

CHAPTER 4

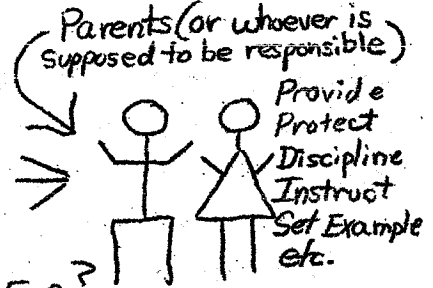
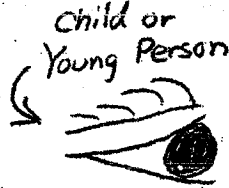
WHY AM I HERE?

(WHERE DO CHILDREN FIT IN?)

In Chapter 1 we studied "Why Parents?"; in this chapter we want to ask, "Why Children?"

IN CHAPTER 1

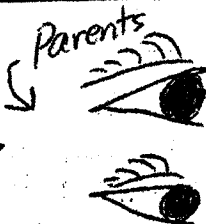
WE LOOKED THROUGH THE CHILD'S EYES AT THE PARENTS



WHAT ARE PARENTS FOR?

IN THIS CHAPTER

WE WILL LOOK THROUGH THE PARENTS' EYES AT THE CHILD



Child or Young Person



WHY CHILDREN?
(Why her? Why him? Why them?)

WHAT ARE CHILDREN FOR

On the sixth day of creation God made the first two parents and He blessed them and said to them, "Be _____ and _____ (have children) and replenish (FILL) the earth" (Genesis 1:28). The Creator's desire was that PEOPLE (persons) might POPULATE and fill the earth... ↘

- 1) to PROMOTE His glory (Isaiah 43:7; Revelation 4:11).
- 2) to PROCLAIM His Name (Isaiah 43:21).
- 3) to PICTURE His Person, by reflecting WHO HE IS (Genesis 1:26-27-- "in His image and after His likeness"; to mirror and reflect God)
- 4) to PREVAIL over His earth, by reflecting His Lordship (Genesis 1:28--"have dominion or rule over")

In God's perfect plan and purpose, children are to grow up to become adults (men and women) and to then leave their parents (Genesis 2:24-25). As adults they are to continue to reflect the truths of God, especially as seen in the marriage relationship (Genesis 2:23-24; Ephesians 5:22-23). Because of the terrible consequences of sin (Genesis 2:17; 3:19; chapter 5--"and he died"), the older generation of parents dies off and must be replaced by the younger generation so that God's purpose and picture can be continued by men and women who have trusted Him.

After the great worldwide flood, God once again gave a command to POPULATE the earth (Genesis 9:1), at a time when there were only 3 families and six parents (not including Noah and his wife).

As we think of children coming into the world, it is important to MAKE A DIFFERENCE between the PERSON and the BODY:

(see the comparison on the next page)

Name _____

<u>PERSON</u>	<u>BODY</u>
the soul/spirit	the body, bones, blood, brain, etc.
the real person who lives in the body	the house of the soul
the immaterial, non-physical part of man created by God directly without human help	the material or physical part of man a product of the parents (according to God's laws of genetics, etc.)

God directs and allows the time and condition of each child that comes into the world, according to His wisdom, mercy and grace. If you were born in a slum area and if you inherited a big nose, you can be sure that God knew all about these things before the world was ever created!

When a child is born, he or she is a FULL PERSON (even if the child is born with certain physical defects or problems or handicaps). A child may be born with a BODY that is...

- | | |
|--------------------------------|----------|
| 1) blind (John 9:1) | 4) _____ |
| 2) lame or crippled (Acts 3:2) | 5) _____ |
| 3) mentally retarded | 6) _____ |

Do these physical problems make a person less of a person? Is a retarded baby less of a person than a healthy baby? Is a physically handicapped child limited in his walk and talk in society (the way he can operate and function in this world and in this life)?

Are parents responsible for certain physical differences and problems that a child is born with? The physical characteristics of a child are largely determined by the genes of the parents according to hereditary laws. If your parents are 5 feet 4 inches and 5 feet 1 inch tall, it is probable that you will not grow to be more than 6 feet tall, regardless of your basketball aspirations! Some physical problems result from the sins and harmful practices of the parents:

- | | |
|-----------|-----------------------------------|
| --smoking | --social sins (venereal diseases) |
| --drugs | --poor diet |
| --alcohol | --etc. |

Such things can sometimes cause or contribute to birth defects.

