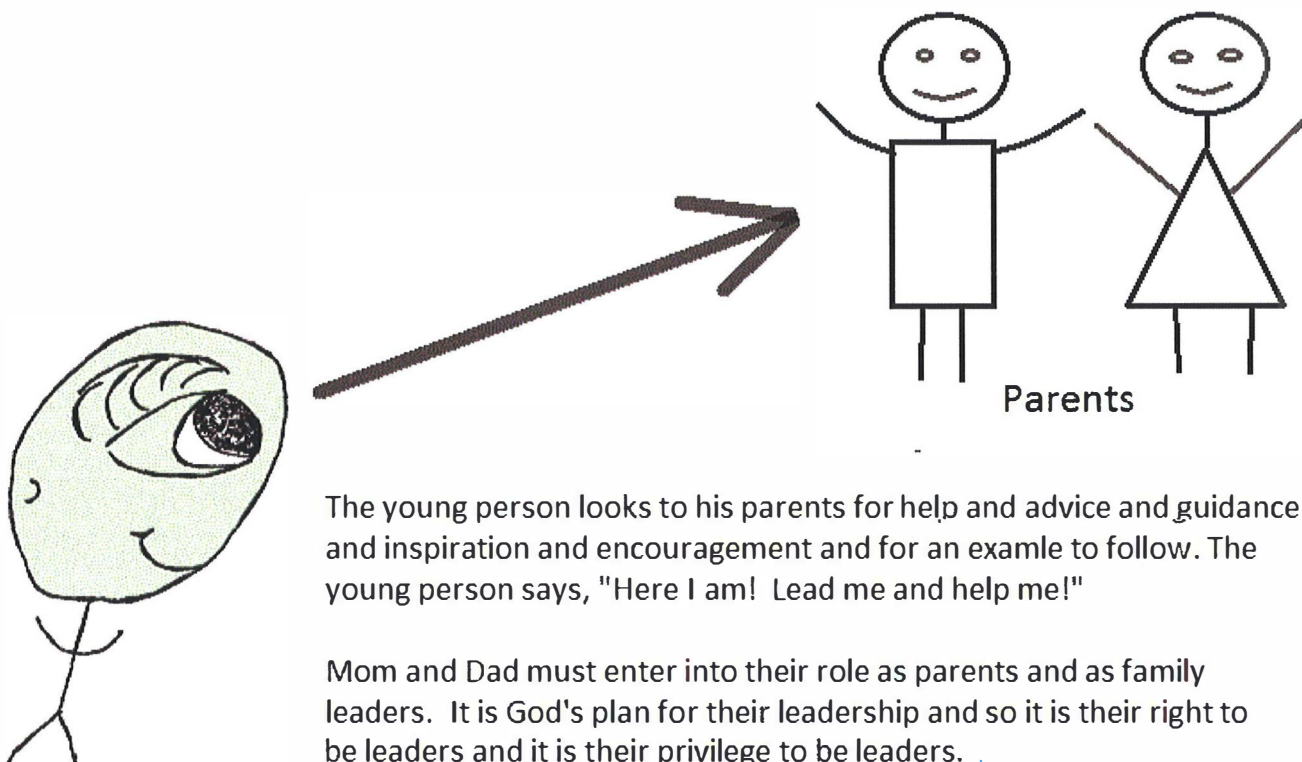


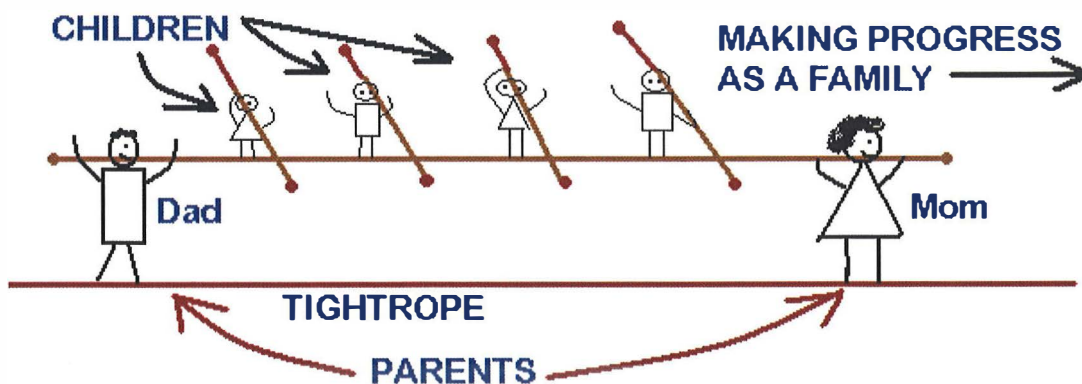
CHAPTER 4

Helping My Parents Do Their Job (Part 1)

Parents are the **leaders** and children are the ones that need to follow and be led.



As we learned in Chapter 3, the family must stay in balance:



Each leader shares in the balance. Mom and Dad both play an important part in the balancing act. Each leader has an important part to play. Each parent must contribute his or her skills and know-how.

How to Be a Good and Skillful Leader

Here are some thoughts to help parents be the leaders they should be:

1) Parents can often suggest rather than demand.

Read the following and put an "S" before that which is a Suggestion and put a "D" before that which is a Demand:

- _____ Take out the trash this very instant!
- _____ It might be a good idea to take out the trash before it piles up too much.
- _____ What do you think about giving Mom a helping hand by starting in on this pile of dirty dishes?
- _____ Wash those dishes right now or you will be severely punished.

Sometimes if we do not follow Mom's and Dad's suggestions they may have to use stronger language. As children in the home, how can we help our parents so that their suggestions result in action? Can you think of suggestions that your parents have given you? Have you followed them?

2) Parents should say "No" and mean "No."

There are many times when parents need to say "No." Would it be good for you if they always said "Yes" to everything that you wanted? Would it be good for you if they always let you eat what you wanted to, and do what you wanted to, and go where you wanted to and see what you wanted to? If you were babysitting for a little child, would you let him (or her) do that which **you know** would lead to trouble (like eating something poisonous), even though the child may not know it? _____ Is it possible that your Mom or Dad could know that something will lead to trouble for you, even though you may not know it or realize it?

