

Spring Issue

TEACHING OBEDIENCE, DISCIPLESHIP, AND AGAPE TO YOUTH

2007

FOR CHURCH, HOME, AND SCHOOL

“GOD’S GREAT MAGNIFICENT PLAN”

By *Rory Ries*



Have you ever heard of the seven Annual Holy Days? If you have, can you name all seven? God has given His children a beautiful blessing and the blessing is knowing about the Holy Days and being able to keep them each passing year. They start in the spring and they end in the fall. They are associated with harvests and there is much rejoicing and celebrating that takes place with each Holy Day. Each one is listed in your bible and there are specific instructions from God when we are to keep them and what we are to do on each day.

We start with the weekly Sabbath (Leviticus 23:1-3). The weekly Sabbath is a delight and is considered a feast day. It is not a day of do's and don'ts like the Pharisee's tried to turn it into during the time Christ walked on this earth. Christ set the example in many places how we are to view the weekly Sabbath (Mark 2:27-28, Mark 3:1-5, and Luke 6:1-5). The weekly Sabbath is a Holy Day in itself, and just think we get 52 of them every year. We are also to go out into the world and proclaim the weekly Sabbath for the whole world to come and rejoice.

The seven annual Holy Days are listed throughout Leviticus 23 (Lev. 23:4-44). We are instructed to keep them at their appointed times which means you actually have an *appointment* with God. It's no different than when you make an appointment to visit the doctor or dentist. You normally mark it down on a calendar so you don't forget. Then when the day comes you go to your appointment. God is the same. He is a loving Father and He has marked down on His calendar the days we are to meet with Him.

God has given us His calendar and when the day that is marked arrives we prepare to worship Him on that day and we meet with those who think the same way. We have a Holy Convocation which is simply having a church service, the assembling of those who belong to Christ. As you may be aware of, there is usually a lot of excitement and a lot of energy at these Holy Convocations,

especially for the eight days we spend at the Feast of the Tabernacles. Not only is it a time of great fun and excitement, it is a time when we can learn more about God and Jesus Christ.

God has a great plan and it is being worked out right now at this present time. Each Holy Day pictures a great event that has taken place or will take place in the near future (Col.2:16-17). Each Holy Day also points to Christ. It all starts with Passover which is in the spring and ends with the Last Great Day which is in the fall. Only those who have become baptized can partake of the bread and wine at Passover (also called The Lord's Supper). The Last Great Day is for everyone and it pictures all of mankind having the opportunity to know who Christ is. God started this plan with a small number (Gen. 12:1) and it will grow into all of humanity when He has completed all things and all things will be reconciled to Him (Col. 1:20).

Parents have a responsibility to teach their children the ways of God (Deut. 6-9). We are to teach them diligently and the blessings that come from obeying God will be more than you could ever count. The knowledge of these days is to be passed on from one generation to the next. The knowledge of God's plan is also to be passed on and His plan offers hope not only to us but to our children.



Adam and Eve were given instructions to multiply

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**GOD'S SEVEN
ANNUAL HOLY
DAYS PORTRAY
HIS PLAN OF
SALVATION**

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Personal Note

Hello Everyone,

Whew! Spring is coming soon. Can't wait for all the trees, bushes and flowers to come out. Everyone seems to have a choice of which season they like best.

I love spring the best. My husband likes fall better. Some people love all the seasons and appreciate each one. For me spring is a time for the earth to be renewed. Also the spring holy days picture a time of renewal for us. We once again take the time to look back at ourselves. As we partake of the Passover we again renew our commitment to our Savior and we know we're starting off again with a clean slate. All our sins have been forgiven.

The Days of Unleavened Bread pictures putting sin out of our lives as we physically unleaven our homes. Spiritually, we are also unleavened and have been cleaned and purified by Christ's sacrifice. What a blessing this season is for all of us.

Our lead article is about "God's Great Magnificent Plan" by Rory Ries concerning the Sabbath and the holy days of God. Diane Kleeschulte has a book review about a book called "Teaching to Change Lives". Also her "Pass It On" column is always interesting.