Are parents always responsible for the physical defects of their children (John 9:1-3)? _____ God sometimes allows such things for reasons that are fully known only by Him. We know, however, that all such problems connected with the body are a result and consequence of Adam's original sin of disobedience. Will there be any deformed or handicapped people in a sin-free heaven (Revelation 21:4)?

According to the Bible, the multiplication of children was meant to be a blessing, not a curse. What are the first 3 words of Genesis 1:28 and 9:1? _____

_____ Children are a blessing, and "_____ is the man that hath his _____ (a case or container for arrows) full of them" (Psalm 127:5).

Why are children such a blessing? How does the child or young person contribute to his or her parents? How does the child or young person help his or her parents? WHY CHILDREN?

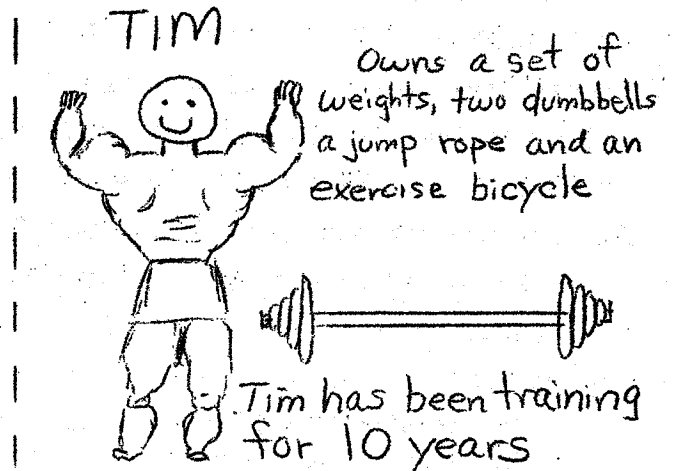
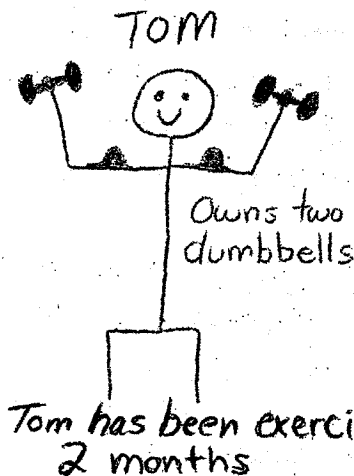
Childhood years are preparatory years. Each year prepares the way for the next. The infant prepares to be a toddler. The toddler prepares to be a little boy. The little boy prepares to go to school and be a student. The young student prepares to enter the teen years. The teen prepares to be a young adult. The child is continually getting ready for the next stage of growth and development.

Did you know that the childhood years are also preparatory FOR THE PARENTS? Each year as the children grow and develop, the parents are being prepared to be better parents and better persons!

We usually think of parents training children (Proverbs 22:6 and Ephesians 6:4), but it is also true that children train parents! As you grow, you are also helping Mom and Dad to grow and to become better people!

The child develops and exercises the parents. The parents need to learn and develop just as the child does. With the first child the parents make many mistakes, and they often fall short in the areas of discipline, love, patience, etc. Hopefully by the second time around they will make fewer mistakes. By the time the fifth child comes around, the parents are much more ready to be parents, because they have had four other children to exercise with!

Consider two men trying to build and exercise their bodies:

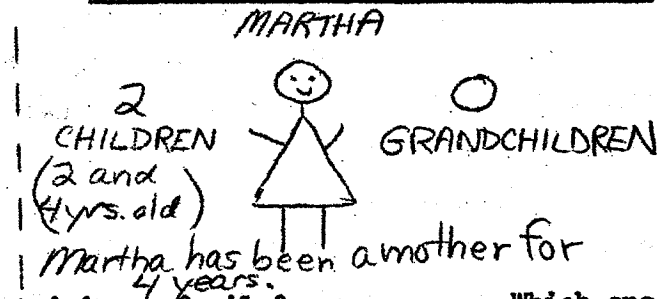
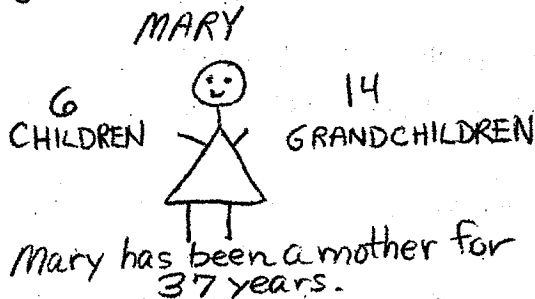


Which one is the stronger person? _____ Which one knows more about body building? _____ Which one has the most experience? _____

Now consider Titus 2:3-4. Who is to teach the younger women?