God sometimes says "No" to those He loves. Moses wanted to go into the Promised Land. Did God say "Yes" or "No" (see Deuteronomy 3:23-27 and 34:4)? _____ David wanted to build a glorious temple for the LORD. Did God say "Yes" or "No" (see 1 Chronicles 17:4)? _____ Did God know what was best?

Parents should say "No" calmly and firmly. And if "No" is the right thing to say, then they should say it and mean it and not change it!

Is there any way that you can help your parents to stay firm when it comes to saying "No"? Sometimes children do everything within their power to try to change a "No" into a "Yes." Suppose you were to go up to your Father and say, "Dad, when you say 'no' you mean it and I'm not going to try to change it because I know that you only want what is best for me!" Would this surprise your Dad?

"Children, obey your parents except when they say 'No.'" Is this what Colossians 3:20 really says? _____

3) Parents need to be reasonable and fair. They should respect the rights of each child in being a child and they should be flexible in light of circumstances. To keep the family in balance, the children need to be reasonable and fair also. Can you think of times when you have not been very reasonable and fair?

4) Parents should give praise for work well done. It feels good to know that we have done something well and right. Life would be difficult if our parents always scolded us and never praised us. Suppose your parents were away and you decided to sweep out the garage. What would happen if no one noticed and if no one said anything to you about it? Would you feel badly about this? Even though no one may notice or know you did this, is there Somebody who noticed your work? Was the Lord aware of what you did? Even if no one else knows and notices, **GOD does!**

5) Parents must discipline (punish, spank) with a view towards correction. Which parent loves his child (see Proverbs 13:24)? The parent who spares the rod and does not spank his child or the parent who uses the rod and spansks his child?

