

***HAPPY HEALTHY HOME***



**DEDICATION**

***As author of this book, I wish to express my deep appreciation to Shirley J. Ruiz, who dedicated her great skills, abounding energy, and many hours of her time in typing the entire manuscript as well as adding illustrations in this book. I feel certain that her committed hands will bring great blessings to many persons. Also, I thank Damon Heinrich for his tireless and conscientious labors as the "Copy Editor" of this book.***

**Ron G. Christian**



# ***HAPPY HEALTHY HOME***

**1.**

***What makes a woman great? There are certain traits that 'set a woman apart' as truly great,-traits which are descriptions of true godliness in her attitudes and in her relationships and in her priorities!***



**2.**

***A great woman puts God first in her life! "A great woman, whether she is very young and single, or whether she is older and daughter of elderly parents, respects her parents and brings honor to her parents!"***



**3.**

***A great woman offers her willing submission. After she unites at the marriage altar with the godly husband, she must learn the importance of willing submission, to her husband's authority and leadership!***



4.

***A great woman raises Godly children and organizes a Godly household. Physical nourishment, social communication, intellectual enlightenment, spiritual instruction – to accomplish these high goals will engage the prime time of the wife and mother in her household! Can there be a higher calling than the calling to be God’s tool for the careful happening of the life of her children-physically, socially, intellectually, and spiritually?***



5

***A great woman cultivates a quiet and reverent spirit! “Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands, that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives, while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plating the hair, and wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel. But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands. (1 Peter 3: 1-5)***



**6.**

***A great woman cultivates the spirit of hospitality! Wrote Peter, "Cheerfully share your home with those who need a meal or a place to stay for the night." 1 Peter 4:9; Living Bible***



**7.**

***A great woman cultivates a simple lifestyle! Preparing simple nutritious meals, enjoying wholesome and inexpensive pleasures, buying attractive but reasonably-priced clothes, driving an economical car, living in a modest house – these are a few ways a man and his wife can demonstrate their commitment to a "simple lifestyle."***



**8.**

***A great woman is lovingly involved in her local church! A great woman provides a godly example for younger women to follow!***

***Paul wrote to Titus (a pastor), "Teach the older women to be quiet and respectful in everything they do. These older women must train the younger women to live quietly, to love their husbands and their children, and to be sensible and clean-minded, spending their time in their own homes; being kind and obedient to their husbands; so that the Christian faith can't be spoken against by those who know them". (Titus 2:3-4; Living Bible)***

***A great woman fearlessly and humbly uses her God-given gifts and talents to serve her church and her world!***



**9.**

**TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!**

***"O God, as a woman created in God's image, it is both my privilege and my duty to give supreme reverence and worship to you. Your Son, Jesus, said that if anyone plans to be his follower, they must love him more than they love anyone else! I want to be a dedicated, love-filled follower of Jesus! I want to be guileless, not deceptive. I want to be diligent in all good works, not lazy and self-indulgent. I want to be ordered and disciplined, not sloppy and slothful! I want to be purpose-driven in carrying out God's assignments to me, not dull of understanding and unperceptive in knowing God's special call to me! I want to use my hands and my feet in 'going about my Father's business' of winning the lost, of lifting up the fallen, of visiting the imprisoned, of feeding the hungry, of clothing the naked, of giving a listening ear to the distressed! I want to be your servant, dear Lord!"***

***The great (Biblical-type) woman "... is a woman of strength and dignity. When she speaks, her words are wise, and kindness is the rule for everything she says." (Proverbs 31:25-26)***



**10.**

***What is a 'Biblical profile' of a great man? "And fathers do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of Lord." (Ephesians 6:4)***

***He can disciple his children lovingly - never too leniently - molding the child's will to every proper authority, but never breaking the child's spirit to despair with life.***



**11.**

***He can provide a consistent example to his children in godly living! He can spend quality time with his children!***



12.

***He can be authentic and transparent before his children! He can love his children's mother - his wife - tenderly and openly - thus demonstrating the strength of marital love, and giving security to his children!***



13.

***He can teach His children to work and to be responsible persons - learning the value of money without becoming greedy or materialistic in the use of money!***



14.