_____ Who knows the most about raising and loving children, younger women or older women? _____

Now carefully consider Mary and Martha, the two mothers illustrated on the top of the next page:



Which mother knows the most about raising a family? _____ Which one knows the most about loving children and caring for their needs? _____ Which one has had the most experience? _____ Which one has been exercised the most? _____

The younger women cannot teach the older women, just as a third grader cannot teach a college student about one's total educational program. You must go through it! The older women have been through it all and have learned from it. They have graduated from the "College of Hard Knocks"! They have fought the battles and they are experienced and seasoned veterans.

A woman does not really understand being a young mother until she is old. Likewise a young person does not really understand being a young person until he is older. If he did, then he would not have done so many foolish things and made so many stupid mistakes!

What can children or young people teach their parents?

1) Children can teach their parents about areas where the parents are weak.

Children develop their parents and reveal areas of weakness and sins which they need to work on. When a parent is first exercised by children, he or she soon discovers that they lack wisdom, they lack patience, they lack love, etc. and they can look to the Lord to supply that which they lack! We as children of God desperately need the parental care of God. Children show parents their own needs (that is, the parents' needs) that must be met by God alone.

2) Children can teach their parents what they (the parents) are really like.

As the parent observes the child, he begins to see himself (or herself)! In seeing what the child is like, the Father or Mother sees what he or she is like:

*The stubborn child teaches me that I am often stubborn as God's child.
The disobedient young person reminds me of my own disobedience to God.
The child who loves to be the center of attention acts just like me!
The fearful child brings to my mind the times when I am afraid.*

The children reveal the parents' SELF-CENTEREDNESS (doing as I please and when I please). Adults are nothing but grown-up children, and what is seen in the child can often be found in the parent.

Suppose a child should say, "I'm going to be as stubborn and selfish and disobedient as I possibly can so that I can show my parents what they are like as children of God. I'll sin all the more to show my parents how rotten they are!" What's wrong with this thinking (Romans 3:5,8; 6:1)?

3) Children can teach their parents responsibility. Children force parents to face up to their responsibility to care for another person and to be totally wrapped up in his/her welfare. As soon as a baby is born, the parents have become full time parents! It takes years before a child is ready to be on his own (see page 1), and parents must be ever on the job. Quitting is not allowed!

Today we are seeing more and more people trying to avoid the responsibility of parenthood by...

--birth control methods	--divorce
--abortion	--etc.
--adoption	--etc.

As a result they lose all that parenthood was meant to teach them. They forfeit the blessing!

Before children come along, the parent is relatively FREE to do as he pleases (SELF-CENTEREDNESS). Once the child is born the parent is OBLIGATED to that child and this forces the parent to come out of himself (or herself) and to show a concern for another person. Is the heavenly Father obligated to the welfare of His children?

4) Children can teach their parents about love and self-giving. True love is the giving of oneself (even sacrificing oneself) for the welfare (the highest and best) of another person. Parents can learn to really care for the children God has given to them and to have the proper motives and goal (to see the children grow and be all they should be in Christ). What is really important is not what the parents want for the child, but what God wants! True love wants what God wants for them and will seek to give them this at any cost.

5) Children can teach their parents about the heartaches that come when children must be let go. Children grow up and the time comes when they must SEPARATE from the parents (Gen. 2:24). They must live their own life and they are responsible for how they live WHETHER GOOD OR BAD (Ezekiel chapter 18).

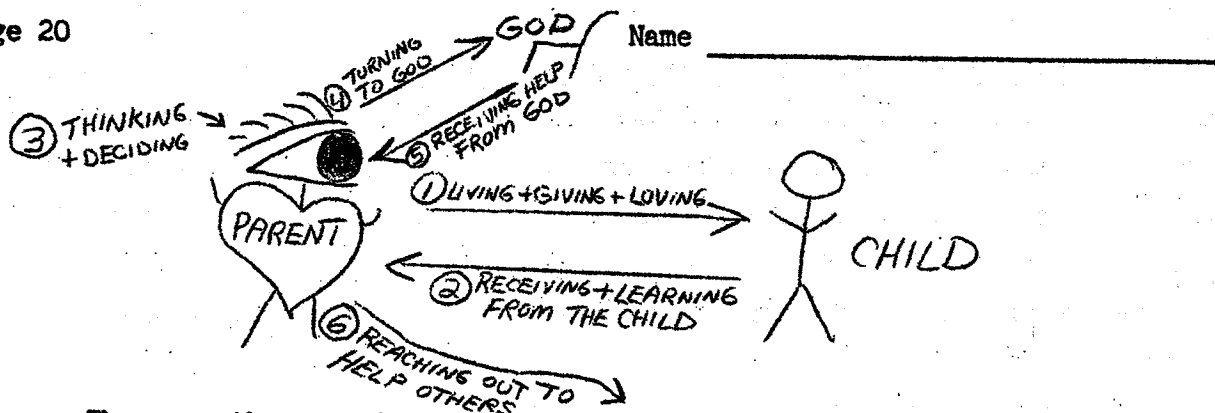
God Himself let man go, and man went in the wrong direction. God then came to "_____ and to _____ that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). Even today men and women are personally responsible for whether they choose life or death, and God allows men to make the decision even though He desires that they choose HIM (Deut. 30:19; Isa. 66:3-4; Ezekiel 18:23; Matt. 23:37; 1 Tim. 2:4; Jn. 3:16).

