# The Woman of Christ Faces Daily Living

Family Upheavals, Willful Child, Unfaithful Children, Troubles Between In-Laws

Ephesians 6:1; Luke 15:14-21; Ruth 2:11 & 12

Lesson #3

## Family Upheavals

Family feuds seem to be the most effective drawing card for daily talk shows. Fighting parents and kids scream at one another on televised hotspots as they squeeze their way between serious newscasts and game shows. Daughters shout at mothers who return the insults. Both are cleverly maneuvering the audience. Each calling for the viewers to take their side of the disagreement (Romans 14:19; Philippians 2:3, 4 & 14).

Who can be entertained by such furor? If, as has been said, our homes or training grounds for life, then surely there are many embattled homes producing troops for political unrest. Wars do not begin at the battle line (James 4:1)

Shamefully, many homes of people who have been baptized into Christ exhibit behavior like the quarreling talk shows where family members bite and devour one another, consuming one another (Galatians 5:15). In turn, Satan seeks those whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8). Frequently, the ancient deceiver is kept busy within the family circle. Do we wonder how wars begin? (Proverbs 6:19)

What can we do to improve our troubled relationships, recognizing that we may not see immediate improvement? Make overtures of kindness. This action may be a start for constructive dialogue. We may have to settle for no more at first. Remember that reconciliation doesn't always indicate resolution. After reconciling to a point where discussions can take place, perhaps resolution will follow (Proverb 26:20 & 21).

## Willful Child

Doctor James Dobson discusses the strong-willed child in *Temper Your Child's Tantrums* and *The Strong-Willed Child*. Doctor Dobson, who is noted for his books and lectures about marriage and family, often substantiates his positions with scriptures. While he has a lot that is worth reading, as with any reference book, please verify Doctor Dobson's positions on various subjects with the context of God's Word.

Have you ever noticed the way children decide pecking order? When children choose teams for ball games, the status of “captain” generally goes to the acknowledged leader. Kids know the ingredients that make a leader. They’re partial to leaders. They want them. Children quarrel

among themselves over who has the best leader, or parent. Doctor Dobson tells of a child who boasted to another, “My dad can beat up your dad.” Not to be bested, the other child responded, “Oh, yeah. Well, my mom can beat up my dad.”

Firm but loving parental leadership assures children of the safe boundaries they need for healthy development. Unfortunately, many parents and social agencies do not have a clear view on this subject (Ephesians 6:1-4; Colossians 3:20 & 21). When children are inclined toward obstinate behavior, parents must meet the challenge through wise leadership.

Christians are obliged to fulfill every area of leadership responsibility to their children. That obligation is not limited to providing the so-called basics of life -- food, clothing, shelter and education-- but especially by teaching God’s Word to our children during their everyday routines (Deuteronomy 11:18-20).

When will we Christians get our priorities straight? The Scriptures teach basics as doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with our God.” (Micah 6:8). Parents who provide scriptural basic training and loving discipline know the necessities of life will be provided (Proverbs 6:20-23; Proverbs 13:24; Matthew 6:33).

## Unfaithful Children

Many parents have known heartaches because of unfaithful lives of adult children. The father of the prodigal son vividly portrays one who waits for the adult child to come to his senses. That son had no appreciation for good things while he wasted his possessions with prodigal living. The decision to change his life had to come from within himself. He had to learn his own lesson. Luke 15:14-21 clearly describes the young man's behavior, thought process, decision and action. No one prodded him. It was a very personal decision.

How should we Christians respond to the problem of unfaithful children? Read Luke 15 often. Learn from the prodigal’s wise father. The memory of his dad's Godly character was an outstanding component in the young man's decision to return home. Learn from the older man's patience. No doubt Dad looked down that road many times before the answer to his prayers materialized.

## Misunderstandings Between In-Laws

Misunderstandings between and among in-laws is not the joke so many have tried to make it (Matthew 19:5). This command, however, does not instruct us to behave badly toward our parents or parents-in-law. Many men and women have dismantled their own homes and potential happiness by savagely attacking the mother and/or father of their mates.

Ruth 2:11 & 12 tells of a young woman's goodness to her mother-in-law. We often overlook a great source of love and friendship: our in-laws. Jethro gave his son-in-law Moses wise advice (Exodus 18).

Let's follow the injunction of Philippians 2:12-15 which teaches us to live so excellently that people in the world will have no reason to find fault in us. We are Christ's ambassadors on earth. Whatever others think of you and me, might be what they think of Christ. What does the world see coming from our homes?

## Some added thoughts

The "Mother Mary" line in the song "Let It Be" was inspired by a 1968 dream that Paul McCartney had of his late mother, Mary Patricia McCartney. It was during a stressful time with The Beatles that Paul dreamed his mother came to him. Before arousing from his sleep, he heard her comforting words, "It's gonna be OK. Just let it be."

Nostalgia is the sandpaper that removes the rough edges from the good old days" is a quote from writer Doug Larson and means that looking back softens past hardships. So it is, with the expression, "It wasn't funny when it happened, but now I can laugh over it." Take time to laugh at the memory of some of the annoying, long-ago remarks of in-laws.

When some unkind deed, remark, tale of gossip or hurtful look annoys you, tell yourself, "Let it be." Keep those three little words ready for use: "Let it be," and let God's peace and happiness abide in your life (Philippians 4:7).

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