***He can teach his children to respect the moral laws of God and remind his children that this universe is a 'moral universe' with definite 'rights' to be affirmed and definite 'wrongs' to be avoided.***

***Make a clear distinction between moral absolutes which are vital for children and youth to accept early, and personal convictions (the moral***

***'gray areas') which are negotiable and secondary and subject to change and personal interpretation!***



**15.**

***A good father will seek to lead his children to make love their top priority. A good father will use every 'teachable moment' he can find to talk about the Lord!***



**16.**

***He can allow his children to experience and to express their uniqueness and their own creativity!***



**17.**

***He Can Love His Children Unconditionally, even if they fail to follow the Christ that he, as father, serves. But the father's unconditional love, be it a love that is hurt ever so deeply, is a love nevertheless that waits and watches and prays and hopes.***

***When the once-rebellious son 'comes to his senses' and reveals his true repentance by returning home to plead with his father to make him a 'hired servant', the forgiving father runs to meet the returning prodigal.***

***The father who loves unconditionally forgives quickly and reconciles totally. He restores dignity to the prodigal and he restores him to the status of full Sonship!***



18.

**TIME FOR A PERSONALIZED PRAYER!**

***“Loving Heavenly Father, I admit that I am a fallible, sometimes even sinful, man who feels unfit to be a husband and a father! However, I want to be an honest person, a person with pure motives and right intentions.***

***I want, for my entire lifetime, to be faithful to my marriage vows, and I want to be a good father – a father who loves his children and who regularly provides for their ‘necessities’!***

***I want to give my dear wife the attention, affection, and security that she needs. I want my sons to treat their wives (in the distant future) the way I treat their mother. By exhortation and more by my example (modeling), I want to teach my sons what it means to be a strong family leader of my wife and children, without becoming domineering and authoritarian!***

***Fill me with the ‘fruits of the Spirit’ (Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, and much more), so that I might faintly, but authentically, show my children what a true Christian really is! As someone said, it is important (in the discipline of children) to be ‘Firm, Fair, and Fun!’***

***A good guideline for discipline, but Heavenly Father, I need so much from you – especially divine-like wisdom – if I am to succeed in this all-important task of fatherhood. All-perfect Father, I constantly look to You! Amen”!***



19.

TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

***The Heavenly Father loves to help human fathers, who sometimes feel so 'weak' and 'needy'.***

***Affirm the following Prayer: "Lord, if their guide I still must be, Oh! let these my children see their father leaning hard on Thee!"  
(Author Unknown)***



20.

***The parents who open their minds and hearts and spirits to receive God's Wisdom (God's truth about life's values and the right attitudes toward their fellow human beings) – these parents are parents, indeed. For it is wise (God-honoring) parents who 'naturally' will direct their children into the pathways of godly living – the pathway of God-given Wisdom. The Bible places a very high premium upon the value of gaining God's knowledge and understanding and discernment and wisdom!***

***"Every young man who listens to me (the Living God) and obeys my instructions will be given wisdom and good sense. Yes, if you want better insight and discernment, and are searching for them as you would for lost money or hidden treasure, then wisdom will be given you and knowledge of God himself; you will soon learn the importance of reverence for the Lord and of trusting Him! (Proverbs 2: 1-5; Living Bible)***

***“For the Lord grants wisdom! His every word is a treasure of knowledge and understanding.” (Proverbs 2:6)***

***“The man who knows right from wrong and has good judgment and common sense is happier than the man who is immensely rich! For such wisdom is far more valuable than pearls. Nothing else compares with it. Wisdom gives: A long, good life, riches, honor, pleasure, peace. Wisdom is a tree of life to those who eat her fruit; happy is the man who keeps on eating it.” (Proverbs 3:13-18: Living Bible)***

***“Getting wisdom is the most important thing you can do! And with your wisdom, develop common sense and good judgment. If you exalt wisdom, she will exalt you. Hold her fast and she will lead you to great honor. (Proverbs 4: 7-9: Living Bible)***

***“If you are wise, live a life of steady goodness so that only good deeds will pour forth. And if you don’t brag about them, then you will be truly wise! And don’t brag about being wise and good if you are bitter and jealous and selfish; that is the worst sort of lie. For jealousy and selfishness are not God’s kind of wisdom. Such things are earthly, unspiritual, inspired by the devil. For wherever there is jealousy or selfish ambition, there will be disorder and every other kind of evil. But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure and full of quiet gentleness. Then it is peace-loving and courteous. It allows discussion and is willing to yield to others; it is full of mercy and good deeds. It is wholehearted and straightforward and sincere.***

***“And those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of goodness.” (James 3: 13-18; Living Bible)***



21.

