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**ESPAÑOL**

voltee la  
revista

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**and more**

**Christianfamily**

*A bilingual magazine for Christian families | Vol 6, No 2, April - June 2021*

## EDITORIAL



Greetings from the editors of *Christian Family*! We want to thank you for reading and sharing this magazine. The issue you have in your hands contains several articles that will greatly benefit your family.

What is the greatest desire Christian parents have for their children? Isn't it for them to one day become Christians and walk faithfully the Christian way? But how can they know **when** their children are ready to commit to Christianity? Our featured article offers relevant information to help you answer this important question. This issue also addresses the role of wives, gives advice for balancing ministry and marriage, emphasizes the high blessing and responsibility of motherhood, warns against sinful choices, and helps little ones to glorify God with their all. Questions about public school sexual instruction, the role of the preacher's wife, and women and secular work are also answered. Get your Bible and dig in with us!

*Paul Holland & Moisés Pinedo*

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# *Christianfamily*

*Helping families become stronger in the Lord*

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# DYSFUNCTIONAL families in Genesis

Sister, don't compete  
with your husband;  
complete him!

by Eric Welch

Rivalry between husband and wife is one of the dysfunctions of the family in Genesis. The first thing Adam did after he sinned was to blame Eve for it. To “fulfill” God’s promise to Abraham that he would have a son, Sarah, who was barren, gave her servant Hagar to him. Sarah’s plan backfired and it caused tension between her and Abraham. After Isaac was born, Sarah could not bear the thought of Ishmael being the co-heir with Isaac (Genesis 16:5-6; 21:8-14). She demanded that Abraham expel Hagar and Ishmael from the household. He did.

The marriage between Isaac and Rebekah was arranged by God. Isaac was the only patriarch with just one wife, and he loved her at first sight (Genesis 24:67). Yet, the favoritism they showed their twins caused tension. Isaac favored Esau, and Rebekah favored Jacob (Genesis 25:28). Rebekah wanted Jacob to have the blessing meant for Esau, to fulfill a prophecy given to her (25:23). Her plan worked, but it backfired. Esau’s desire to kill Jacob for his trickery forced Rebekah to send her favorite son away, probably never to see him again (cf. 27:45). Rebekah could not bear the thought of Jacob marrying a Canaanite woman as Esau had done, so she asked Isaac to send Jacob away to her brother Laban (27:46). He did (28:1-5).

The rivalries between Jacob, his wives Leah and Rachel, and their children were the most severe. When Jacob married Leah by accident and began to have children with her, Rachel became jealous. She could not bear the thought of not being able to provide children for Jacob (Genesis 29:15-35). Rachel said to Jacob, “‘Give me children, or else I die!’ And Jacob’s anger was aroused against Rachel, and he said, ‘Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?’” (Genesis 30:1-2).

These three stories illustrate the ongoing rift in marital harmony that began with sin in the garden (Genesis 3:12). As part of Eve’s punishment for her sin, God said, “Your desire *shall* be for your husband, and he shall rule over you” (Genesis 3:16). Similar language in Genesis 4:7 helps with the meaning. Describing sin as a predatory animal, God told Cain that sin’s “desire is for you (Cain), but you should rule over it.” This could suggest that, as sin wanted to control Cain, the wife will desire to dominate her husband (e.g., Sarah, Rebekah, and Rachel). In turn, the husband will react and abuse his leadership. “Sin,” as Michael Whitworth writes, “has corrupted both the willing submission of the wife and the loving headship of the husband.”<sup>1</sup>

When sin has the upper hand in either the wife, the husband, or both, it will destroy their relationship. Only when they submit their lives to the leading of Christ’s Spirit and to God’s intended roles for them, can they restore its beauty (Ephesians 5:15-32). Paul concludes his address to husbands and wives in Ephesians 5:33: “let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects *her* husband.” Brother, one way to love your wife is by owning up to any sin against her and apologizing (Ephesians 5:28). Sister, one way to respect your husband is to adopt the truth summarized in this meme: “God designed you not to do everything a man can do, but to do everything a man cannot do.” In other words, “Sister, don’t compete with your husband; complete him!” (Genesis 2:18-24). ■

1. Whitworth, Michael (2014), *Epic of God* (Fort Worth: TX: Start-2Finish), p. 42.

# BALANCE of Ministry and Marriage

## RECOGNIZING THE CHALLENGE

Every type of work creates challenges within a marriage because most working people spend more waking hours at work than any other activity. Furthermore, there is no shortage of other responsibilities to tend: housekeeping, lawn care, personal care, vehicle maintenance, community service, etc. Add in children and the list lengthens as parents must be sure to train up their children in the Lord's way (Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:4) while balancing secular education and extracurricular activities. With the hours of the day never growing, the list of responsibilities always growing, and our energy levels slowly diminishing, the danger of letting our marriages become devalued and neglected in pursuit of such things grows. Therefore, husbands and wives must protect their marriages and prioritize this beautiful gift from God.

Some types of work pose even greater stresses on marriages due to greater or unpredictable demands on time and energy. For instance, many types of work demand much overtime, rotating shifts or being on call many of the "off days." These variables can increase difficulties in making or keeping plans to nourish the marriage. They can also drain energy needed to focus on the marriage.