_____ Is it very loving for a parent to let the child continue doing wrong without ever stopping him? Would it be very loving for a policeman to let a crook rob 50 houses without stopping him? Does God discipline those He loves or those He hates (see Hebrews 12:6)?

_____ Does God let His children keep on sinning or does He stop them? _____ **Please note:** Proper spanking is not child abuse. Proper spanking does not result in physical injury. Spanking should hurt a child briefly, but it should not harm a child permanently. Parents should only spank a child in love, never in anger.

6) Parents must set a good example. Children follow and imitate their parents. God's children should follow and imitate Him: "Be ye therefore _____ of God as dear _____" (see Ephesians 5:1; "followers" means "imitators"). Can you think of ways in which you follow or copy your parents? Do you talk like them? Do you act like them in certain ways?

It is possible for a parent to sometimes set a bad example? Parents are not perfect (and neither are children). If this happens, what should you do? Should you follow what is wrong (3 John 11)? What if your parents do what is good and right? Should you follow them (3 John 11)?

7) Parents should consider the weaknesses and the strengths of the children. Every young person has certain strengths and weaknesses. There are certain things that you can do well and certain things that you cannot do well. There are certain things with which you feel comfortable, and certain things with which you don't feel comfortable. One child might find sports easy and school work hard. Another child might find school work easy and sports hard.

Parents are the same way. Each parent or leader has certain strengths and weaknesses. Mom and Dad are learning to lead, and they have much still to learn. You are learning to follow and they are learning to lead. In this way the balancing act goes forward!

8) Parents should give clear directions. It is difficult to do something if you are not sure what you are supposed to do! Suppose you are told, "Go to the store and bring back what we need!" You might not know what your family needs and you might not know what store you should go to! Clear and simple directions are very helpful.

How can we help our parents when it comes to directions? Sometimes our parents do give very clear directions, but we do not listen carefully! The directions are not clear in our mind because we did not pay attention! Sometimes we do not listen to God's Word very carefully either. God gives very clear directions. For example, He tells us exactly what to do instead of worrying (Philippians 4:6) and He tells us exactly what to do when we sin (1 John 1:9). But we do not always pay attention to God's directions as we should.

If our parents do not give clear directions, what can we do? We can always ask them to explain: "Mom, I do not understand what you want me to do. Could you please explain again." If there is a question, then ask and get an answer!

Differences Among Children

All people are different and have differences. And because this is true, different actions are required. Let's think about some of these differences:

The Inward, Timid Child

Some young people are gentle and shy and timid. They do not say very much and they tend to keep things within instead of letting them come out. Do you know young people like this? This kind of person appears to be easily led and will do what the parents say, but on the inside there might be much **resentment** (on the inside the young person is not very pleased or happy about it at all). On the outside this person might say, "All right, I'll do it!" but on the inside this same person might be thinking, "I hate doing this and I'm unhappy doing this and I'm angry at my parents for making me do this!"

When Mom and Dad scold this shy and timid person, he might move right away and be quick to obey them. But the parents need to see if his heart is really in it. The parents need to find out if there are unhappy and resentful feelings on the inside. If there are, then this young person will silently seek to do what he (or she) wants to do without the parents knowing it.



If you are a young person who is like this, what can you do to help your parents? How can you bring out some of those feelings which are on the inside? Why not try being honest and open with your parents: "Mom and Dad, I'm not very happy about certain things and I would like to talk to you about it!"

It is not easy for a timid and shy person to bring things out into the open. Often such a child is pushed into a small corner of self and into a dark, lonely closet of worry, shame and fear. Instead of going to Mom and Dad and talking, this person hides out from Mom and Dad. He (or she) will only let his parents know the part of him that he (or she) dares to let them see.

