them of something, and event, or honor, or vacation.

And now let me remind you, brethren, of the Gospel (the glad tidings of salvation) which I proclaimed to you, which you welcomed *and* accepted and upon which your faith rests, (1 Cor 15:1 AMP).

A woman kept a corner of her living room with a what-not shelf. Whenever God answered a prayer or did something wonderful in her life, she bought a what-not item to represent it. She said it opened the door for many chances to witness about God, not to mention that it reminded her of God's goodness to her.

- Ask you family to tell the story of the object they brought. What reminds us of the goodness of God?
- Do such a family project, as described above. It may even be a bulletin board.

(This writer carries a gold dollar in his pocket. It reminds him of family who are in heaven where the streets are paved with gold [Rev. 21:21]. It has led to Gospel conversations when people ask about the gold dollar.)