***Wise is the Christian parent, who (by both precept and personal example) teaches his children the Biblically-based meaning of stewardship of money. Children need never to 'despise' money, but neither should they 'fall into the easy trap' of 'worshipping' money (and become 'pursuers' of things and more things)! How foolish for youth (or, for that matter, adults) to think that the possession of 'things' (all kinds of material 'things') can bring satisfaction or happiness in life.***

***We live in a 'material' world and, therefore, believers are to own and to enjoy some of the things of the world, but a simple lifestyle is most honorable, satisficing and God-glorifying! Joy is experienced when one is the 'channel' of blessing to needy persons. God is a generous God, and His followers are, like Him very generous in their giving to the poor and dispossessed and needy persons. "It is definitely more blessed to give than it is to receive." Generous giving is not 'legalistic' giving (giving a 10% to the Church, and then feeling that one has no further responsibility to give beyond the tithe). The generous giver gives to others, after he has 'met his initial duty' to his Church, and to his own family (which two responsibilities have priority).***

***If the money which you call 'yours' is not yours, but instead 'God's property', then how should you use the money that is in your possession? The Bible says that the man who does not provide for his family is 'worse than the heathen!' (I Timothy 5:8)'.***

***Obviously, money is to be used to supply the common necessities of life – food, clothing, shelter, and health needs. And, oftentimes, God will permit you to have and to enjoy even a few luxuries. However, you must always watch your 'desires', for your desire for 'things' can easily 'get out of hand'. It is easy to abuse God's gift of money, with the result of robbing both family and god. John Wesley declared emphatically***

***that whoever has sufficient food to eat and raiment to put on, with a place where to lay his head, should be content.***

***Hebrews 13:5 says, "Stay away from the love of money; be satisfied with what you have, for God has said, 'I will never, never fail you nor forsake you.'" (Living Bible)***

***The Apostle Paul wrote (about himself): "I have learned to be content, whatever the circumstance may be. I know now how to live when things are difficult and I know how to live when things are prosperous. In general, and in particular I have learned the secret of facing either plenty or poverty." (Philippians 4: 11-12, Phillips)***

***The generous family –the family that practices generous giving to needy persons – is generally the most happy and healthy family!***



**22.**

***Of Jesus, it is written, "The little child grew up and became strong in spirit." (Luke 1:80; Phillips) "And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him." (Luke 2: 40; NIV)***

***(A child is not really growing stronger unless he is growing stronger in his spirit! He may be able to flex his muscles, but unless he is strong in his spirit, he is weak altogether!)***

***To be strong in spirit, a child must experience the forgiveness of sins. A child soon learns that he is selfish by nature and that he is a sinner by***

***choice. A child needs early in life to learn that he is born with a sinful nature and in need of a Savior!***

***Found in John's epistle are these important words, "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake." (I John 2:12)***

***Make sure your child has been saved. (Religious education without religious conversion can only lead your child into self-deception or religious cynicism!)***



**23.**

***To be strong in spirit, a child must experience the Heavenly Father's love. John continues, "I write unto you, little children, because you have known the father." (I John 2:13)***

***The child who sees God as a loving Father – personal and caring and yet disciplining when necessary – is the child who is making great strides in his spiritual development. A child's concept of God is largely formed around the pattern of his concept of his human father! To see God as one whom he loving serves and with whom he joyously shares is to see a realistic picture of God.***

***Said Jesus to His own parents when they found Him in the temple. "Do you not know that I must be about my Father's business?" (The child who is concerned to do His Heavenly Father's business is the child who is well on his way to spiritual maturity!)***



**24.**

***Jesus lived in proper submission to God and to man. As a child, Jesus was obedient to his parents: "Then he returned to Nazareth with them." (Luke 2:51: Living Bible)***

***Paul wrote, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right. Honor thy father and mother: which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth." (Ephesians 6: 1-3)***

***To learn obedience, submission, and respect is the first duty of all children, and is the most important lesson of childhood.) Why? For life itself, in all its social relationships, is based on the law of mutual submission. "Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ." (Ephesians 5:21)***

***This is the guiding principle for all meaningful relationships. "Never act from motives -of rivalry or personal vanity, but in humility think more of each other than you do of yourselves. None of you should think only of his own affairs, but consider other people's interest also." (Philippians 2: 3, 4; Phillips)***

***There is no maturity unless there is maturity in love. There is no social maturity until submission is practiced and love is expressed in human relationships.)***



25.

***By example and by precept, parents should teach their children to honor their body. This means parents should not smoke, or drink, or abuse their body through the harmful use of drugs.***

***It is difficult for parents to ask their children not to smoke, or drink, or use drugs, if, at the same time, the parents are engaging in one or more of these habits in the presence of their children. One of the leading factors that influence children to smoke is the example of their parents smoking!***

***Children who smoke, drink or use drugs cannot expect physically to develop properly.***



26.

