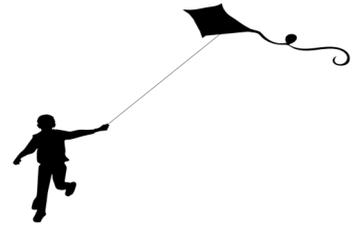


The Family Friend



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

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The Pain

Dr. Paul W. Brand was a noted leprosy expert who was especially famous for his surgical accomplishments with lepers in India. One night he became terrified when he noticed he had no feeling in his heel, a sign that he might have contracted leprosy. "He rose mechanically, found a pin, sat down again, and pricked the small area below his ankle. He felt no pain. He thrust the pin deeper until a speck of blood showed. Still, he felt nothing... All that night the great surgeon tried to imagine his new life as a leper, an outcast, his medical staff's confidence in their immunity shattered by his disaster, and the forced separation from his family. He waited until morning, then with steady fingers he bared the skin below his ankle, jabbed in the point—and yelled. From then on, whenever Dr. Brand cut his finger, turned an ankle, even when he suffered from agonizing nausea from mushroom poisoning, he was to respond with fervent gratitude" (Dorothy Clarke Wilson, *Ten Fingers for God*, pp. 142-145).

What an awesome perspective! While pain is certainly no fun, the alternative is to be paralyzed or to have something wrong with us. Feeling pain is normal. Feeling pain means we are alive. Feeling pain helps us to fix the problem.

The same is true for spiritual pain. When we sin, we are supposed to feel guilty and be appalled with ourselves. This is the reason God gave us a conscience. Guilt often produces change. Consider David's emotional words of guilt, "O LORD, rebuke me not in Your wrath, and chasten me not in Your burning anger... For my iniquities are gone over my head; As a heavy burden they weigh too much for me... I am benumbed and badly crushed; I groan because of the agitation of my heart... For I confess my iniquity; I am full of anxiety because of my sin... Do not forsake me, O LORD; O my God, do not be far from me! Make haste to help me, O Lord, my salvation! (Psalm 38:1, 4, 8, 18, 21-22).

Sin should produce guilt in us. The real problem is when people stop feeling guilty. In Jeremiah's day, the people reached a point of spiritual numbness where they "no longer knew how to

blush" (Jeremiah 6:15). They were no longer embarrassed or felt guilty by their sins. Amazingly, in Noah's day, the people reached the level where "...every intent of the thoughts of their heart was only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5).

The more we ignore our guilt and spiritual pain, the more numb we become to sin. What a sad day this is when it happens. Whether it is physical pain or spiritual pain, God gave it to us so we can know when something is wrong and fix it. Don't ignore the spiritual warning signs. If something hurts, take care of it.

—**Brett Petrillo**, BP's Fuel for Thought



Praying Together as a Family

Yesterday something happened that gave my wife and children cause to celebrate. We had a late day – two hours late to school due to bad weather. I decided to take advantage of the extra hours in the morning.

We went out to breakfast together. It was a prayer breakfast. We used the time we never have on a Monday in which we are usually in a rush to get ready. We talked. We ate a sit-down meal together. We discussed the week ahead. Then I asked them all to tell me something specifically they wanted to pray about. It was a great morning for our family. It was also a very humbling moment for me as a father.

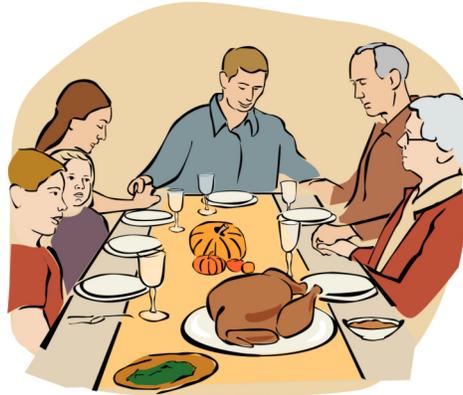
How often do you pray together as a family? I am not talking about a quick prayer before a meal or a brief nighttime prayer you may have with your spouse or your kids. I am talking about an organized gathering where you share your thoughts and anxieties and spend some quality time together with every member of the family present in unified supplication to Jehovah God.

We need to pray more together. The family at home needs to communicate and then pray. The local congregation that constitutes your spiritual family needs to communicate and then pray. But we don't! We are in too much of a hurry!

And just as we go too fast in praying before a meal at home, we often rush through every instance in prayer with the church. There seems to be a

time limit on the Lord's Supper. I mean, after all, we have got to get the preacher up there ASAP so we don't go over! If old man Jones leads the closing prayer and he gets long winded the people begin to fidget! And when is the last time you heard a prayer in the assembly that was more than five minutes long?

Slow down to pray. Whatever is going on can wait. Your work for the day will hang out and still be ready for you until you are done praying.



We need to repent about our prayer lives! We have robbed ourselves, our families, and our Father from prayer time by simply not making it a priority. We think we are doing a great job as parents because we are making every practice, getting all the homework done, and being on task for each and every responsibility. I would rather have a child who wasn't as good at basketball as the other kids, if my child knew how to pray. I would rather have a child that gets B's than a kid who gets A's if my child was one who walked and talked with God. I'd rather have the laundry backed up and the kitchen not as tidy as long as I had a spouse who was allowed the time to have a healthy prayer life with me and my children.

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It just hit me yesterday. In doing the right thing about prayer for once I realized I had been doing the wrong thing most of the time. Families MUST share quality spiritual time together and pray. This is true for the church and it's true for the home.

If you are an elder and you are reading this I ask that you consider making 2019 a year of prayer for your church family. If you are a parent I suggest you to the same thing for your home. You will not regret it. I left breakfast for once feeling like a pretty good husband and father. Not because I am good, but because my family had together just talked to the One who alone IS good, and that is God. We left everything at His feet. We trusted Him and His will and it gave us peace. We came together in love and care for one another in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And it was wonderful.

"Father, forgive me for not praying as I should. Forgive me for not leading my family in prayer as I should. Forgive me for all the times I didn't make time for a conversation with You. Because You are what I need the most. And You are who I love the most. I am looking forward to talking to You more. Thank You for always being there to listen and help me. In Jesus name, Amen."

Whatever you are doing, you have not done as much as you can do...until at first you have prayed. *"I desire then that in every place the men should pray"* –1 Timothy 2:8
-Jeremiah Tatum