Doyle Carter has written an excellent article about teaching your children about the spring holy days and includes some information on how the Jews teach and include their children in the Passover service. I have included an article I wrote describing four gifts you can give your children. Also included are activities for the spring holy days and "The Story of Moses and the First Passover".

So you can see we have a very full issue this time focusing on instructing your children about the holy days and including them in the worship of these days. We hope you enjoy these articles. Let us know what other subjects you would like in our future issues. If you would like to contribute to this newsletter please get in touch with me at the address below. We always appreciate your help.

Until next time,

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"Pass It On: Ask"

By Diane Kleeschulte

"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you." Matthew 7:7-8 (NKJV)

Through the years of studying and learning about Jesus Christ and His teachings, I often recall these verses and ponder these words given to us by Him. He gave these words to His disciples then, two thousand years ago, and they are for us His disciples today; losing none of their relevancy through the ages.

Many years ago I had a friend explain to me how easy it was for her to remember this verse because of the acronym: a-ask; s-seek;- k-knock. I thought about how clever that was, but I was sure Jesus did not quite have that in mind as He was speaking to the multitudes. Nevertheless, it stuck in my mind, and as life has continued I find myself examining the meaning in different contexts.

In the past, when I was still a babe in Christ, I would tell myself: "ask and it will be given to you". Of course, my motivation was all about me and what I wanted. I used the verse very selfishly. If I didn't receive what I had requested or get what I wanted, then God didn't work. And if I opened the bible to "seek" an answer, how was I supposed to know where to look? Or it would take me so long to find an answer that I would finally give up. "Was it supposed to be this hard", I would say to myself? Knock? Well, I understand the door and knock connection, but I was not real clear on the location of the door and how could I knock if I didn't know where to find it?

Thankfully, I have matured some since those days, and when I look back on them I can't help but feel naive and silly. But growing as a Christian, a Christ-follower, is a process. Though the same God does the calling, everyone follows a different path to answer it. But how happy I am now to have a better understanding of Jesus' words. When applied with a selfless, prayerful attitude, these words take on a powerful meaning. Instead of praying "I" and "me", I learned to pray "He" and "His" and "You" and "Your", as in His will, and Your will, not mine.

Praying from the heart with deep conviction was not learned overnight, but I used the acronym "ask" when I discovered my old way was useless. The uselessness brought me to desperation and desperation brought me to ask. Isn't it funny how that somehow happens? What you think will get you what you want doesn't work the way you use it, but because it's all you have you decide to use it a little differently, and voila, different results.

The result was actually phenomenal and not a little scary at first. I kept telling myself He is there and listening; keep going! So, **a-ask** for His forgiveness, mercy and grace; **s-seek** His will through His word; **k-knock** at His door of wisdom and understanding. How remarkably changed my life has become since I applied this word, ask, with a more humble heart. During our

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“God’s Great Magnificent Plan” - Continued from Page 1)

and fill the earth (Gen. 1:28). God's name used there in Genesis actually means family (Gen 1:1). God is the Father and we are His children. God is seeking godly offspring (Mal. 2:15). He is family oriented and His Holy Days are part of His plan and when we keep His Holy Days they are a reminder to us all what He is going to do here. Isn't that awesome news? God is giving you everything you need to become a child of His.

Many have asked why then doesn't the world keep these Holy Days? We mentioned before how God is working with the few at this time (1 Pet. 2:9). He is not trying to save the whole world at this time. The world has been held captive and is being deceived (Rev 12:9 and 2 Cor. 4:3-4). The church is being judged today (1 Pet. 4:17) while the world will be judged at another time (Rev. 20:11). The world has rejected the Holy Days and have incorporated heathen practices that have been going on for thousands of years.