Suppose your car had engine problems and suppose you were a good mechanic and you were able to fix these problems. What if your car refused to let you open the hood so that you could see what was on the inside? Would you be able to help the car and fix the problem? _____
Some people are like this car. They refuse to open up and let people see what is on the inside. How can your parents help you if they do not know what is bothering you? How can they help to fix something if you will not let them see what is broken? As the family tries to stay in balance, you need to do your part: **talk, share, open up the hood!**

The Outward, Rebellious Child

Other children have the opposite temperament. Instead of being inward, they are outward. Instead of holding things in, they let everything come out. Instead of hiding how they feel from their parents, they let their parents know exactly how they feel. These children clearly express what is on the inside so that everyone knows!

When the parents give commands, this young person responds in an explosive way. His nickname is "Firecracker!" As Mom and Dad give the orders, this person is likely to **resist** and **fight** every inch of the way.

This person does not **brood** (let thoughts go through his mind) silently like the timid person. Neither does he always obey outwardly. This person is a real fighter who needs a **firm** but gentle hand from the parents.

Parents must help this person now while they can or else there will be much more trouble later. Later the person will be older and bigger and stronger and his explosions will be much more dangerous to his parents, to himself, and to other people. He will no longer be a "Firecracker;" he will be an "**active volcano!**" A volcano is much more dangerous than a firecracker!

Think again of that car that would not let you open up the hood. What if another car not only allowed you to open up its hood, but also threw motor oil and nuts and bolts and other metal parts right into the face of the one who was there to fix it! It is good to open up, but it is not good to open up in the wrong way! If you are a "Firecracker" type of person, what can you do to help your parents and to help the entire family as they seek to balance properly?

It may get to the point where the parents' **criticisms** ("you are doing this wrong") and **commands** ("you must do this and not do that") do not seem to reach the rebellious young person. He refuses to listen and obey. It seems like all he hears is "NO!" and it seems like his heart gets harder and harder. The parents might feel that they are not getting through at all (like they are trying to speak to a brick wall).

The young person needs to realize that rebellion against parents is also rebellion against God. He is the God who gave the Fifth Commandment found in Exodus 20:12. When a young person gets hard against parents who are trying to do right, he is also getting hard against God. Not only is he fighting his parents, but he is also fighting God.

Parents must deal with this young person with much patience and they must see their son or daughter in the right way (with a **long view**). The parents need to see more than "the little trouble maker." They need to see the young man or the young woman that this person will be down the road. They need to look ahead about ten years! God can use an outgoing assertive personality for His glory.

God is very patient and **longsuffering** (slow to anger, long before getting angry) with us. Were we once rebellious and disobedient (Titus 3:3)? _____ Yes, there was a time when we were all God-fighters. God made peace (Ephesians 2:15)! God made it possible for the war to be over! God could have quickly destroyed all of the rebellious people, but instead He sent His Son and provided a wonderful salvation! God was patient with us and He slowly hammered away at our hearts with His Word. The Bible has always been the same. God's commands have always been there and they stay the same. But God did not force all of these commands on us all at once. Even though we might hold the whole Bible in front of us, our limited minds can only understand a little at a time. We can only read the Bible one page at a time (one sentence at a time). God used His Word and kept working at our hearts. When a person is saved, he still has many problems and sins in his life, but God looks ahead down the road and sees the believer presented F _____ (see Jude 24). **Without any faults at all!**

Parents need to know their children and children need to know their parents. As a young person, you need to understand that your parents have a great responsibility. God has given you to them to raise and to lead. Who is held responsible before God for raising you and training you in the right way--**you** or **your parents**? _____ They have an important job and they need your help!

Parents need to love and respect young people and see each of them as a person:

- A person who has been created by God.
- A person for whom God has died (1 Cor. 15:3).
- A person whom God wants to save (1 Timothy 2:4).

When the parents understand this, then they will be able to be **persistent** (not give up) and **consistent** (steady, the same day after day) in leading them to God and to good and in taking them in the right direction.

Parents want to go the right way! Don't make them fall off the tightrope. They need your help!

GODLY FAMILY

LOVE	TRUST
VALUES	RESPECT
SACRIFICE	COMMITMENT
HELPFULNESS	RELATIONSHIPS
RESPONSIBILITY	LOVE FOR GOD