Ministry often carries some of these burdens. The men who trained me to preach repeatedly warned against neglecting our families while serving other families. They

reminded us that many ministers had lost their families trying to save the world. Sadly, most who fell victim to this trap did not know they were ensnared until it was too late to correct it. It all began with good intentions—as leaving someone in a lost condition should trouble every Christian, not just those who serve the church in an official capacity. Being a source of comfort in times of trouble, strengthening those who are fading, or restoring those who have fallen should motivate every child of God. If we love God and our neighbors (Matthew 22:34-40), of course we will be disturbed that someone is lost and will want to help.

For the minister and his wife, this sense of responsibility often grows to potentially dangerous heights. This is when the minister may fall prey to the trap aforementioned. The responsibilities of ministers often include preparing lessons, visiting the sick, visiting the healthy, seeking Bible studies, answering Bible questions, counseling those who suffer, performing weddings, conducting funerals, writing articles, fielding benevolent requests, etc. The minister may be called away from home on his "off days" because people cannot predict when someone will need biblical advice, get sick, be injured, or God forbid, die. Likewise, a minister's wife is often called upon to fill many of these roles with other ladies in the church. It is easy to see how ministers and ministers' families may stretch themselves so thin they neglect the marriage relationship. After all, every hour spent on any new responsibility demands an hour be taken away from another. Unfortunately, God will not make the sun stand still for us as He did for Joshua when battling the five kings in Joshua 10:1-15.

## PLANNING TO MEET THE CHALLENGE

Recognizing these dangers is only the beginning of our responsibilities. We must create and execute a plan to guard our marriages. Despite the challenges, we must



manage the delicate balance of ministry and marriage, or we may fall victim to Satan's schemes causing us to bring reproach to God's name rather than glory. Below are several attitudes and actions we have set our minds to apply to guard our marriage while attempting to give our best to the work of ministry we have chosen. We make no claims to perfection in either the plan or our execution of it, but we have found it helpful for us.

### **Determination**

Life is busy, and every activity requires time and energy both of which we all have limited supplies available. After our work responsibilities are finished (if they ever truly are finished), we must be determined to nurture our marriages, despite being tired or stressed. The old saying that anything worth having is worth fighting for is especially true of God's precious gift of marriage. God's provisions combined with our determination will empower us to properly care for our marriages despite the challenges inherent to a life in ministry.

### **Attention**

Intricately connected to limited time and energy is our limited available attention to give to things. As mentioned previously, most ministers who lose their families had no idea they were on the brink until it was too late. Might we suggest that one contributing factor was lack of attention to the cues their wives were giving them? It is easy to get so caught up in caring for the sick, studying with the lost, encouraging those who are struggling, etc. that we fail to hear the cries of our wives and children for the attention they need from us. This can work both ways, so ministers and their wives must be dedicated to paying attention to one another.

### **Communication**

Willingness to communicate is imperative in maintaining attentiveness in a marriage. This can be difficult because we do not want to add any strain to an already heavy burden for our spouse, but it is absolutely worth the trouble. By establishing communication, we ensure that the needs of both parties in the marriage are known. We must

never assume or expect our spouse is able to read and react to our needs without our willingness to communicate them. Such requires an environment where both parties are comfortable telling and hearing the needs of the other.

### **Teamwork**

One of the things that has helped keep us connected in these eight years of ministry is our efforts to do as much of the ministry together as possible. Obviously, there are situations where it would not be appropriate to go together due to confidentiality concerns or areas of general comfort in a given situation. However, we have found that in most situations, visiting together, studying together, etc. is not just acceptable, but also ideal. This doubles the capacity for good in the ministry as we each bring our respective strengths into the work thereby bridging one another's gaps. This has helped keep us close with one another as we spend that time together and labor together. We are mutually invested in the service of God, and that is healthy for us both in our marriage and our spiritual lives.

### **Reciprocal Grace**

Where would any of us be without the grace of God? Is not the broadcasting of God's wondrous grace through various ministry functions the very work we have undertaken? Understanding God's extension of grace to us and His expectation that we extend that grace to others, it should go without saying that ministers and their wives be gracious to one another in this and every other endeavor. None of us is perfect in any area of our lives, but we can be faithful to God and to one another if we set our hearts and minds to do so. May grace and peace be multiplied to you in your ministry and marriage. ■





# Is my **CHILD** **READY** to be **BAPTIZED**

*by Moisés Pinedo*

**MY** wife and I have been blessed with four wonderful daughters. Two of them are now baptized believers; Melanie was baptized at 15 (now 17), and Ella was baptized at 12 (now almost 14). Kelsey (12) has been asking about baptism for a year. Layla (almost 3) is on her early walk toward one day becoming a Christian when she reaches an age to adequately understand and obey God's will.