Man has changed Passover to Easter. Instead of rejoicing before the Lord for 8 days during the Feast of Tabernacles man decided to create Halloween and worship the dead. If you really look close you can see how Satan has tried to counterfeit everything good God has created. God loves children and what does Satan do? Satan promotes abortion. God gave man the beautiful institution of marriage and Satan promotes divorce. God gives man and woman the blessing of marital sex and Satan promotes fornication and adultery. God's way produces beautiful fruit and Satan's lies produce misery and suffering.

Satan has even convinced the world these Holy Days have been nailed to the cross. Your sins, along with mine, were nailed to the cross as was the sacrificial system that was set up for ancient Israel. All of the disciples kept the Holy Days long after Christ had died (1 Cor. 11:23-28, 1 Cor. 5:8, Acts 2:1, Acts 12:3, Acts 18:21, Acts 20:6, and Acts 27:9). The early Christian church did the same as they followed Christ.

Christ's true church today is practicing the things Christ taught when He was here in the flesh and even today as He leads his followers. Check out the Holy Days. If you already know about them that's great, then go out and proclaim them to the rest of the world so they can see what it is they are missing. Here is another opportunity our Heavenly Father has given us where we can use the time to get to know Him better and develop a lasting relationship with not only Him but our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. That is something worth proclaiming and shouting out with great joy.

“In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good”

Ecclesiastes 11:6

**“Four Gifts You Can Give Your Children”**

By Shelby Faith

As parents, we all want to leave a legacy to our children, something that will live on for the next generation. There are some things we can do that will make a positive impression on our children for all of their lives.

The gift of your presence

Our kids want to know we're there for them no matter what. When they've made a mistake, they don't always want to listen to a "I told you so" speech from their father or mother. It matters more to them that you care and that you'll listen to them. When they're hurting, discouraged or disappointed they may not be able to express how they feel but it helps them to get over the matter if they know they can come to you when they're ready to talk. In the good times they want to be able to share the joy and excitement with you of what is making them happy. Let them know that you're always there for them. Give them the gift of your presence.

**The gift of your acceptance**

None of us ever get enough of being accepted. We all crave acceptance. We need to let our children know that we accept them the way they are, warts and all. Each child has their own personality; some are outgoing while others are withdrawn. Some children make friends easily while others have a difficult time. Some learn fast and others learn at a slower pace. Don't force your children to change to the way you want them to be. Give your children the opportunity to be themselves, and to become what God, not you, wants them to be.