***Children need proper exercise if their bodies are to develop physically. There may be dangers however, connected with something that seems as good as sports. One danger is idolization of sports heroes. Some children 'eat', 'sleep', and 'talk' sports almost continuously! Some children are amazingly knowledgeable of all the great sports heroes of today and of yesterday.***

***Some children visualize themselves as professional athletes – as great sports heroes – and they will sacrifice almost anything in their pursuit to be 'successful' as a sport hero.***

***The competitiveness in school sports is unbelievable. Some youngsters feel that they cannot be successful in life unless they are successful in sports and athletics.***



**27.**

***To some children and their parents, sports and athletics are more important than academic achievement or spiritual development. Some children sacrifice good grades in school simply to be competent in athletics. As parents, make sure that you always put spiritual development and Christian training above participation in athletics.***

***Help your children not to allow athletics to become their God! If your child should make a choice between being in sports and being in the Church's youth club, put your child's spiritual development above his physical development. Sports are a 'supplement to' spiritual training, never a 'substitute for' spiritual training!***

***If you allow your child to participate in sports, while he should be participating in his weekly Church youth clubs, you, as a parent, are communicating to your child that group athletics are more important than group Bible study!***



28.

***To be strong in spirit, a child or youth must be knowledgeable of God's Word. Says John in his epistle, "I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the Word of God abideth in you." (I John 2:14)***

***Knowledge of and obedience to God's commandments is essential if a child is to have a meaningful life! The Word of God hid in the child's life, will keep the child from sinning against God: "I have thought much about your words and stored them in my heart so that they would hold me back from sin". (Psalms 119: 11)***

***Mediating on God's Word, day and night, will cause the child to grow like a tree that is planted by streams of cool water. "They are like trees along a riverbank bearing luscious fruit each season without fail. Their leaves shall never wither, and all they do shall prosper". (Psalms 1:3)***

***Every parent must teach his children to love the Lord their God. God's instructions to Jewish parents is good instruction for modern parents. Deuteronomy 6: 1-9: "The Lord your God told me to give you all these commandments which you are to obey in the land you will soon be entering, where you will live. The purpose of these laws is to cause you, your sons, and your grandsons to reverence the Lord your God by obeying all his instructions if you live; if you do, you will have long, prosperous years ahead of you. Therefore, O Israel, listen closely to each command and be careful to obey it, so that all will go well with you, and so that you will have many children. If you obey these commands, you will become a great nation in a glorious land 'flowing with milk and honey,' even as the God of your fathers promised you. "O Israel, listen: Jehovah is our God, Jehovah alone. You must love him with all your heart, soul, and might. And you must think constantly about these commandments I am giving you today. You must teach them to your children and talk about them when you are at home or out for a***

***walk; at bedtime and the first thing in the morning. Tie them on your finger, wear them on your forehead, and write them on the doorposts of your house!"***

***It is a sad thing when children – especially children in Christian homes – are more knowledgeable of science than they are of the Bible, are more knowledgeable of Hollywood than they are of Holiness, are more knowledgeable of the heroes of baseball than they are of the heroes of faith! Biblical illiteracy is great even though opportunities for biblical knowledge are greater now than ever before! (Every child must grow in the knowledge of God's Word if he is to grow in his spirit!)***



**29.**

***Even Jesus, sinless though He was, "learned obedience by the things which He suffered." Suffering can benefit a child! A child needs to experience the suffering of punishment if he is to learn obedience to his parents and respect for authority. There is also the suffering of disappointment which can produce steadfastness and persistence in a child.***

***There is the suffering of peer pressure which can produce moral strength and integrity in the life of the child who refuses to conform to the world's standard.***

***Paul warns the Christian against allowing the world to squeeze him into its mold.***

***Social conformity to the world's standards brings God's disfavor. Whoever makes himself a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. But whoever makes himself a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. But whoever makes himself a friend of God, makes himself a true friend to needy people. It is impossible to grow in favor with God (spiritual growth) without growing in favor with men (social growth). He who is in love with God is also in love with men. He who loves the Father also loves the Father's children.***

***He who loves others will find that he himself is loved! He who lives in self-forgetful ways will find that he is not forgotten by men! He who is willing to die that others may live, will discover that he is forever lovingly enshrined in the minds and hearts of men! (Think of Martin Luther King, Jr., who laid down his life for the cause of Christ, for the cause of racial equality. He is forever enshrined in our hearts!)***