As parents, we have learned much about our daughters; no one is a cookie cutter. Yes, they look like the replica of each other when we take their pictures at the same age, but each is a whole different entity. Without going into too much detail on their character, I can say that Melanie is on one side of the spectrum, while Ella is on the opposite side; Kelsey seems to be in the middle, and well, we are still trying to figure out where Layla falls in. No doubt, each parent could testify to the fact that all children are different. With such a range of personalities and differences, how can parents know **when** their children are ready to be baptized and therefore become disciples of Christ—Christians?

I do not pretend to know all the answers on this subject, and I do not pretend that the answers and principles presented in this article will equally apply to each child, but I pray that they will help you to better understand “the times” of your children (cf. 1 Chronicles 12:32).

## IS MY CHILD...

I want to start with the obvious yet often overlooked part of this question. Before jumping to the part of readiness and baptism, let us remember that there is a “child” in the question and there is an identity attached to that child: he/she is **my child**. This means that we acknowledge that **parents** have the primary responsibility to understand their child’s readiness to become a Christian. Christian parents cannot expect the elders, deacons, preachers, or Bible teachers to be more suitable to answer this question for them. Christian teachers usually only have a few minutes a week of personal interaction with our children; this is not enough to get to know them on a deep level. (That is not to say that their input is not to be sought; in fact, it can prove to be very valuable.)

It was never God’s intention for the raising of children to fall on the shoulders of Bible teachers (cf. Deuteronomy 6; 2 Timothy 3:14-15). Instead, parents are admonished to train their children in **the way of the Lord** (Ephesians 6:4 cf. Genesis 18:19) and in **their individual ways** (Proverbs 22:6).<sup>1</sup> Children cannot be trained in the Lord’s way if parents do not have adequate knowledge of that way (cf. Matthew 15:14). Additionally, children cannot be trained in their individual ways if proper amounts of effort and time are not constantly invested in getting to know them on a personal and individual basis.

All parents who consider this solemn question should deeply analyze our lives to see that we are not failing our children. As we look at their beautiful eyes and contemplate the fact that they will reach the time when their innocence will be taken away and they will stand in need of Christ’s forgiveness (Romans 3:23-26), let us commit to leave behind any worthless, temporary, or unnecessary activity or pursuit that may be robbing them of the precious and vital time we owe them to properly instruct them and know them.

## ...READY...

A main definition for “ready” is “prepared mentally or physically for some experience or action.”<sup>2</sup> This is what we, as parents, want to determine concerning our children’s aptitude to submit to baptism.

When talking about readiness for baptism, the first thought that usually comes to our mind is if our children

have reached the so-called “age of accountability.” Even though I am not an advocate of this specific expression (the term “age” may be confusing), let me point out two things about it: (1) The Bible does not contain the term “age of accountability.” Yet, it presents the concept, both in the Old (Isaiah 7:16) and New Testaments (Romans 7:9), of a time when a person reaches a certain level of maturity and is therefore held accountable for his actions before God. (2) The “age of accountability” is not an age at all. This does not mean that we are free to baptize anyone at any age, for baptism requires believing and repenting—things babies and little children cannot perform (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). Though the Bible mentions our Lord being busy doing His Father’s business by age 12 (Luke 2:41-49), as well as God judging a generation of unbelievers and complainers who were 20 and older (Numbers 14:29-31),<sup>3</sup> it never pinpoints a precise “age of accountability” for an obvious reason: “Children mature at different rates and ages as their spirits are fashioned, shaped, and molded by parents, teachers, and life’s experiences.”<sup>4</sup>

Having said that, I would like to suggest some relevant questions to determine whether our children are getting closer in their walk leading to the obedience of faith (Romans 1:5; 16:26).

### Are my child’s requests constant, intense, and profound?

Of course, asking about baptism does not necessarily mean that the child is ready; in fact, if you are training your child in God’s way, taking him regularly to Bible class and worship, and he is paying at least some attention to the “invitation call,” then, chances are that he will be requesting baptism **long before** he is ready to take that step. However, this is a starting point, and parents should actively monitor their child’s requests as they get more constant (he will not “leave you alone”), intense (he is seriously concerned, not only afraid of the dark at night), and profound (he is thinking hard about it).

### Is my child showing obvious signs of physical maturity?

People are “wonderfully made” (Psalm 139:14), not just at the point of conception, but in every stage of their lives (cf. Isaiah 46:3-4). We are to consider the “signs of puberty” to have a better understanding of the subject at hand. Think for a moment: Would a loving God ask parents to train their children in His way and then leave them

in complete obscurity concerning when they are starting to get ready to commit to that way? This is not to say that as soon as the child starts puberty, he is ready to be immersed (some factors may contribute to early external “signs of puberty”),<sup>5</sup> but that he is **starting** his way to maturity and adulthood. It is a known fact that puberty changes the child, not only externally but also mentally and emotionally,<sup>6</sup> which is essential to proper commitment to God (cf. Matthew 22:37). As brother Allen Webster has suggested, in puberty, when there is “an increased consciousness of one’s own impulses, feelings, drives, desires, and therefore sinful attitudes and passions,” there is also “the possibility of sin and thus the need for forgiveness.”<sup>7</sup>