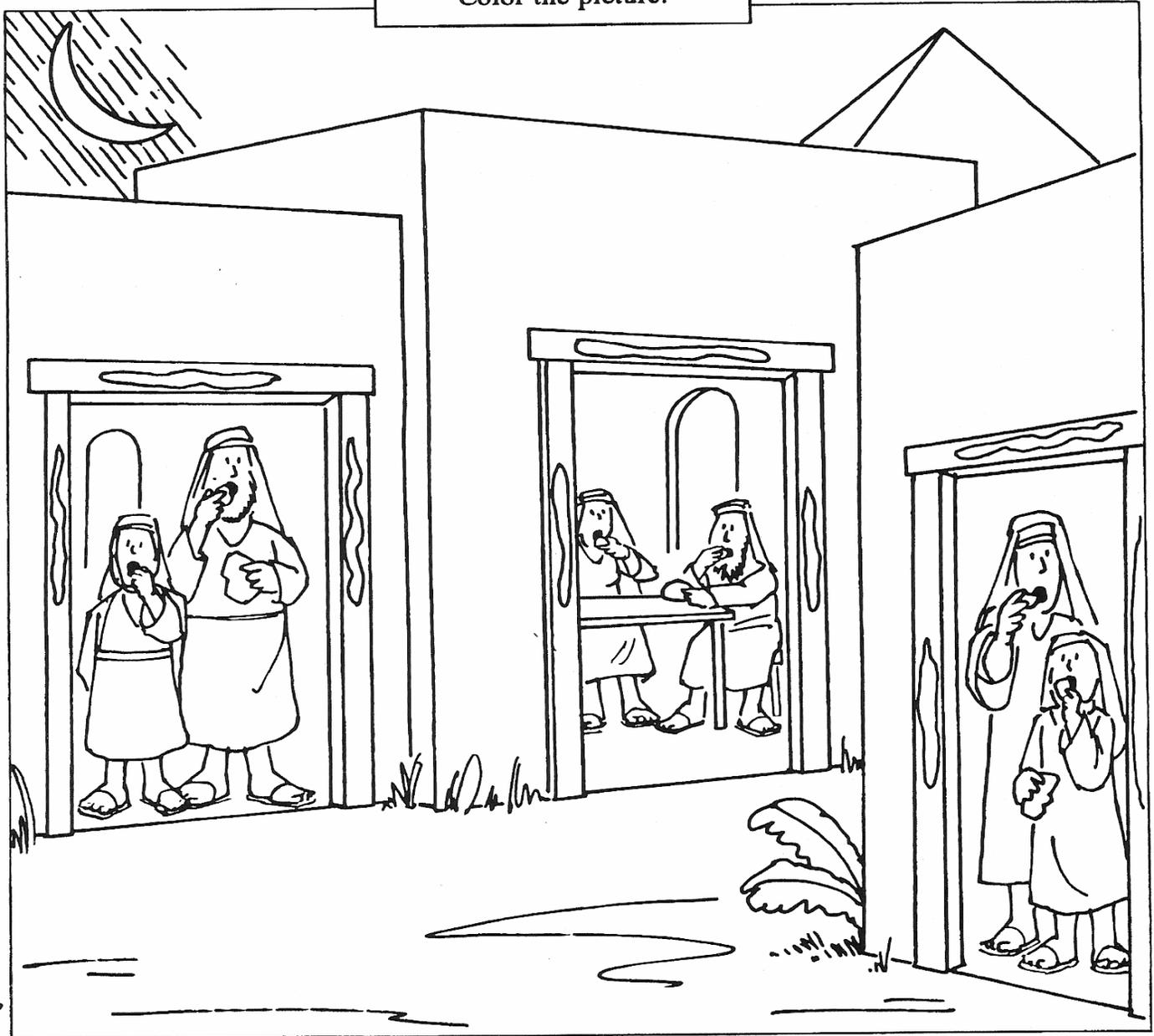
The gift of your correction

By correcting your children you are teaching them what is right and wrong behavior and believe it or not, that is a gift to them. They will grow up aware of what is acceptable behavior. Parents need to agree upon the method of correction or punishment that needs to be meted out to the child. Both parents need to present a united front. Sometimes one parent is better at handling the situation than the other one but both parents should support each other when correction is needed. God corrects His children because He loves us. (Hebrews 12:6). We need to correct our children because we love them and don't want anything to cause harm to them. When correction is needed, try to do it when it won't embarrass the child in public. Sometimes correction has to be immediate, but other times it can wait until you can speak privately to your child.

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In the houses where people did what God told them to do, the firstborn were protected from death.

Color the picture.



Passover-Days of Unleavened Bread Ages 8-12

Fill in the blanks using words from the word pool below. If you need help, look up the scriptures in your bible:

"Your lamb shall be without _____, a male of the first year...And you shall keep it up until the _____ day of the same month; and the whole assembly of the congregation of _____ shall kill it in the _____." (Exodus 12:5-6)

"And they shall take the _____ and strike it on the two _____ and on the upper _____ of the houses, wherein they shall _____ it." (Exodus 12:7)

"For I will pass through the land of _____ this night and I will smite all the _____ in the land of Egypt, both man and beast..." (Ex. 12:12)

And this day shall be unto you a _____ and you shall keep it a _____ to the Lord throughout your _____; and you shall keep it as a feast by an ordinance _____." (Ex. 12:14)

"Seven _____ shall you eat _____ bread; even the _____ day you shall put away _____ out of your houses." (Ex. 12:15)

