

Winter Issue

TEACHING OBEDIENCE, DISCIPLESHIP, AND AGAPE TO YOUTH

2007

FOR CHURCH, HOME, AND SCHOOL

“NOW WHAT?”



By *Rory Ries*



Some of us have had this question pop up in our lives at one time or another, especially when we have had to deal with our children. We usually ask ourselves this type of question when we are faced with a dilemma and we are not sure what to do next. This specifically happens to most parents when their child decides they no longer want to go to church. Actually we are not talking about a child because in most cases it is a young person, anywhere from the age of 16 years old to maybe 18 years old.

It seems they do just fine when they are youngsters and in their pre-teen years, but then some kind of a transformation takes place and they start to develop their own opinions and they want to seek autonomy. It is not always total autonomy because they still want to rely on their parents being there for them in case they mess up or make a bad choice. However, they do start to seek their independence once they hit their teenage years.

Over the years many children have come and gone. We have seen some count the days until they turned 18 years old so they wouldn't have to come to church anymore. We have also seen some of our children gradually lose interest and they eventually go out into the world seeking the worldly pleasures. It is a problem that most churches face and many are trying to find the right solution that hopefully will resolve this issue.

What can we do when we are faced with our child wanting to go their separate way? Do we lay the law down and force them to continue going to church? Do we give them an ultimatum, it's my way or the highway? It can be a very distressing time and can cause some hurt feelings that may take a long time to heal. What is a parent to do?

First of all, we need to mention a disclaimer. What you are

reading here is just some helpful thoughts and reminders. You as a parent know your child better than anyone else. Every child is different and what may work for one child may not work for another. The bottom line is it is your decision on how you handle your specific situation with your child. However, we are told to seek out a multitude of counsel (Prov. 11:14). It is our job to assist you in hopefully making wise choices.

We know about the scriptures in Deuteronomy that tell us to teach our children diligently the laws of God (Deut. 6:7). We also know our household, which includes our children, are to keep the Sabbath and there is no work to be done (Ex. 20:8-11). What then do we do with the child who lives under our roof but refuses to go to church? What do you think the solution is?



Communicate with your children and start at an early age. Don't wait until they're too old and won't listen to you.

One basic truth is we need to be able to communicate with our children and that starts at an early age. If we have never had open communications with our children since they were born, it is not just going to happen when they are teenagers. Research shows if we have always been a tyrant or a dictator as a parent, chances are the teenager will rebel and you could possibly get into the battle of wills. It simply means a power struggle could take place and nobody wins.

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Personal Note

Hello Everyone,

Once again the Feast of Tabernacles has come and gone like a flash. Doesn't it seem like the good times fly by so quickly? Before you know it we're back home and back in our normal routine, just as though we had never had a break.

Can you imagine what it will be like when the Kingdom of God is here on earth at last? Will it will be one glorious day after the other. Will we measure time then like now? We'll have all eternity to worship, work, create, have really good fun and enjoy all the wonderful things God has in store for us. Then the good times will last forever.

In the winter months we're now into, we should have a little more time to pray, meditate and study God's Words more deeply. I find more time to read and catch up on some of the things I put off in the warm weather when I can be outside. I love looking at all the garden catalogs which start coming in with spring bulb pictures and my mind also turns to re-planning a garden spot, or planting new areas in the spring. Just staying cozy and dreaming in front of a warm fire helps pass the time more quickly too.

Our lead article written by Rory Ries is called "Now What". His article deals with communication with our children. You have to start this process when the child is young if you want them to keep the communication going as they grow, especially when they get into their teen years. And what if your child doesn't want to go the same way you want him/her too. What do you do?

Also included in this issue is an article about "Modern Music", written by Doyle Carter. What kind of music do your children listen to? How does it influence them? Music surely does have a great impact on our children and we need to know what they are listening to. Remember to read the "Pass It On" article and "Creation Corner" written by Diane Kleeschulte.

