



# The Family Friend

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

Volume 9, Number 3

March, 2007

## Sibling Rivalry

Dad has a great love for healthy competition, in sports, business, or any other arena. Healthy competition focuses the goal and sharpens the senses, as he liked to say. Healthy competition builds character and instills the traits of respect, evaluation, honesty, and camaraderie. What a great vehicle for learning, this “healthy competition!”

It was a warm summer afternoon, just right for practicing baseball in the side lot my parents owned. But a light gray sky offered little in the way of contrast between sky and baseball! The lot was too small for actual batting/fielding practice, so Dad would hand throw “pop flies” high to give his boys practice judging the place we had to have our gloves as gravity and wind worked to undermine our best efforts.

Actually, I had gotten fairly good, but not quite as good as Bill, my older brother. Then it happened. Somewhere between my growing (over) confidence and that gray sky, that white horsehide monster slipped just over my glove and whacked the bottom of my Adam’s apple! Gag, spit, cough, gasp, but not words!

Dad did what he could but the best healer was time. The embarrassment was almost as bad as the dull ache in my throat.

Hmmm—competition can also bring pain at times . . . but not always physical pain. Little league lore is replete with stories of screaming dads, embarrassed moms, and frustrated coaches—**not** examples of healthy competition. The challenge is to help the kids learn teamwork and how to be a good winner as well as a gracious loser. But in all those details, **we must still learn the careful art of helping each of our children attain success in areas of their own ability.** If a child sees no area in which he or she can excel, the result is most often the jealousy we call “sibling rivalry.”

I speak not of healthy competition between siblings, but of a rivalry that turns to jealousy and threatens the very bond of brotherhood. Parents must address the subject of jealousy! Jealousy is a serious malady. Jealousy evolves into a disease that eats the spirit as cancer eats the body.

A shock to most Christians is the reality of Romans 13:13-14 which places jealous in a short but heinous sin list. What can parents actually do? I’m glad you asked.

The first thing to do is make sure you child has some area in which he or she can excel. Anything from homeruns, to touchdowns, to an “A” on the report card, to music, to cleaning up a room is a worthy target for praise. Once a child has found an area of expertise, he has an area in which he can “win.”

Equally important is to praise each child genuinely. Praise builds confidence. Praise creates desire to keep trying. Praise wards off unhealthy rivalry and jealousy. Allowing each child a full measure of confidence not only guards against jealousy but also builds spiritual endurance. Hebrews 10:35, 36 says, **“Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.”** (Confidence is a major building block of endurance!)

With the reassurance of love, teach each child, individually, the ugliness of jealousy. Most Christians are dumbfounded to realize the significance of Romans 13:13,14. Most of us remember, “. . . **make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts,**” from verse 14. But few remember that the last thing mentioned

in verse 13 is “**jealousy.**”

That’s a little scary! In this passage, God actually places jealousy parallel to some very distressing sins. Let’s read together:

**Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.**

Whew... pretty heavy stuff! Jealousy is like adultery! We must learn to control it! When you as a parent begin to live out that reality in your own struggles with jealousy, your kids will begin to learn by example as well as words. You will hear them building up and encouraging one another rather than dealing in the dreaded “sibling rivalry” that is so destructive to the development of Christ-like character.

Help them excel, praise them genuinely, reassure them lovingly and teach them individually. Help them discern the difference between ugly jealousy and healthy competition. Now, where did I put that baseball?

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## What You Need to Say to Your Children

Our entire community went into shock last week when the lives of five whole-

some, well-liked American girls were forever altered within the space of a few seconds. Five teenage girls got into one vehicle and started down the interstate highway intending to cheer for their school at a Friday night football game. Somewhere along the way, they lost control of the vehicle. The car flipped; and when it came to rest, three of the girls were dead; another was severely injured. The other young lady survived with only minor injuries.

We know what you may be thinking, but according to police reports, no drugs or alcohol were involved. Everyone who knew them speaks highly of their character. The girls were said to be fine Christian young ladies. How did they lose control of the car? No one really knows.

So why are we writing about a traffic accident in *All About Families*? The father of one of the girls said something that we can’t put out of our minds. He said, “Tell your children that you love them every day.” We think about our readers. Our readers include husbands, wives, parents, grandparents, children, and single people—people who have caring relationships with others, either through family ties or friendship. How long has it been since you let those who are closest to you know how much you care about them. Do you just take it for granted that they understand the depths of your feelings?

You need to tell them you love them, and you need to do it often.

By **Norman and Ann Bales**—*All About Families*

***The Family Friend***

Published Monthly by  
Calvert City church of Christ

## Growing Through Grief 10 Suggestions That Often Help

1. Talk about it.
2. Cry if you feel like it.
3. Challenge your negative, irrational thinking.
4. Read good books including the Bible, especially the Psalms.
5. Force yourself to get back into circulation. Work.
6. Allow others to help you.
7. Do something constructive in memory of your loved one (scholarship, library books, city park.)
8. Be of service to others.
9. Keep a journal. Process your thoughts and feelings.
10. Deepen your relationship to God—church, prayer, Bible readings, relationships.

—“Appendix A” from the book, **Restoring My Soul**, by Bill Flatt  
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