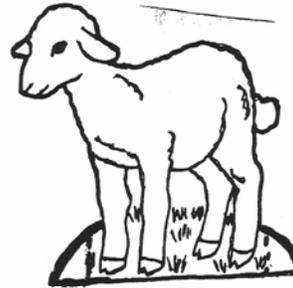
WORD POOL

Israel	feast	doorpost	fourteenth	leaven
blemish	days	firstborn	memorial	first
blood	evening	eat	forever	Egypt
unleavened	side posts	generations		

Passover Lamb and Israelite Shepherd

Passover Lamb and Israelite Shepherd

Color the lamb and shepherd. Cut out the pictures along the dark lines. You can either glue the pictures to card board and/or fold back the bottom corners on each picture and stand them up. Each Israelite family had to take a lamb and sacrifice it for Passover. The Passover Lamb represents Jesus who was sacrificed for us.



(These pictures may be used with other Bible Stories)

PENTECOST

On the day of Pentecost we are to bring an offering to God. Count the pennies below and see how many pennies the little girl is giving to God. Can you count to 50?



("Gifts for Your Children" - Continued from Page 3)

The gift of your guidance



God didn't make our children independent at the time of their birth. He made them dependent on their parents from that time until they are old enough to go out on their own. Our children not only depend on us to love them, feed them, provide for them and keep them safe but also depend on us for guidance. We are to teach our children God's wonderful ways and the moral values they are to adhere to in their growing up.

We should teach them from our experiences in making wrong decisions. They can learn from their own experiences, but they can avoid a lot of unnecessary pain and anguish by learning from our experiences. When you see them heading down the wrong path speak up and show them the right path. They may not always follow your advice but we need to guide them and train them as much as is humanly possible, for we only have them for such a short time. Above all else, we need to pray always for our children that God will be with them as they grow up and that He will protect them, heal them, give them wisdom and always be there for them. Our guidance should always be there even after they are grown but we need to teach them God is their Supreme Guide.

Brick homes are built one brick at a time. The lives of our children are built also one brick at a time with the bricks of presence, acceptance, correction and guidance. Every time you give a child one of these gifts, you are helping build his or her life.



(This article was inspired by an article written by Rick Warren titled "The Love Kids Really Need" in Ladies Home Journal, Sept. 2006. Some phrases are from that article.)

("Pass It On: Ask") - Continued from Page 2)

prayer time and throughout our Christian walk, it should be a comfort to us that we can lean upon His words in Matthew to be our guide and help.

The last context of application is far down the spectrum from where I first learned these verses. "Ask" became yet a different tool of understanding for me. I looked at the word "it" in each of the verses in Matthew 7:7 and I now apply "it" as the Kingdom of God. Ask for the Kingdom of God, and it will be given to you. Seek the Kingdom of God, and you will find it. Knock, and the door to the Kingdom of God will open to you. When I feel discouraged about what is going on in the world around me I remember that this is all temporary. There is a better world waiting for me and it is His Kingdom!

Ask, three letters full of meaning and application; Jesus said as much and more. There are people who understand it selfishly and apply it just that way; some may even be Christians. Pray for them to have a better understanding of His words for their life. And when we encounter those who are experiencing trials, setbacks, and discouragement, try offering a little insight to how ask has worked for you. Jesus did not give His words to us in vain because even after all of these years there is still power in them. What we need to do is learn how powerful they can be for us and for others in our lives. Remember, don't keep the power of ask to yourself, pass it on!

The Story of Moses and The First Passover (Exodus Chapter 3 through Chapter 12)

By *Shelby Faith*

A long time ago in a land called Midian a man named Moses was tending his father-in-law's sheep. As he watched over the flock a nearby bush suddenly burst into flames. That really got his attention.



The bush was on fire but was not being burnt up. "I need to see why this bush is not burning up", said Moses. Just then he heard a voice from the bush, saying "Moses, Moses". He said "Here I am." God told Moses, "Take off your sandals. You are standing on holy ground."