Until next time,

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"Pass It On"

By Diane Kleeschulte

Do the people of the bible just jump off the page, full of life and personality to you, or like me, do you struggle sometimes forming a picture of what they were really like in flesh and blood?

What personality did a particular man or woman possess, what did they sound like and how did they carry themselves? What about their speech and inflection? Did they speak with a soft, but firm tone in a particular verse or was it sarcastic and mean? What kind of facial expressions did they have?

The bible text offers adjectives that describe how certain verses were spoken, but can you really hear words in your mind the way they were spoken? Here is an example: While my mother was visiting I was studying the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Before bed one night my mother checked in on me and asked what I was reading. I read to her this verse in Genesis 42:38: "But Jacob said, 'My son will not go down there with you; his brother is dead and he is the only one left. If harm comes to him on the journey you are taking, you will bring my gray head down to the grave in sorrow.'" (NIV)

My mother responded by giving a little laugh and asked what Jacob was talking about. She did not know Joseph's story, so I gave her a quick summary so she would have a better understanding of Jacob's reply to his son, Reuben. After hearing Joseph's story, my mother asked me to read the scripture verse again and then explained that I had made Jacob seem so real. I told her that the people in the bible were real people that actually walked and talked and lived and breathed.

The next day, as we entered a Christian bible store, my mother said she wanted to buy a devotional that would teach her who the people of the bible were and what they did that made such a difference that their lives were recorded for us to learn from today. She bought a daily devotional whose topic centers on men and women of the bible, and she looked at study bibles, as well.

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("Now What?" - Continued from Page 1)

That approach can be very destructive.

If a child feels like they can come talk to you about anything they will. If they feel they will not be ridiculed for what they believe or feel, they will be willing to share with you what they are thinking. The parent has to be the one who keeps that door open and make sure the child knows they are there to listen and to advise accordingly if needed.



There is an admonition from Paul that says, "Do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord." (Eph. 6:4) It goes along with instructing our children to obey their parents. This communication is two way, the child honors the parent and the parent responds in a loving way. This is the ideal situation, however, the ideal situation is not always reality. No matter the situation this is the standard we hope to attain and uphold.

Paul also says not to provoke our children because they could become discouraged (Col. 3:21). We may have made mistakes in the past concerning the Sabbath and church. We may have had nothing but rules that consist of what you can't do on the Sabbath instead of focusing in on what a delight the Sabbath can be (Isa. 58:13-14). Maybe the church has made the mistake in the past of not including our children and they lost interest. These matters can be fixed and there are some positive solutions to the problem.

In the meantime your child has grown and wants to move on. The only solution that seems to be reasonable is to give them the freedom to choose. We have to remember we are dealing with individuals who have not been given the gift of the Holy Spirit at this time. The danger of provoking them or threatening them is they may become completely turned off. That is not what we want and we don't want to place a stumbling block before them.

It is not easy stepping back and allowing them to choose on their own. None of us want to see our children go through pain and suffering. If we can keep an objective mind in dealing with this matter it may have a more lasting positive affect on them than the other way where we may separate ourselves from them. Our love for them never fails (1 Cor. 13:4-7). Our love for them bears all things and hopes all things. The hope is they will eventually come to the calling that waits for them.

**"For the promise
is to you and
your children..."
Acts 2:38-397**

Peter told the crowd on the Day of Pentecost that if they repented they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and the promise was not only for them but for their children (Acts 2:38-39). God never goes back on

(Con't. on Page 6)



"Modern Music and Its' Influence"

By Doyle Carter

In recent years, parents are becoming more concerned about modern music and its' influence on their children with its corrupt messages. Most music video and songs, not all, seems to focus on subject matters that are not appropriate to present in public. The outline of this article will be to cover the negative aspects on the matter then focus on the positive aspects of music. There are included at the end of this article a few tips on how you can assist your child in choosing music that is appropriate.

I, personally, listen to music from many generations such as Big Band (40s-50s), 60's music, easy listen such as Celt, and 80's rock music. This variety of music gives me a well rounded view of music. Many preteens and teens feel that only rap or hard rock is music, as my nephew stated to me a few years ago.



