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# THE HERALD

Newsletter of the Orrville Grace Brethren Church

## Know Your Child by Heart

By Israel Wayne

As a teenager, I sat on the back row at a Christian conference, listening to the keynote speaker discuss raising godly children. He talked about building character, the importance of family discipleship, and passing on a biblical worldview. I was nodding in agreement, until his teenage son elbowed me. "You know," he whispered, "if my parents knew what I really believed, I think they would be shocked." My head started to spin. How could his father, who was a nationally renowned parenting expert, seem so detached from his own son?

I'm sure he kept up with his son's grades and made sure that he was on par with his standardized achievement tests in school. The problem with those benchmarks, however, is that they reveal only what a child knows. It is vastly more important to know what a child believes, and, as I learned at that conference, this can

be difficult to uncover, even for very conscientious parents.

Every day children are developing a worldview. They are seeing life through many different lenses that color their perception of reality, lenses shaped by their experiences and the information they receive.

Many voices call out to children: not just parents but peers, media, books, magazines, video games, textbooks, music, teachers, social media, and more. As much as we may try to protect them from harmful external influences and promote positive ones, sheltering is not enough. We must teach them how to deal with the subtle thinking of this world that wars against our faith, always remembering that temptation lies on both sides of our hearts' door. Our own sinful natures, inherited from Adam, work against us, and our greatest need is personal salvation and sanctification.

Knowing your child involves far more than lecturing on what to believe. It mandates conversation and asking questions. It requires the Deuteronomy

chapter 6 method of discussing God's Word, day and night. Don't shut children down if they express doubts or question a conventional position on an issue. Draw them out. Demonstrate that it is safe to work through struggles and confusion with you.

Most important, make sure that your teaching and discipline are accompanied with lavish amounts of affirmation and love. Without truth embodied and lived out in proper relationship, young people will very likely reject the doctrine taught by their parents.

As a parent, I would like to ensure that my children make the right choices and believe the right things. As much as I desire, however, I can't make them love and obey Jesus. I can learn their struggles, though, and be prepared to assist and pray for them by maintaining open and loving relationships with them. My mandate from God is simply to be faithful.

Jesus was the perfect balance of love and truth. We seek to walk in His steps.

## Aging Godly and Gracefully

by Tim Munger

Many people don't like to think about aging. In fact, one television commercial said it like this: "I will fight [aging] every step of the way!" But the reality is that each

day we live, we age.

As David said in Psalm 37:25, "I have *been young* and *now am old*; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his descendants begging bread" (emphasis added).

The aging process begins the moment of conception. As sand in an hourglass drops one grain at a time, so our lives move one second at a time.

The Bible provides several examples of people from whom we can gain practical life lessons on aging gracefully. From godly figures in Genesis to the apostle Paul, God gives us examples of those who lived life to the fullest at all stages of life.

One of the most unique people in Genesis was Enoch, who walked with God before God suddenly took him to be with Him. The Bible simply says, "He [Enoch] was not, for God took him" (Gen. 5:24).

It was after the birth of Enoch's son Methuselah that he began to walk with God, which shows that as Enoch aged, he grew in godliness. The greatest legacy we can leave our family isn't financial or material, but spiritual. It is the legacy of faith.

King Solomon said, "The righteous man walks in his integrity; his children are blessed after him" (Prov. 20:7). Enoch's life should remind us to live with integrity, consistency, and dependability.

Abraham serves as another example of aging in a godly way. Called "the friend of God," he left an amazing legacy and died as "an old man and full of years, and was

gathered to his people” (Gen. 25:8).

Abraham, which means “father of many,” lived up to his name’s meaning by pursuing God’s will for his life. He indeed became the father of a multitude.

Abraham’s life teaches us the key to having a personal relationship with God: faith. We should likewise pursue a genuine, faith-filled relationship with God. That relationship must begin at salvation, when we place our faith in Jesus Christ. Then we can begin to live godly lives.