### Is my child able to think deeper concerning spiritual matters?

A few years ago, I was visiting a congregation in Peru. There I was asked to talk to a child (about 9 years old, I think) who wanted to be baptized; his family told me that “he knew all his steps.” I was happy to talk to him. I congratulated him for his good desire and then asked him: “Have you sinned?” The child put his finger on his cheek, looked to the ceiling for a few seconds, and then replied: “Don’t know.” I said: “That is ok. But most likely, if you had, you would know it.” We talked for a while, and then the child went back on his way happily. (I learned that the child was later baptized when he was 15.) Children are smart, but it takes more than just reciting the steps of salvation to be ready to obey the Gospel. Is my child only asking about baptism, but he does not know what role God’s grace plays in salvation (Ephesians 2:8-10)? Does he understand the need of Christ’s death in view of God’s justice (Romans 3:21-26)? Can he answer open questions (not only recite facts) concerning his decision, and life after it (why, how, what, etc.)? The mind is to be completely engaged in the obedience of faith (cf. Acts 19:8).

### Is my child more active, reverent, and reflective in worship?

Worship is the greatest expression of man’s gratitude toward a God Who is worthy of all honor, glory and power (Revelation 4:11). Worship to God is foundational to Christianity. Contrary to today’s religious profanity where worship is viewed as entertainment for a human audience, worship really is for, and in the presence of, God (cf. Psalm 134). Does my child understand the so-

lemnity, significance, and highest privilege of worshipping God? Or does he barely make it through worship while nodding off, drawing the preacher, or playing with a toy? Does he engage in prayer, song, and Bible study? Does he reflect on the sermon he has recently heard? Does he wake up early Sunday morning to get ready for worship? Christians worship—from the beginning of Christianity to the eternal ages in heaven (Revelation 15)!

### Is my child ready to hear some “grown-up stuff”?

We cannot expect our children to take on the serious demands of Christianity and still view them as little children. Do I think my child is old enough for Christianity but not to hear about the “birds and the bees”? It is said that Gus Nichols used to point out that belief in Jesus as the virgin-born Son of God (Matthew 1:18-25; cf. John 8:24) is essential to being scripturally baptized, and that one cannot appreciate the virgin birth unless he comprehends the process of natural birth. I am not fond of the birds and the bees’ talk (and certainly do not think an “in-depth discussion” is necessary), but I still believe it to be relevant to the matter at hand. My wife (who is the main one in charge of talking to the girls about it...phew!) and I have long agreed on this to be the case.

### Is my child ready for a greater level of commitment?

Christianity is about faithfulness to God, and faithfulness requires a strong and long-lasting commitment. Is my child determined, according to his growing abilities and knowledge, to defend God and His Word in the face of a humanistic world (1 Peter 3:15)? Does he engage in regular Bible study and prayer, or does he have to be pushed to do those things by Mom and Dad? Does he understand church discipline and is he prepared to own up to his sins and consequences and make necessary changes (cf. 1 Corinthians 5)? Is he committed, according to his abilities, to work for the Lord, help the needy, and extend the Gospel of Jesus Christ (cf. Matthew 28:19-20; James 1:27)? Is he ready to forsake anything, and anyone, that prevents him from growing in the Lord or glorifying God (cf. Matthew 10:37)? Is he willing to be holy even if this means being looked down on as the weirdo of society (cf. 1 Corinthians 4:9-13)? And is he resolved to even give his own life (yes, to die!) for the cause of Christ (Revelation 2:10)? Although it is true that he will not be alone in his Christian walk (his Christian family and, most importantly, God will be with him—a reality that we should



not forget to stress to our children; cf. Romans 8), a penitent believer needs personal conviction and determination to surrender his whole life at the feet of the One Who gave all, even His life, to set him free (Philippians 2:5-8).

Many factors can contribute to an early request for baptism before “due time.” A Bible camp in the “spiritual woods” can suddenly ignite a “campfire of obedience;” an older sibling or close friend being baptized can cause a child to want to join in; curiosity to taste the memorial elements can open the “appetite of obedience;” and a powerful sermon about a hot hell can cause him to want to jump in the cool, refreshing waters of baptism. Children are emotional people and easily influenced, so parents are to use wisdom in discerning conviction from emotion (Matthew 13:20-21) to help their children arrive to true conversion.

## ...TO BE BAPTIZED?

I wish we would ask more in these terms, “Is my child ready to **obey the Gospel?**” for obeying the Gospel is more than just being baptized. Yet, I understand that the question is asked from the perspective that baptism is the **final** step to **begin** Christianity (Matthew 28:19). Then, is my child ready? It may be the case that, after considering the previous questions, a clear answer may be in the negative. So, what are parents to do while their child continues his way toward Christianity?