**30.**

***“The Lord Your God told me to give you all these commandments which you are to obey in the land you will soon be entering, where you will live. The purpose of these laws is to cause you, your sons, and your grandsons to reverence the Lord your God by obeying all his instruction, if you do, you will have long, prosperous years ahead of you.***

***“Therefore, O Israel, listen closely to each command and be careful to obey it, so that all will go well with you, and so that you will have many children. If you obey these commands you will become a great nation in a glorious land ‘flowing with milk and honey’, even as the God, of your fathers, promised you.***

***“O Israel, listen: Jehovah is our God, Jehovah alone. You must love him with all your heart, soul, and might. And you must think constantly about these commandments I am giving you today. You must teach them to your children and talk about them when you are at home or out for a walk; at bedtime and the first thing in the morning. Tie them on your finger, wear them on your forehead, and write them on the doorposts of our house! (Deuteronomy 6: 1-9)***



**31.**

***Social growth is growth in love, growth in service, growth in respect. Is there any greater lesson that a child can learn than the lesson of respect? (The Ten Commandments can be summarized in one word - Respect!)***

***Respect for God's sole existence which demands total surrender!***

***Respect for God's nature which demands spiritual worship!***

***Respect for God's name which demands reverent treatment!***

***Respect for God's special day which demands restful and creative observance!***

***Respect for father and mother who deserve obedient submission!***

***Respect for life! Respect for human property! Respect for fidelity in marriage!***

***Respect for human reputation!***

***Respect, respect, respect!***

***Respect for the identity of others with no coveting of what belongs to others.***

***Respect for authority! Show me a child who has not learned respect for authority, and I will show you a child who is crippled, if not paralyzed, in his social development! The child learns first to respect the authority of his parents. Then from his first lesson in respect, respect for school authority, respect for civil authority, respect for governmental authority and respect for religious authority! But, like a series of falling dominoes, the child who has defied the authority of his parents will soon learn to defy all other authorities – finally even learning to defy the highest of all authorities, the authority of God Himself!***

***The first duty of children is to learn to respect authority. This is the key to proper social development! The child's spirit must not be destroyed by harsh treatment, but the child's will must be molded by loving discipline. The self-willed child is both unhappy and potentially dangerous to society! The disciplined child is happy and productive and socially strong!***



**32.**

***To be strong in spirit, a child or youth must learn to cope with temptation. John believes that it is possible for young people to be victorious over temptation!***

***“I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.” (I John 2: 14) Jesus said, “Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation. The Spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Paul***

***said, "Flee youthful lusts!" Avoid certain 'traps' of Temptation! Put on all the 'armour' for spiritual victory (Ephesians 6).***

***Hide God's word in your heart, that you might have power to resist temptation, following the example of Jesus in the wilderness. (Matthew 4) Make friends of 'God's People', whose good influence will help keep you on the 'right path'! Commit your heart to God's Spirit, and ask for special protection. Avoid Lustful Pictures and Books!***



**33.**

***Godly parents (caring parents) teach their children that God's great blessing rests on them, if they learn to reverence (revere and worship) the true and living God. They must know (as God's Word States) that "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom."***

***God promises great blessings to those who submit their lives (in sincere respect and reverence of God): The Lord's promise is amazing (and every child should be encouraged greatly because of this promise):***

***"Because He loves me, I will rescue him, I will make Him great because He trusts in my name. When he calls on me I will answer, I will be with him in trouble, and rescue him and honor him. I will satisfy him with a full life and give him my salvation." (Psalms 91: 14-16; Living Bible)***



**34.**

***Children (Youth) must learn to love the Word of God! Reading the Bible (in both Testaments) to one's children will likely produce 'hunger and thirst' for Biblical truth within the 'heart' of our children. Establishing a short (daily) 'Family Time' – for Bible Reading and short prayers – is one of the 'Key activities' in the life of a happy family! The family that prays together and shares together will likely "stay together beneath God's sheltering wing"!***

***The most important knowledge is Biblical Knowledge. Without this knowledge, there is no reliable superstructure nor foundation for life; that is, without Biblical knowledge, none of the other knowledge has true or lasting significance. I Corinthians 13 (the Love Chapter) states that all knowledge will pass away except the love of God in our lives.***

***"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth."***



**35.**

***Parents need to teach their children that the 'wrath' of God is as much a manifestation of God's 'Holy Love', as the 'mercy' of God is a manifestation of God's 'Holy Love'! Just as there are certain***