Thus parents can learn the heartache and heartbreak that comes in allowing the child to make personal decisions and choices. They can learn what it means to be grieved by their children even as God is grieved by His (Eph. 4:30). They can also enter into the delight and joy which comes when children choose the way of life.

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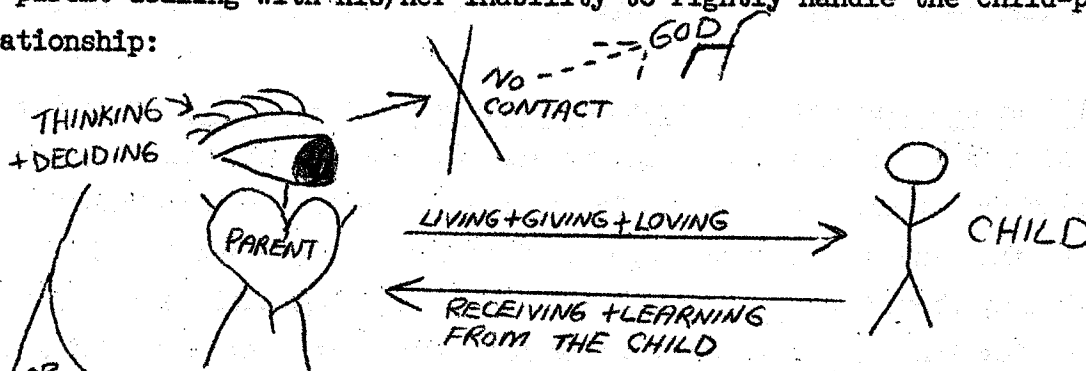
God is reaching and seeking to reach parents and He uses children to do so!

- ① As parents rightly relate to their children by loving and giving of themselves,
- ② they then learn from the children and discover needs and problems in their own lives.
- ③ This should cause the parents to think and to decide to ④ turn to the living God who can meet the parents' needs.
- ⑤ The parents are then in the place to receive from God whatever is needed to be better parents and better persons.
- ⑥ The parent is then able to reach out and help others even beyond the immediate family (even as the older women were able to help the younger women). This can be illustrated as follows: (see the next page)



The more the parent gets from God the more he/she can give. The more the parent learns and receives the more he/she is able to seek to love and give and care for others ①. The more the parent learns to turn to God ④, the more the parent will receive ⑤, and thus the more the parent can then give to others ② ③. So it is with each stage of the child's growth (BABY, CHILD, TEEN, YOUNG ADULT). The parent is able to HANG IN THERE.

The problem comes when parents fail to turn to God and receive help from Him. Failure to contact God will usually result in one of two possible ways of the parent dealing with his/her inability to rightly handle the child-parent relationship:



The parent may ignore, neglect, run from (get buried in work, be out most every night, go to sleep, etc.) his responsibility towards the children. The parent may have a "drop dead" attitude: "no one cared about me so why should I care about you", etc.

The parent may seek to help others and save others from the faults, failures and troubles of his children WITHOUT REALLY DEALING WITH HIS/HER NEEDED LEARNING AND TURNING TO GOD. For example, if a parent has seen his child ruined by drugs, he may devote his time and money to warning and saving others from the same thing (go on an anti-drug crusade). If a Father has a son who goes to prison, he may do all within his power to fight crime and keep others from ending up behind bars. Such things are good, but Mom or Dad must realize that God wants to work first of all in the heart of the parent.

YOUNG PEOPLE--be patient with your parents! God is trying to do something in them (and in you too)! God is using you to help them! You are God's special blessing for your parents!