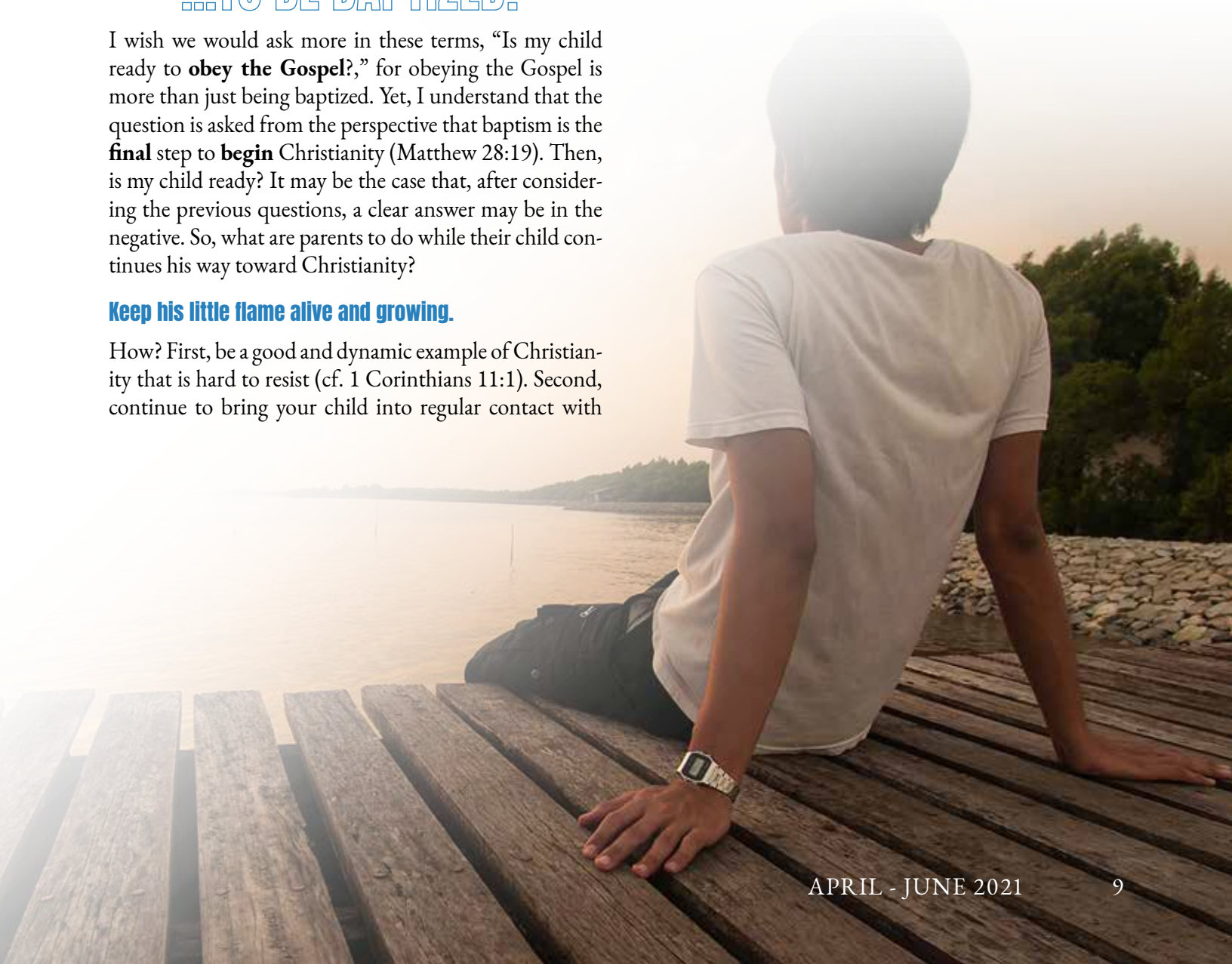
### Keep his little flame alive and growing.

How? First, be a good and dynamic example of Christianity that is hard to resist (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:1). Second, continue to bring your child into regular contact with

the Word to produce faith (Romans 10:17). Third, try to minimize evil influences that can choke the Word of God growing in the heart of your child (Matthew 13:22; Mark 4:19). Fourth, as much as possible, surround your child with strong, enthusiastic Christians who will inspire him to follow Christ (Hebrews 11:1). And fifth, focus on activities that will lead your child to greater faith in God (Philippians 4:8).<sup>8</sup>

### Take time, and learn, to comfort your child.

I have lost count of the times one of our girls has woken us up at night to tell us that she thinks she is lost. Sometimes we feel like saying: “Let’s go and get the child baptized so she will sleep and let us sleep!” But just sit down, hug your child, and talk to him. Give him assurance that he is safe in the arms of God as he matures (Matthew



18:3; 19:14). Additionally, you may need to explain that doing something wrong is not necessarily the same as sinning (my two-year-old daughter does many things that are wrong yet she is not a sinner—cf. 1 John 3:4), and feeling shame is not necessarily the same as being guilty (people who are abused may feel shame even when they are not guilty of the abuse.)