God then said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. I have seen the misery of my people who are in Egypt and heard their cries. I will deliver them out of slavery from the Egyptians and bring my people to a land flowing with milk and honey. I will send you to Pharaoh so that you may lead my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt. The Pharaoh will not let my people go, but I will strike Egypt with my wonders, and after that he will let my people go."

Even though Moses was afraid to return to Egypt he knew he had to obey God. So he returned to Egypt and gathered all the elders of Israel together, including his brother Aaron. He said, "God has heard your cries and will deliver you out of Egypt".

Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh, who was the leader over Egypt, and spoke to him saying, "These are the words of the God of Israel; **LET MY PEOPLE GO** so that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness." But Pharaoh said, "Who is this God that I should obey His voice? I do not know him, nor will I let Israel go." God then send a plague on the water in the river and turned it into blood. All the fish died and no one could drink the water.

After this happened, Moses and Aaron went back before Pharaoh and told him, "**LET MY PEOPLE GO**", but Pharaoh's

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“Teach Your Children”

By Doyle J. Carter

Are you teaching your children what the bible says about the spring holy days and how to observe them? Some parents do not make any real effort to clearly explain to their children at their level why they observe certain customs at this season, such as the customs of the unleavened bread and wine at Passover. They may feel that their children are too young to understand or it is not their responsibility. But the Bible does not express this opinion in any way. In fact, it commands parents to teach their children about this Way of Life.

In **Deuteronomy 6:7**, it says, “And thou shalt teach [engrave] them [commandment of God] unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou riseth up.”

In the Matthew Henry Commentary, 1994 ed., volume 1, page 586, he comments on this verse saying, “Those that love the Lord God themselves should do what they can to engage the affections of their children to Him, and so to preserve the entail of religion in their family from being cut off.”

In relation to this verse, the Jewish people have a saying, “Be careful and exact in teaching thy children; and aim, as by whetting, to sharpen them, and put an edge upon them. Teach them to thy children, not only those of thy own body.”

To follow this command of the above verse, it is the practice of many Jewish families during the weekly Sabbath and Holy Days to place their children in active roles so as to engrain in them the understanding of the meaning of these days.

For example, during Passover, it is a custom in many families to hide the pieces of mitzvah (the unleavened bread that is the staple items of the Jewish Passover) and it is the responsibility of the children to find it. In others families, the children are to purloin it and later exchange it for gifts.

Even Solomon expresses the same concept in **Proverbs 22:6**, “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”

In **2 Timothy 3:15-17**, Paul said to Timothy, “ And that from a child thou hast known the Holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God ...That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works”. Paul expresses to Timothy that the scriptures can make one wise to salvation, including the children.

In reference to the Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread,

Moses said in **Exodus 13:8** to Israel, “And thou shall show thy son in that day, saying, this is done because of that which the Lord did unto me when I came forth out of Egypt.” This is repeated in **Deuteronomy 6:20-24**. These two scriptures express that during these days they were to teach their children why and how these events occur.

In just a few scriptures, we have established that parents are to educate their children in God’s Way and with more research on this topic you would clearly see that the Bible commands it. But how does one teach their child? This question is answered very simply.

First, you can read the events out of the Bible and explain it to them at their level of understanding.

Second, you as a parent can ask your church for study materials such as Sabbath lessons and so forth. Your local church should be very happy to assist in this area.

Third, you can check out other organizations such as Christian Educational Ministries (cem.org web site) or The United Church of God (ucg.org web site) for other resources. Many of these offer lessons for children of all ages, even crossword puzzles and possibly coloring books that cover such topics as Passover and so forth. Through this newsletter we also include lessons, puzzles, activities geared for the holy days.

It is very important to educate your children as earlier as possible in God’s Way, because it will ground them to the Word of God, the Bible, and teach them to place their trust in God. By teaching them as earlier as possible, your children will avoid many pitfalls in life that their peers will not. It will make their life easier.

As it says in Deuteronomy 6:7, “...Teach them unto thy children.”

