



# The Family Friend

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

Volume 20, Number 9

September, 2018

## Parents in the Pews

It wasn't just sympathy, it was pure empathy. It was 4 AM as my wife, kids, a friend, and I had been standing in line to check our bags at the airport. For over an hour we had been standing in the Frontier line. This line could have dwarfed even the longest lines at Six Flags. The sheer magnitude of the line made everyone seriously worried about missing their flight. As we progressed, I had been watching a young couple. The wife was probably 8 months pregnant and they were holding a little girl around 2 years old. In addition to everything they had already endured that morning, the child chose that very moment to let the entire airport know that she had reached her limit. She began an epic wailing that just might have made some nearby seismographs quiver. The parents' consoling wasn't working. They couldn't leave the line since they were moments from the check-in desk. There was very little that this couple could do but hope the crying wouldn't break any nearby glass.

Without a doubt, it was a moment of horror for these parents. I had walked in their shoes, and they were sneakers I never wish to walk in again. I felt very helpless for them, so I just offered what small measure of encouragement I could: "Hang in there guys, you're doing a great job."



I've encountered countless moments like this with my own family. I've encountered them in the airport and at the grocery store. I've encountered them at my friends' homes. But perhaps more than any other, I've encountered them in the pew during worship.

It can be quite the challenge. We have felt embarrassed. We have wondered if judging eyes have fallen upon our family. We've wondered if disapproving eyes are critiquing our parenting. And more than anything else, we've had doubts if we're doing things right as a parent. And then one of the most encouraging things happens -- a sweet member will

come up and say, "Hang in there, you guys are doing a great job."

I know I'm not alone. Nearly every young parent wrestles with these very thoughts. So for all the parents out there, please hang in there. You're doing a great job! Children are a tremendous blessing from the Lord (Psalm 127:3-5), and you're bringing your children to worship the Lord. You're doing what you can to train up your children in the Lord (Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:4). So keep at it!

—Brett Petrillo

## Encouraging to Read What's On the Mind of Teens

In a recent question and answer session, it became apparent what's really on the hearts and minds of our teens. You could see the depth and conviction of the questions and concerns filling the hearts of our teens. They want to know more about how to share their faith, what to say and how to say it. They want to know how to be a bigger influence on the world around them. They want to know what the Bible says about a wide variety of matters.

It's hard for our teenagers to live in this world. They are facing challenges we never even imagined could be a reality. The world's worldview is drifting and dangerous, yet these courageous young people have a David-like heart of faith and are showing dauntless daring to do what's right. I have no idea what they'll ask or how they'll drive our conversation for the next couple of days, but I look forward to it based on what I've already seen. They are from all over the country, facing problems and pressures that in some cases are based on their region of the country and, thanks to mediums like social media, some things in common with every other teen in the room with them. As BJ remarked, the more things change the more they stay the same. In broad principle, there is nothing new under the sun. But, I'm encouraged to see how God's people of this generation are embracing the challenge with a desire to know what God has to say about it. We'd appreciate your prayers as we seek to encourage so many teens who have already encouraged us greatly!

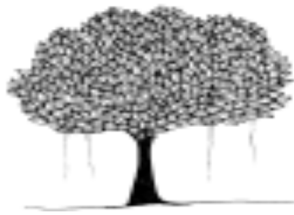
—Neal Pollard

## ***Grieving Like Jesus***

I heard a preacher once speak about a tombstone in California. "You cannot win" was engraved on it. Since the death of those we love is something with which we must all deal, grief is something we will also have to face. In Matthew 26:35-46, Jesus provides for us an example of how to deal with the burden of grief. Make no

mistake; grieving is a burden. Our English word "grief" comes from a Latin word that means "heavy." So what can we learn from Jesus to help us shoulder this load?

**INVOLVE OTHERS.** Verse 36 says Jesus brought His disciples with Him to share with Him this time of grief. He asked them to pray as He also prayed. Others want to help you. Don't shut them out. Friends, family, and church family want to help you.



**SHARE WITH FRIENDS.** Verse 37 says Jesus took the closest of His friends, Peter, James, and John, with Him. He then "began to be sorrowful and distressed." The word translated "sorrowful" literally means "grieved." He then shared with them His feelings (verse 38). Jesus unmasked his deep anguish. Too often we bottle up our feelings. We tell people "I am fine," when we are anything but okay. We must share our feelings.

**TIME with GOD** (vv. 39-44). Jesus did two things in His time with God. *First*, He asked for God's help (39, 42, 44). It is important to remember God cares! Jesus' humanity can be seen. He did not want to face Gethsemane any more than we want to face sickness, aging, loss, or sorrow. *Second*, He sought God's will (39, 42, 44). While God cares, He also knows best. We must remember that.

**SERVE OTHERS** (45-46). Setting aside His pain, our Lord gently warned his disciples to "watch and pray" knowing they would soon enter their own "gardens." Without the discipline and strength of prayer, their weak flesh could not stand it! Jesus used His grief to serve those who would grieve. We must do the same.

There is nothing wrong with grieving. There is no shame in it. However, we must use our grief to draw us closer to God. Plus, experiencing grief and dealing with it in a God-approved way helps us serve others who are grieving. Involving others in our grief helps us see the value of going and sharing others' pain. Sharing with others helps us to not worry about what to say. Those you serve will remember your presence long after your words are forgotten. Spending time with the Lord helps us remember we must let them grieve (Don't be guilty of saying, "They just need to get over it").

Grief is a burden. However, you do not have to bear it alone. Turn to your brethren. Turn to the Lord. If you are struggling and we can pray for you, please let us know. Remember, we love you, and God does too!

—Corey Sawyers

*All articles in this issue first appeared in **The Daily Bread**, an email ministry of the Bear Valley church of Christ, Denver, CO*