### Finally, do not panic.

Sometimes parents are more “scared of the night” than their child, so they are relieved when the child asks about baptism and rush him to premature conversion. This, sadly, can put off true conversion many years down the road (if ever). Instead, trust God’s love, patience, and grace while your child learns and grows toward becoming a Christian. As brother Wayne Jackson has asked,

“Has God instituted a system wherein parents lovingly raise their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord only to have to suddenly be terrified, be-

*cause their son or daughter has turned twelve and is now in peril of hell until they decide to be baptized? That’s simply a question that is best answered by saying, “Trust God.” If your home is a godly one, and you are faithfully training your children, you can rest assured that when your child needs to be baptized, he or she will make it known.* ■

[I understand that this is an extensive subject that cannot be exhausted in a rather short article like this, and some parents may have additional questions and doubts not covered in this discussion. For those seeking more information, I would like to recommend the excellent booklet by Allen Webster, “The Age of Accountability,” published by House to House; the book by Kyle Butt, *Am I Ready to Be Baptized?*, published by Peaceful House; and the article by Wayne Jackson, “What about Baptism of Young Children?,” online at Christian Courier.]

1. Albert Barnes comments the following concerning “the way he should go” in Proverbs 22:6: “Or, according to the tenor of his way, *i. e.*, the path especially belonging to, especially fitted for, the individual’s character.”
2. “Ready,” *Merriam-Webster*, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ready>, access date: April 30, 2021.
3. These and other “age-related verses” should be carefully studied.
4. “What Is the Age of Accountability?” Church of Christ Articles, <https://churchofchristarticles.com/blog/administrator/what-is-the-age-of-accountability/>, access date: April 30, 2021.
5. Wanjek, Christopher, “The Truth Behind Early Puberty,” Live Science, <https://www.livescience.com/1824-truth-early-puberty.html>, access date: April 30, 2021.
6. “The Adolescent Brain: Beyond Raging Hormones” (2011), Harvard Health Publishing, <https://www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/the-adolescent-brain-beyond-raging-hormones>.
7. Webster, Allen, “The Age of Accountability” (Jacksonville, AL: House to House), booklet.
8. These points are adapted from Webster, *ibid.*
9. As quoted in Webster, *op. cit.*

# EVERYTHING FADES compared to *Motherhood*

by Jane Elsworth

Growing up I always knew I wanted to get married, but having children was not something I thought of. I was never one of those women who felt destined to be a mother. I knew that, if I did decide to have children someday, I didn't want to be a "stay at home" mom. I thrived off of hard work and adult conversation. There was no way I would give that up. I believed a female should be able to "do it all"—you know... be a mom and have a career and a social life.

When I became pregnant with my first child, I had a daycare all set up for her. **But...**nothing could have prepared me for my baby girl's first breath outside of me. I looked into her eyes. I held her little hand in mine. She was a piece of heaven and I was her mother. There is a lot to be expected out of such a special blessing. I instantly became her protector and her nurturer. All that I once believed to be important slowly faded away.

To be a mother began to mean so much more than it did before her. I realized I wouldn't (couldn't) be a mother who "did it all." My priority would be either my career or it would be raising my children. God entrusted me (no one else) to raise my children. Titus 2:4-5 exhorts the older women to "admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, *to be* discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed."


The feminist movement has completely changed God's ideal for our homes. Working from home is no longer valued. To be a homemaker is thought as not contributing to your income. Now both fathers and mothers are expected to earn an income. This in turn causes our children to be raised by someone outside of the home. The Shulamite lamented, "...they made me the keeper of the vineyards, *but* my own vineyard I have not kept" (Song of Solomon 1:6).

I once saw this saying and it stuck with me: "Becoming the woman God created you to be will cost you friends, relationships, plans and material things. Become her anyway."



I am blessed to be in a situation where I don't have to work outside the home. When I made that decision, I lost money but I gained a community of other mommas and, most importantly, I gained time and opportunities to raise my precious babies to love God. It is such a great gift for the Lord to have rewarded me with the responsibility of raising my girls. I pray that I will constantly strive to be the Titus 2 woman, serving as an example to those around me that when you follow God's plan, He will make your path clear.

Psalms 127:3-5 says: "Behold, children *are* a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb *is* a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so *are* the children of one's youth. Happy *is* the man who has his quiver full of them." My prayer for current and future mothers is to know how much God has entrusted to us. It is our responsibility to shape the little hearts and minds of our children. If I could place emphasis on one thing, it is this: In every decision that involves your children, always ask how this will affect their souls. When God gives us gifts, He also gives clear instructions about their use. God did not ask us to raise NFL players or corporate leaders. He asked us to raise children who know and honor Him with their lives. ■



# **WEIGH** the **CONSEQUENCES** of your **CHOICES**

*Anonymous*

**MY** name is “Wayne,” and I am an adulterer. I cheated on my wife of 24 years, both physically and emotionally. I grew up “in the church”—the church was a regular part of my life. When I went away to the military, I made sure “not to leave the Lord behind.” Then I married my wife who was the daughter of an elder and an active member in her congregation.

Pornography played a big role in my life from the time I was 15. Erotic magazines and books were the rage of the day, and I would find them or buy them from time to time. Later, VHS tapes became more prevalent, but going into video arcades while heightening the excitement also ran the risk of exposure.

When I married my wife, I assumed that regular sexual contact with her would kill my urges. For some time, it did, but after a while I sought out more and more sensual pleasures, strip clubs, and other forms of adult entertainment. Over the course of eighteen years my flirtation with different types of pornography was a roller-coaster of regret, repentance and regression.