A TIME TO PLANT

To everything there is a season, a time to every purpose under the heaven; a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; a time to kill and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to get, and a time to lose; a time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

(The Story of Moses—Continued from Page 6)

heart was hardened and he would not let Israel leave. Moses then told Pharaoh that if he would not let Israel go, God would send more plagues on Egypt. Pharaoh refused to let Israel leave. So there were plagues of frogs, lice, flies, locust, great sores and plagues of giant hail that killed many Egyptians and their cattle. Then there came a plague of darkness upon Egypt and the Egyptians could not see anything for three days, but the children of Israel had light. Each time before a plague happened Moses and Aaron would tell Pharaoh, "**LET MY PEOPLE GO.**" Each time Pharaoh's heart was hardened and he would not let Israel go out of Egypt.

God then sent Moses and Aaron to Pharaoh one more time saying, "All the firstborn of Egypt will die, from Pharaoh's firstborn down to the firstborn of their cattle". They said once again to Pharaoh, "**LET MY PEOPLE GO.**" Pharaoh's heart was hardened even more and he still refused to let God's people leave Egypt.



Moses then called all the elders of Israel and told them what God wanted them to do next. "Take a lamb and kill it and take the blood and cover the top and two side posts of the doorways of your houses. And none of you shall go out of your house till morning. Roast the lamb and eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Be ready to depart with your shoes on your feet and your staff

in your hand, and eat it in haste. 'It is the Lord's Passover'. At midnight when the Lord passes through to strike the Egyptians, He will see the blood and pass over your house and will not allow death to come near you. You shall observe this with God as a covenant forever. When you come into the land which the Lord will give you, you shall keep this service. And when your children ask, 'What does this service mean?' you shall say 'It is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover, for He passed over the houses of the children of Israel when He struck the Egyptians'."

And so it came to pass at midnight that the Lord passed over the land of Egypt and killed all the firstborn of Egypt, from Pharaoh's firstborn son to the firstborn of all their cattle. There was a great cry through out Egypt and in every house someone died. Pharaoh rose up and called for Moses and Aaron. He told them, "Rise up and get out of Egypt, both you and all the children of Israel and take your flocks and herds". So the people of Israel took their dough before it was risen and all their belongings, and departed Egypt by night. The people of Israel were finally free from their bondage in Egypt and free to go and worship God in the wilderness.

Exodus 12:40-42: "Now the sojourn of the children of Israel who lived in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years. And it came to pass at the end of four hundred and thirty years, on that very same day it came to pass that all the armies of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt. It is a night of solemn observance to the Lord for bringing them out of the land of Egypt."

BOOK REVIEW**"Teaching to Change Lives"**

By Diane Kleeschulte

Howard G. Hendricks has written a book that should be on everyone's book shelf, parents and teachers alike. The amount of information that he shares from his experiences are invaluable for those of us who teach at home, school, or church. After this review, which will only include Mr. Hendricks' general topics, you will certainly be looking for this book at your local library or bookstore.

Using the acronym "teacher" the author presents seven chapters based on the following "laws":(of):Teacher, Education, Activity, Communication, Heart, Encouragement, and Readiness. Each chapter focuses on each of the above areas keeping in mind that we who educate should always be asking, "How can I improve?". Mr. Hendricks says that teachers and parents should look at it (educating others) this way-" 'As long as you live, you learn; and as long as you learn, you live.' " His insight into teaching, not just a curriculum or lesson plan, comes more from his commitment to better his students through loving them with a pure and dedicated heart. Using scripture to support his philosophy, (Luke 6:40b), the author convinces the reader that teaching can and does change lives. We must decide whether it is for the better, or not.

When we teach, do we pray for our students, parents, and ourselves? Do we teach from our heart, purely for love of them and the One we serve? If you are looking for a way to get back on track because you are teaching the "plan", and not your students, please pick up a copy of "Teaching to Change Lives". You will find yourself changed as much or more than the students you teach. As always, look to His word to guide you in all things.

Good reading and teaching!

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"Children's children are the crown of old men; and the glory of children are their fathers" Proverbs 17:6