Moses’ life provides another life lesson for aging. His story teaches us we must have life goals. His goal was to lead the children of Israel.

Moses’ life of 120 years divides into three 40-year parts: his birth to his departure from Egypt (Ex. 2:15); his time in Midian, where he gets married, has two sons, and encounters God at a burning bush; and his journey leading the Israelites out of bondage in Egypt to the Promised Land.

Though Moses aged and faced many challenges throughout his life, he continued to serve the Lord. Too many look at retirement as an end and never plan to do anything afterward. Moses, for 120 years, kept pursuing goals and seeking the Lord. So should we if we are to age godly and gracefully.

As Caleb said, “Give me this mountain!” (Josh. 14:12), we too must continue climbing, striving, and pursuing our God-given dreams until the Lord takes

us home. Someone once said, “I am retreating, not retiring.” May we never tire from serving Christ.

I knew a man who still played handball in his 70s. He was energetic, fit, and enthusiastic. I loved talking with him and hearing how he would play and defeat men much younger than him. Why could he do this? Because he had passion and purpose.

Paul and John in the New Testament also possessed passion and purpose. The possession of those two qualities will determine the quality of our lives as we age.

Paul called himself, “Paul the aged.” John, exiled on Patmos, received the visions recorded in the Book of Revelation. Both lived with heart, zeal, and vigor.

Did they have their challenges? Of course. Paul wrote about some of his challenges in 2 Corinthians 11:23–29 and 2 Timothy 4:9–18. John suffered a sentence of death, and church tradition says he was burned in oil then exiled to Patmos after he survived.

We cannot change the physical and mental obstacles that enter our lives as we age. But we can change our attitudes. Like John and Paul, we must face our days with passion and purpose.

May we live each phase of our lives with the desire to grow in grace, faith, love, passion, and purpose. Then when we reach the end of our lives, we will be able to say like Paul, “For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Phil. 1:21).

# FUNNIES

There was a nice lady, a minister's widow, who was a little old fashioned. She was planning a week's vacation in California at Skylake Yosemite campground (Bass Lake, to the uninitiated), but she wanted to make sure of the accommodation first. Uppermost in her mind were bathroom facilities, but she couldn't bring herself to write "toilet" in a letter. After considerable deliberation, she settled on "bathroom commode," but when she wrote that down, it still sounded too forward, so, after the first page of her letter, she referred to the bathroom commode as "BC." "Does the cabin where I will be staying have its own 'BC'? If not, where is the 'BC' located?" is what she actually wrote.

The campground owner took the first page of the letter and the lady's check and gave it to his secretary. He put the remainder of the letter on the desk of the senior member of his staff without noticing that the staffer would have no way of knowing what "BC" meant. Then the owner went off to town to run some errands.

The staff member came in after lunch, found the letter, and was baffled by the euphemism, so he showed the letter around to several counselors, but they couldn't decipher it either. The staff member's wife, who knew that the lady was the widow of a famous Baptist preacher,

was sure that it must be a question about the local Baptist Church. "Of course," the first staffer exclaimed, "'BC' stands for 'Baptist Church.'" And he sat down and wrote:

Dear Madam,

I regret very much the delay in answering your letter, but I now take the pleasure in informing you that the BC is located nine miles north of the campground and is capable of seating 250 people at one time. I admit it is quite a distance away if you are in the habit of going regularly, but no doubt you will be pleased to know that a great number of people take their lunches along and make a day of it. They usually arrive early and stay late.

The last time my wife and I went was six years ago, and it was so crowded we had to stand up the whole time we were there. It may interest you to know that right now there is a supper planned to raise money to buy more seats. They are going to hold it in the basement of the 'BC.'

I would like to say that it pains me very much not to be able to go more regularly, but it is surely no lack of desire on my part. As we grow older, it seems to be more of an effort, particularly in cold weather.

If you decide to come down to our campground, perhaps I could go with you the first time, sit with you, and introduce you to all the folks. Remember, this is a friendly community."