

A Richly Blessed Family

"Pity the Jones family. Poor things, they have to keep the preacher every time the church plans a meeting. And Christians are always stopping in at their place. And they are about the only people in the church that ever invite people in after services. I just wouldn't put up with it myself. .

Spare your pity! The Jones' are a richly blessed family. Oh, occasionally they entertain some ungrateful scoundrel, but the blessings of hospitality far outweigh the problems.

The Bible speaks of some wonderfully blessed people along these lines. For instance, we do not pity Mary and Martha for "having" to have Jesus in their home; we pity those who, not wanting Jesus, were deprived of this blessing. We do not pity Mary the mother of John Mark, in whose home "many were gathered together praying", we pity those homes where Christians never assemble for Bible study and prayer. We do not pity Philemon who was to prepare Paul a lodging; we would love to have Paul as a guest in our home. Christians need to learn the joy and blessings which come to those who are hospitable.

"We are hospitable," someone says, "we often have friends from church in our home for get-togethers and parties." That's fine! We encourage this! But Bible hospitality goes beyond having friends in for an evening which is at least partially for our own selfish enjoyment. "I was a stranger and you took Me in," Jesus will say in the judgment (Matthew 25:35). Gaius was commended for helping "brethren" and "strangers" who were traveling for the Lord's name sake, and was told by John, "If you send them forward on their journey in a manner worthy of God, you will do well" (3 John 5-7). Further, the Bible teaches that we become partakers in evil deeds of false teachers when we receive them into our houses (2 John 9-11). But does this not imply that we become partakers in the good deeds of faithful teachers when we show them hospitality?

A Christian will want to make friends with other Christians, and consequently will plan enjoyable evenings with close friends in his home. But the hospitable Christian will also use his home for conducting Bible classes, entertaining visiting preachers and other workers for the Lord, getting acquainted with newcomers in the church, comforting the bereaved and troubled, and for every good work.

Our homes are blessings from the Lord. We must not use them selfishly, but rather to His glory. The result will be an occasional scratch on a chair, or a stain on the carpet, or a chipped glass -- really a small price to pay, though, for the warmth that comes to the home from new friends, good influences, rich Bible discussions, participation in the Lord's work, and the satisfaction of knowing that one is pleasing God and preparing himself for eternity. No, it is not the Jones' whom we pity; it's those who do not know the joy of hospitality.

- by Bill Hall

Reasons To Discipline Our Children

A scanning of Solomon's Proverbs provides several reasons. . .

1. To show you don't hate them. *"He who spares the rod hates his son but he who loves him is careful to discipline him." (13:24)*
2. To give them hope: *"Discipline your son, for in that there is hope; do not be a willing party to his death." (19:18)*
3. To help them for a lifetime: *"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it." (22:6)*
4. To chase away foolishness: *"Folly is bound up in the heart of a child but the rod of discipline will drive it far from him." (22:15)*
5. To save his soul: *"Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you punish him with the rod he will not die. Punish him with the rod and save his soul from death." (23:13-14)*
6. For your own comfort: *"Discipline your son and he will give you peace; he will bring delight to your soul." (29:17)*

Parents need to read and understand these passages. So, too, should our children. We want them to see why for their own good, and for the good of their children as well.

- by Bob Hines

God and Man

Remember that God sees the whole picture. He sees all the past; He sees all the present; and He has the power to see all the future. He can see the end from the beginning, and He knows the destiny of every person and the solution to every problem. He loves us and is always available to us, but He will force neither Himself nor His will upon us. As long as we live, we are allowed to choose. He is concerned about our true welfare and happiness - here and hereafter. With Him on our side every thing will turn out well (Rom.8:28,31); but if He must be against us, nothing will turn out right.

- by Bill Crews

Unthankful, Unholy

His hair is long, his clothes wrinkled and dirty, his general appearance untidy. Though enrolled in college at great expense to his parents, he has neglected his studies and his grades are disgraceful. He has no job and few, if any, prospects for the future. Given every advantage as he was growing up, he has wasted each opportunity that came his way. His life is a "wreck", and everyone can see it except him. And what does he have to say about all of this?

"It really doesn't matter to me. People worry about those things too much. Money doesn't really matter to me. I think people are too materialistic anyway. I'm not interested in living like my father."

The ingratitude of this kid is sickening. Given a chance, we would probably stand in line to get a crack at him! He is ungrateful to the core. He surely doesn't appreciate what has been done for him.

There's another son to consider. His heavenly father loved him more than he will ever be able to comprehend. He blessed him with abundant gifts when he was totally undeserving. Spiritual riches were showered upon him. Yet, he disregarded all of that. He has neglected his duty to God, chosen to live in such a way as to disgrace his Father, tear down his brethren, and generally shame the name "Christian". Urgent pleas for him to change have gone unheeded. He tells us that he simply isn't interested - claims he doesn't care about such things any longer.

Are you surprised that God warns of a "sorer punishment" for this one who has "trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace" (Hebrews 10:29)?

Christian, live so that YOU are never described by the words "unthankful, unholy" (2 Timothy 3:2). Think!

- by Greg Gwin