Many videos and song lyrics in recent years have been seriously deteriorating in various ways, which can have a great influence on the immature minds of children and teenagers who are still developing their concepts of the world around them.

The following **negative** themes are strongly promoted by many song lyrics and music videos:

- advocating and glamorizing abuse of drugs and alcohol
- Pictures and explicit lyrics presenting suicide as an "alternative" way out or as a solution
- Graphic violence like in many rap videos
- Preoccupation with the occult or other satanic concepts as entertainment
- Strong sexual concepts in lyrics and videos which promote violence to women, de-valuing of women, incest, homosexuality, and so forth.

The impact on the mind of negative messages in music heard constantly repeated, may cause the listener to act out the actions of the message in the music or at least cause the acceptance of this message as normal.

This puts great responsibility on the musical artist and record companies, because music can and does have a great influence on a child's behavior such as the way they think or dress or even the way that they speak.

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CHILDREN'S BIBLE

ACTIVITY SHEETS

THE HOLINESS CODE AND LAW OF LOVE LEVITICUS 19:1-18

The Lord gave Moses many laws to teach the people.



Match the pieces.
Copy the words



You shall steal.

You shall my

You shall a block before

You shall not your heart of your

hate in anyone kin.

not

love your as yourself.

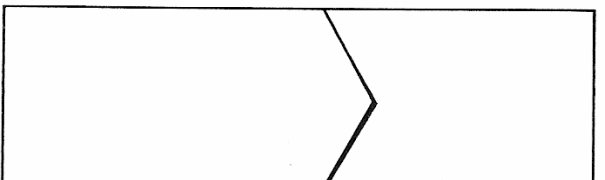
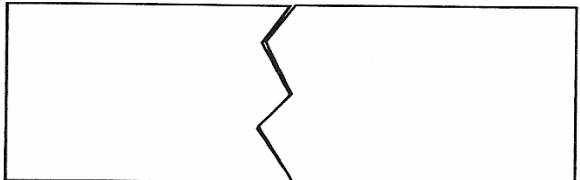
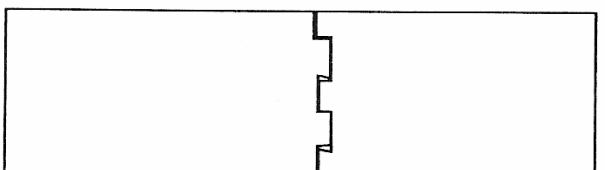
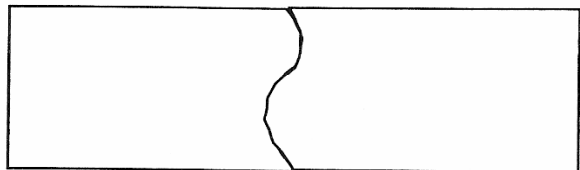
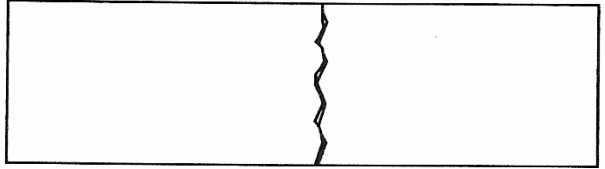
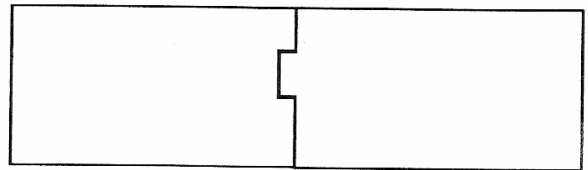
keep Sabbaths.

not lie another.

not put stumbling the blind.

You shall neighbor

You shall to one



CHILDREN'S **THE HOLINESS CODE AND LAW OF LOVE** LEVITICUS 19:1-18
BIBLE
 ACTIVITY SHEETS

The Lord told Moses to speak to the people of Israel, to tell them the way to behave to be holy, to be like Him.