Around my 18<sup>th</sup> year of marriage, when I was 42, we got internet in our house. I was not “foolish” enough to look at pornography in my house, but I was not above going into Yahoo chat rooms (today you may think about Tinder, Facebook, etc.). Over the next six to nine months, I began an internet relationship with a lady in Kentucky. I was in Arizona, so I “knew” that I would not ever consummate our relationship. Over time, we exchanged phone numbers and engaged in sexual fantasies over the phone on a regular basis. Meanwhile, I was getting less and less sleep, my relationship with my wife and three children was deteriorating, but I continued to lead singing, teach class, and regularly show people what a great “Christian” I was. I was very good at compartmentalizing my sin.

## **WARNING**

Due to the nature of this article,  
parental discretion is advised.

Events worked out that I was able to be in Arkansas for a few days. During that time period, I made an excuse to visit an old military buddy and I drove to Kentucky where I did in the flesh what my heart had already done many times. I often say in class that King David did not walk out on the balcony, look at Bathsheba, and say, “I think I will split my kingdom in two, lose the respect of everyone I know, and kill a friend.” But that is exactly what happened. I heard someone say, “Sin will take you further than you want to go, for longer than you want to be there, and cost you more than you expect.”

I wish I could say that when I returned to Arizona, I had a prodigal son moment and repented, but sadly I did not. I wound up divorcing my wife and continuing the illicit relationship with that woman. It should not

surprise you that we had nothing in common, something that I had blinded myself to because of lust. James 1:15 says, “Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it has run its course, brings forth death” (NASB).

The stress, heartache, and pain that I placed on my family is something that I live with today. I believe that God has forgiven me, and I understand David’s sentiments in Psalm 51:4, “Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight; so you are right in your verdict and justified when you judge” (NIV). I would encourage any who may read this to remember Luke 12:2: “For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, nor hidden that will not be known.” If you have a problem, please, seek godly help! ■

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**THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST GREET YOU**

# Oh, Be Careful!

by Madison Lindsey

The song "Oh, Be Careful Little Eyes" can teach us a great deal about how to best live for God in our daily lives.

## Oh, be careful little eyes what you see!

We use our eyes that God gave us to read His Word and to observe the beautiful nature that is all around us. But just like everything else in this world, our eyes can be used in sinful ways. Let's look at a simple situation. Say you are at a friend's house for the day, and while you two are playing together, you notice something magnificent. It was the toy you asked your parents about, but they didn't buy it for you. You and your friend spend the day playing with the toy you really wish you had. Once playtime is over, you realize the toy was never yours to begin with. However, you still want it. You became jealous of your friend. The Bible calls this coveting. James 4:2 says, "You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask."

We must be careful with our eyes and mind, so we do not fall into Satan's traps. He knows how to trip us up on our path, but we must follow the commands set by God and try our best every day. That is all God and our parents expect of us.



## Oh, be careful little ears what you hear!

Everyone loves to talk with others about various things, but sometimes conversations can lead to unexpected challenges in keeping God's Word. Have you ever overheard something that was a secret? What did you do with that valuable information? Did you tell someone? Did they tell someone else? Did the person they told tell someone else? The list can go on forever. This is called gossiping, and the Bible prohibits this sort of behavior. Romans 1:29 connects gossip with wickedness. Have you ever told someone something about someone else just to find out that what you said was false? Gossiping leads to lying about someone else. Proverbs 26:28 tells us that a "lying tongue hates those who are crushed by it." This is the part when the person you talked about hears all of the gossip surrounding his name and is deeply hurt by it. Then you must apologize not just to him but to everyone involved so they know what was said is false. This is why we are to be careful of what we hear, because not everything we hear is good!

## Oh, be careful little mouth what you say!

Sadly, in today's world, slurs, profanity, and lewd gestures are popular with teens and even younger children. However, the Bible warns in Leviticus 19:12, "And you shall not swear by My name falsely, nor shall you profane the name of your God: I am the Lord."

We understand not to swear by the name of God because He is holy (1 Samuel 2:2). Even though most people do take God's name in vain, we must not be like the world (Romans 12:2). We are special and unique! Show your originality by the way you praise the Lord instead of speaking against Him, and be the light in this dark sinful world. "Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the bones" (Proverbs 16:24).



## Oh, be careful little hands what you do.

Our hands are the tools God has given us to do so many things. Our hands can be the key to doing the work of the Lord, but they can also be used for evil (Proverbs 10:4; Hebrews 13:21). As children of God, we must always be doing good deeds toward others instead of being lazy. Hebrews 6:12 reads, "...you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises." By reading this text, we can see that what has been promised, of course, is eternal life with Christ.

Even the youngest children can help others. So, while we are young, we should be doing whatever we are able to prepare us to work even harder as we grow older and can handle more responsibility. Here are a few things you can do no matter your age: handing out bulletins to the elderly on Sundays, being a good example to others in conduct, and talking to others in the church and not just to your friends. It is never too early or too late to do things in service to others; even seemingly small things can mean a lot to others.



