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The Family Friend

A collection of articles and quotes to aid your family in daily living.

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The Soul of A Child

The soul of a child is the loveliest flower,
That grows in the garden of God,
Its climb is from weakness to knowledge and power,
To the sky from the clay and the clod.

To beauty and sweetness it grows under care,
Neglected, 'tis ragged and wild,
'Tis a plant that is tender, but wonderously rare—
The sweet, wistful soul of a child!

Be tender, O gardener, and give it its share
Of moisture, of warmth, and of light.
And light it not lack for thy painstaking care
To protect it from frost and from blight.

A glad day will come when its bloom shall unfold,
It will seem that an angel has smiled,
Reflecting a beauty and sweetness untold
In the sensitive soul of a child.

—Author Unknown

12 Rules for a Happy Married Life

1. Never both be angry at once.
2. Never yell at each other unless the house is on fire.
3. Yield to the wishes of the other as an exercise in self-discipline if you can't think of a better reason.
4. If you have a choice between making yourself or your mate look good—choose your mate.
5. If you must criticize, do so lovingly.
6. Never bring up a mistake of the past.
7. Neglect the whole world, rather than each other.
8. Never let the day end without saying at least one complimentary thing to your life's partner.
9. Never meet without an affectionate welcome.
10. Never go to bed mad.
11. When you've made a mistake, talk it out and ask forgiveness.
12. Remember, it takes two to

make an argument. The one who is wrong is the one who will be doing most of the talking.

—Author Unknown, provided by the Christian Counseling Center

The Little Boy & the Old Man

Said the little boy, "*Sometimes I drop my spoon.*" Said the little old man, "*I do that too.*"

The little boy whispered, "*I wet my pants.*" "*I do that too,*" laughed the little old man.

Said the little boy, "*I often cry.*" The old man nodded, "*So do I.*"

"*But worst of all,*" said the boy, "*it seems grown ups don't pay attention to me.*"

And he felt the warmth of a wrinkled old hand. "*I know what you mean,*" said the little old man."

—Shel Silverstein, via "*Worth Repeating*"

A Family for the Lord

As we allow our thoughts to go further into what is involved in rearing a family for the Lord, we must also consider the im-

portant concept of love. Love is the beautiful wrapping that encloses all other virtues in a family. Since God Himself is love, how could a family be designated as a family for the Lord without it? When God adds to our family children, one by one, He is issuing with each addition, a challenge to develop and promote love. Try to imagine that when a child is given to us, that such is like a new canvas on which a picture has never been painted. God hands us the paints and brushes and says, "paint for me a masterpiece of love." This is our greatest challenge because the more we paint love, the closer we keep them to God. Each stroke of the brush gives them the qualities they need to be successful in life—now and forever.

The power of love in our families cannot be overestimated. In the words of one writer: "*Love is the purification of the heart from self; it strengthens and ennobles the character, gives a higher motive and a nobler aim to every action of life, and makes both man and woman strong, noble and courageous; and the power to love truly and devotedly is the noblest gift with which a human being can be endowed.*" (Miss Jeusbury)

As we parents show love to our children in our own lives, we must also teach and enforce the characteristics of love. Love is not simply a beautiful word to be defined, but rather a way of life to be experienced. Instead of defining love, Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 13 what love will do.

What will be taught to our children when we teach them love?

LOVE WILL SHARE

Love will teach our children the meaning of sharing and the awfulness of selfishness. This is not easy since most children become very possessive of those things that belong to them. The words "my" and "mine" are big and important words in their vocabularies. However, love teaches the proper balance between the balance of self and sharing with others. Jesus our Lord is the greatest example to keep before our children to teach them to share with others: "*This is my commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends*" (John 15:12-13).

LOVE HAS GOOD MANNERS

One of the challenges faced by parents is to teach their children good manners, and the many positive characteristics of love will promote this. Love provides the proper environment for all other attributes of life to grow and bear fruit. If your children are taught not to envy, not to boast or be full of pride, and not to be rude, not self-seeking, and not easily angered, do you not believe that they will have good manners? Remember, these traits and others are present when love abounds.

LOVE IS UNSELFISH

Selfishness can be a great problem in the family unless love is present to turn things around. For some strange reason, children will often show less selfishness outside the family than in it, and this is where love must be

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taught. As we teach our children love, there will be times when we feel that love has failed, but it has not! You see, love is a positive virtue and it stays alive and strong even when buried among childish ways. Think about the following illustration:

A man once parked his car on a street. Up came a boy and looked it over. His eyes were wide with admiration of the beautiful car.

"Where did you get this car?" he asked, "My brother gave it to me," replied the man. "My, I wish. . . ." "The man knew the boy was wishing that he had a new car like that.

But the lad went on and finished the sentence surprisingly; "I wish I could be a brother like your brother was. I have a crippled brother who cannot get out. I would buy him a car like this." —*The Teacher*

Remember, sooner or later love (when taught as God would have it taught) will shine through, because love is unselfish.

Therefore, if you seek a family for the Lord, you must make your home an environment of love. "*Happy are the families where the government of the parents is the reign of affection and obedience of the children the submission of love.*" Would you seek to have a family for the Lord? "*A happy family is but an early heaven.*" (Bowring)

—**Benny Bristow, *The Christian Bible Teacher***