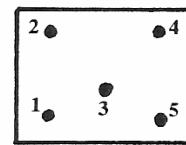
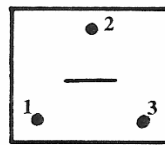
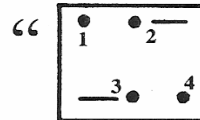
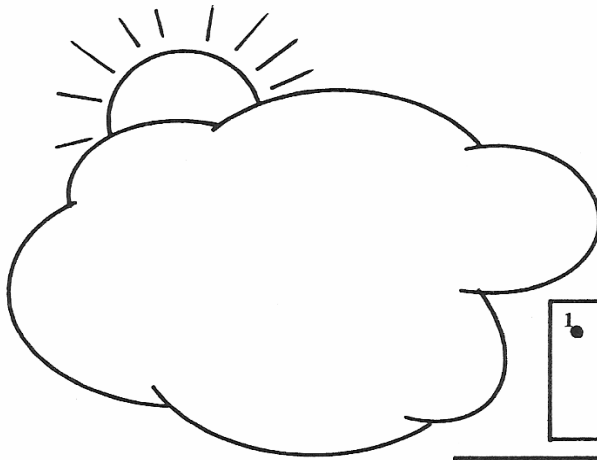
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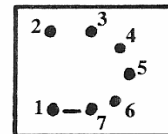
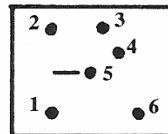
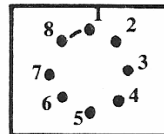
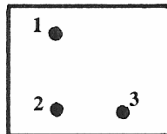
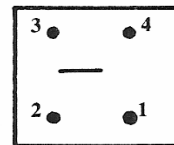
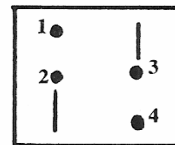
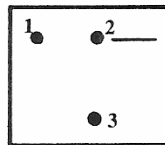
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B	K	H	O	F	O	R	O	F	G	R
C	J	A	P	Y	W	I	H	E	O	U
D	I	L	Q	L	X	T	M	A	D	O
E	H	L	R	O	Y	H	C	D	K	Y
F	G	B	E	H	Z	E	L	O	R	D

“You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.”

Find this verse in the word maze. The words will all be connected, but they will go up, down, forward and backward. Use a pencil or crayon to follow the words.



Connect the dots in each box.



”

Name _____

("Now What" - Continued from Page 3)

His promises. Paul said something similar when he was writing to the Corinthians; he said the children of a believer are no longer unclean, but now they are holy (1 Cor 7:14). These are encouraging words that were inspired by the one true Father of all.

Our Father is the ultimate, most perfect Father. We have all turned our backs on Him at one time or another and yet He still remains steadfast and His love for His children never fails (Heb. 13:5). Solomon wrote, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it (Proverbs 22:6)." Do we believe in what God says? Even though we may want our child to answer the calling today it may not be the right time and that totally depends on their relationship with God. God's timing is always perfect.

It may be one of the most challenging times in your life in dealing with your children when they are thinking about going their separate way. The father of the prodigal son did not try to stop his son. It doesn't say but we can assume the father was not happy about his son wanting to go out into the world and seek after worldly pleasures. However, he did let him go (Luke 15:11-24). You know the story, the son does return and they all rejoiced. As difficult as it may be you may have to make the same choice as the father did in this parable.

Christ said that all the Father has given Him, He will lose nothing (John 6:39). If we believe the scriptures, our children have been set apart because we, the parents, have turned our lives over to Christ. Jesus Christ knows our children. Their time will come, if not today, then later. The best we can do now is to continue to love them and set the example for them and when the Father brings them to Christ they will know how to respond and make the right choice.

FREE RESOURCES

Sabbath School Lessons

The United Church of God announced recently that there are now 240 Sabbath School lessons for teachers posted on the UCG Youth web site (www.ucgyouth.org).