## Oh, be careful little feet where you go!

Feet are great! But of course, there is a danger with feet as well. Where you go can be the problem. You have probably heard your parents tell you not to go somewhere for whatever reason or another. Do you ever wonder why you are not allowed to do something you really want to go do—like going down a spooky dark trail or riding your bike without a helmet? Your parents just want to protect you! A child's job is to obey his parents (Ephesians 6:1).

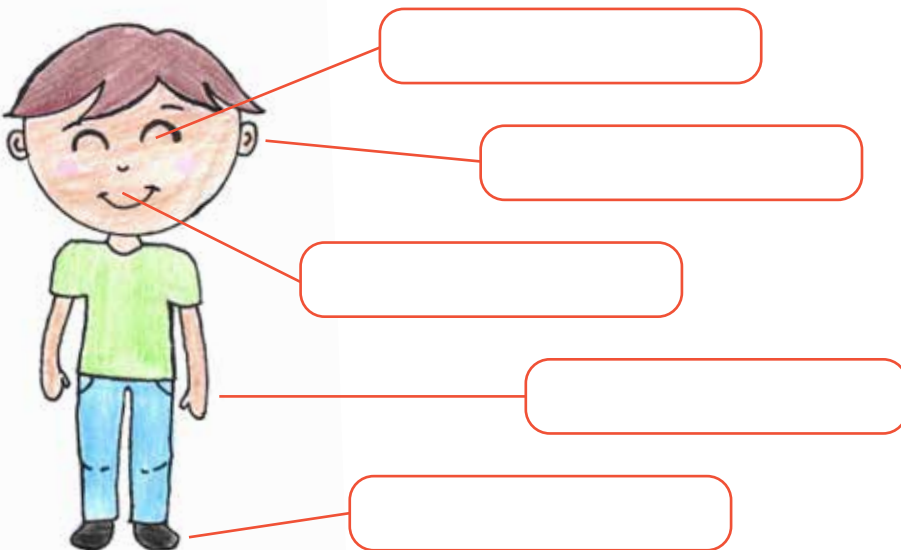
We have explored different ways to use our bodies in service to the Lord. John 14:15 says, "If you love Me, keep My commandments." That means **everything** the Lord asks us to do. Do His will by working together and building each other up! ■



## Eyes, ears, mouth, hands, and feet

Find the eyes, ears, mouth, hands, and feet in the following Bible verses and place the verses in the blanks in which they belong (use the NKJV):

**2 Samuel 7:22; Psalm 119:18; Luke 6:45; Romans 10:15; Psalm 26:6.**



Illustrations in this spread by Kelsey Pinedo (age 12)

Online and printed Spanish materials for children at:

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To ask a family-related question to the editors, go to:

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**Q:** *How can I talk to my 11-year-old son who is being taught “safe sex” in school?*

—TAMAULIPAS, MEXICO

Unfortunately, we live in a society which does not respect God’s laws. When our society starts teaching our children to live by their moral standards instead of God’s, we have to work even harder to teach them the truth. It might be that we can’t take our children out of public school, or even take them out of the “safe sex” class discussion. So, we must teach them God’s standards and why it is important to follow them. Sex is a gift from God, but He has given us regulations relative to sexual behavior, and we must follow those if we want to honor Him. —PH

**Q:** *What is the role of the preacher’s wife in the church?* —MEXICO

The short answer is: the same role as for any other woman in the church. Paul wrote: “the older women likewise,... admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed” (Titus 2:3-5). However, as the wife of someone in leadership, the women will look to her for more. Every woman will have her own strengths and weaknesses. The preacher’s wife will have to balance her own abilities, and time limitations, with the needs of the congregation, especially if there aren’t many mature Christian women to serve as examples. —PH

**Q:** *Should a Christian mother only be a housewife, taking care of the children, or should she work to help the husband?* —QUITO, ECUADOR

I would like to start by correcting two misunderstandings we may have due to society’s modern perspective. Mothers who are homemakers **do work**, though they may not do it outside; and mothers who are homemakers **do contribute** to the home and **help** the husband. In fact,

mothers who work at home do one of the most valuable and hard jobs a woman can ever do. They wear many hats at home. Among other things, they are all-in-one teachers, accountants, chefs, playmates, dietitians, hairdressers, advisors, interior designers, nurses, and supervisors. The value of their work at home should not be minimized in view of a secular job.

Men are the main providers for the home (Genesis 3:17-19), and they should not make their wives feel that they also have to go out and make a living. This is usually expected and demanded in a society where the family’s **economy** is the main concern. Yet, as Christians, we need to understand that the family’s main concern is **spiritual** (cf. Matthew 6:25-34), and, therefore, every decision must be made with this priority in mind.

Of course, working outside is not a sin for a woman, and there are situations in which a family may need the extra income. But parents need to make sure that they are not neglecting their children or their own marriage, or that they are not placing their responsibility to train their children on the shoulders of others—just to have better financial status. Children need attention, time, and constant training, especially in their younger years; and there are **no** more qualified people to provide this training for them than a loving father and mother. It is **their** solemn duty (Ephesians 6:2), and **they** need to make sure to fulfill it to the best of their abilities. —MP

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