The curriculum consists of six levels; grades kindergarten through fifth grade. There are 4 lessons per month covering 10 months of the year. These lessons are free and can be downloaded for your use.

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

She has a bible and had wanted to start studying prior to her visit, but maybe our conversation was an encouragement that she was headed in the right direction. My mother said that the way I read the verse the night before just made Jacob seem so real, and that she had never thought of any of the people of the bible that way.

How many people today do not realize that the bible is not just words on a page about men and women from long ago that we should feel disconnected from? How will they ever know unless someone takes advantage of an opportunity to tell them so?

As Christians we have the power of the Holy Spirit to guide our actions and our words to witness our faith. We must be ready always with an answer. (1 Peter 3:15) If we love our neighbors we will share the love of God with them in many ways. (1 John 3:11)

**"The Bible is
the Living
Word. His
Word is alive!"**

Maybe today that love will be evident in your answer to a seemingly innocent question. The bible is the living Word; it should sound real! We are real people helping real people find out that God and His Son are in our lives today through real people who lived long ago. His Word is alive!

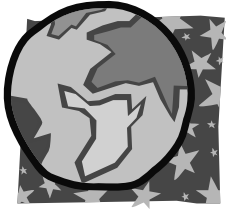
The lives of those ancients, through hope, faith, and love, were a living testimony to Whom and what they believed. Now, today, we can do the same by letting God use us through His word for testifying to others. Be armed, (Ephesians 6:10-20), and ready with an answer, though, so we can, indeed, pass it on!

"Grandmother's Story"

My grandson was visiting one day when he asked, "Grandma, do you know how you and God are alike?"

I mentally was polishing my halo while I asked, "No, how are we alike?"

"You're both old", he replied.



Creation Corner

"God's Majestic World"

By Diane Kleeschulte



In the northern hemisphere of the world we are all anticipating a season called winter. What are you doing to prepare yourself for the cold and dark days that lie ahead? Maybe you could take some tips from some of God's special animals, (Genesis 1:24-25), as they prepare and settle in for a phenomenon called hibernation.

Do you know why animals hibernate? Where is their place of hibernation and when do they begin to prepare? Do all animals hibernate? Let's take a snapshot look at hibernation and then you can do some work on your own.

Hiberna is a Latin word that means winter. Hibernation is a way for animals to save their energy and survive the winter when food is hard to find. Did you know that there are different levels of hibernation? One level is known as the "real" hibernation where the animals, or hibernators, sleep so deeply that it is almost impossible for them to awaken! The largest of the hibernators is the bear. They are not like the "real" hibernators because they can awaken easily and their body temperature will start to rise almost immediately.



The skunk and raccoon are examples of the "in-between" hibernators. They take long winter naps, but find time to search and store their food.

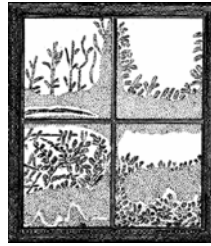


The last level is that called "daily dormants". A hummingbird is a good example of a daily dormant because it can only survive if it turns its body temperature down into a mini-hibernation.

The bear, skunk and hummingbird, are all examples of the majesty of the world God created for us to enjoy. Hibernating is a way of survival for each of them, but they do it in different ways. The winter months can sometimes be long and harsh and each of the levels of hibernation ensures in some way that the species will survive.

After researching a little on my own about animals that hibernate I began asking myself questions. Are you wondering, too, about "winter sleep"? Do you hibernate during the short, cold, dark days of winter? Do you wonder if the

sun will ever come out? Do you long for the rays of sunshine to stream through your windows? You are probably not alone if you have any of these questions.



Maybe this year, though, you can approach winter with new eyes. First, look around you and actually "see" winter. It is a very beautiful season and each region of the United States experiences it differently. Take out your coat, gloves, hat, and scarf, if necessary, and go for a long walk. Use your senses and make a mental list of what you observe around you. Remember the levels of hibernation? Next, create a list of animals that you know and try to categorize them into each of the levels of hibernation. If an animal does not hibernate, how does it survive the winter? Write your own book, with illustrations, of course, about winter, animals, hibernation, and survival.

Finally, if you are going to hibernate yourself, take God's word with you. Snuggle and bundle up from the cold of the outside world into the pages of His world that brims with abundant life. As Christians we need to remember to search the scriptures daily, (Acts 17:11), not only during the winter. But if you haven't, then let's get you back on track! Take advantage of the wintertime to schedule some time to study as a family. Maybe you can start by reading Genesis 1, and finding out more about God's majestic world of creation.

Before long I will be looking forward to the warmer days of spring, but in the meantime I will bury down, warm and safe, with the word of God close at hand. And I won't forget the hot chocolate!



Suggested books on this topic are listed below:

1. **Do Not Disturb**, the mysteries of animal hibernation and sleep- Margery Facklam. Discusses, by chapter, animals that are specific to each level of hibernation.
2. **Why Do Some Animals Hibernate?**- Patricia J. Murphy. From "The Library of Why" series. A scientific approach to hibernation with a glossary of terms.
3. **Animals in Winter**- Henrietta Bancroft and Richard G. Van Gelder. This book offers suggestions on ways to help animals in winter. For example, hang suet in a plastic net bag.

("Modern Music" — Con't. from Page 3)

Now on a positive note, there many singers and bands that do take their responsibility seriously and are careful about the lyrics in their songs and contents that are in their videos. They are aware that they are role models and want to be a positive one. It is worth your time to research modern rock groups and singers and discover those who can be positive role models for your child.

One example of a group that tries to be a positive role models is Sonic Flood who has a song entitled "Youth of a Nation." This song was to be a warning to teens and parents of the many problems in society that young people are going through.

Another example is a song by White Loin with a song entitled "When Children Cry." The lyrics spoke of how the present world governments are destructive with wars and mismanagement, but when God becomes king over this earth the "children will sing." Yes, it is like a religious song in many ways.

Here are a few tips to assist you with your child in picking music.

First, you can plan to go with your child to the music store and check out the music together. It would make you more aware of the type of music out there and when you do show disapproval of a song or lyrics then you can at least comment based on experience which will hold more weight with your child. Plus, you become more involved in your child's life, which many parents do not seem to do in today's society.

Second, you can try renting or borrowing music videos before you buy them for your child. This will prevent you from wasting money on music videos that you would not approve of.

In fact, you can even check out music and music videos at your local library to review. Many cities have libraries (such as Tulsa, OK) that allow you to check out movies and music at no cost. This is a great way to review entertainment materials.

Third, you should monitor what you child is listening to on the internet. The internet can be great source for listening to music and watching videos and getting copies of song lyrics, but with the internet being so accessible it can be too easy for you child to watch videos with messages that you do not want them to see.

Fourth, you should introduce your child to many types of music so that his/her taste in music can be well rounded. You can easily broaden your child's taste and understanding in music by doing this. The earlier that you start introducing various types of music to your child, then the easier it will be for your child to choose and enjoy other types of music. You should remember that not all of your child's music is negative or has a negative influence, but you can assist them

in understanding what is appropriate and explain why. Do not forget that the music you listened to when you were a teen seemed rebellious to your parents. Try to be understanding with their music and if certain songs are inappropriate, explain to your child why so they can understand.

Be a parent and share with your child's interest in music.

(Source: *The American Academy of child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP) "The influence of Music and Music Videos"*)

BIBLE TRIVIA

Try to answer these questions before looking up the scriptures.

1. What strongman was ordained from birth to deliver Israel from the Philistines. (Judges 13:2-5)
2. What apostle was foreordained to minister to the Gentiles? (Galatians 1:15)
3. What prophet was ordained before birth to be God's messenger? (Jeremiah 1:5)
4. Who foretold Jesus' birth and ministry to Mary? (Luke 1:26-38)

T.O.D.A.Y. NEWSLETTER

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Rory Ries and YOU!*

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