***virtues that God loves (in the lives of human beings) - like kindness and gentleness and generosity- there are also certain vices (sins) that God hates!***

***In fact, among the many sins that are so destructible, there are seven specific sins which God especially 'HATES'. (1) Haughtiness; (2) Lying; (3) Murdering; (4) Plotting evil; (5) Eagerness to do wrong; (6) A false witness, (7) Sowing discord among brothers."***  
***(Proverbs 6: 16-19, Living Bible)***



**36.**

***At age 12, Jesus was 'lost; in the Holy Temple from his parents, (although, of course Jesus was intentionally at the Temple for a holy purpose). When He was found by his parents, the Bible says that "Jesus returned home with his parents and during his 'growing up years, he was obedient to them." (Luke 2: 51)***

***If the Son of God (who was fully human, as well as divine, in nature) was obedient to His own parents, as a child and as a teen, how much more should youth today be obedient to their parents (especially Christian children and youth)?***

***"Children (and youth), obey your parents in the Lord." (Ephesians 6) Of course, no Christian youth is commanded by God to obey words or commands of evil from the lips of a godless parent. No child (or youth) should ever enter into an agreement with a godless parent, to lie or cheat or deceive or commit acts of 'lustful passion.'***



**37.**

***Godly Parents can (and must) give their children comfort by reminding them that the God they sincerely serve, has promised to guide them throughout their long life. That comfort is so strengthening! God's promise, of course, is 'couched' in God's 'conditions'. To the person (young person) who submits to the discipline and correction and chastening of a loving Lord, God guarantees divine comfort and leadership and communion and strength and enlightenment (and so much more)!***

***God will wonderfully guide you throughout your life! "You (God) are my hiding place from every storm of life, you even keep me from getting into trouble! You surround me with songs of victory. I will instruct you (says the Lord) and guide you along the best pathway for your life, I will advise you and watch your progress." (Psalms 32:7-8; Living Bible)***

***Submit to God's correction for your life, for God greatly loves you. "God's correction is always right and for our best good, that we may share his holiness: Being punished isn't enjoyable while it is happening; it hurts! But afterwards we can see the result, a quiet growth in grace and character." (Hebrews 12:10b-11; Living Bible)***



**38.**

***Every parent who is a “Christ-follower” (that is, a parent who sincerely seeks to please and to glorify the Living Savior) – should strongly encourage his children to, likewise, follow the Savior (to obey the will of the Savior). Children should be encouraged to discover and to develop their God-given talents, and to surrender those talents into the ‘hands’ of God, to be used throughout their lives to serve and to bless many persons.***

***God is not primarily concerned with your ‘Ability’, but with your ‘Availability’! Not so much concerned regarding your great talents, but having a great concern in your willing spirit of love and obedience! Are you ‘available’ for God to use you (with your few or with your many talents)! Do you deeply desire for God to use you (i.e., to use all that you are, now and potentially), to help ‘build the kingdom of God’? “Little is much, if God is in it!”***

***With both a spirit of humility and with a spirit of God-given confidence, never underestimate what God can do through you to bless more and more persons in your ever-expanding world of needy persons! The power of God is limitless, and God is ready to use you in your ever-expanding world of needy persons! The power of God is limitless, and God is ready to use willing hearts and minds to bless His people, far and wide! Be a special God-used person!***

***Remember, God has a ‘place’ (mission) for everyone! God’s strength is manifest in our human weakness, so no one who feels ‘helpless’ and ‘unworthy’ has any excuse to ‘stay on the sidelines’!***



***The wise parent teaches the receptive child that, within the child's own abilities, the child would not be able to accomplish anything of lasting significance, but that the child who dedicates his life to Christ – such a child has great capacity for lasting accomplishments.***

***Everyone has a 'call' from the Lord God Almighty – the Creator of Life! The Creator has gifted every person, without exception. Some have considerable 'limitations' (in terms of gifting and intellect and abilities), but our loving God includes all in His 'Master Plan' for human life! 'Little is much when God is in it.' Some of the most-used servants of God (in terms of spiritual fruitfulness) have been those persons who felt they had little to contribute to God's Kingdom.***

***With a wholehearted dedication to God and to God's specific 'call' in their lives, these 'modest souls' (some of whom had only 'one talent') 'moved mountains for God!' Their willingness (with very little gifting) combined with God's mighty power, resulted in the salvation of many souls, and in the edification of many believers!***

***Never underestimate what God can do with a person who is totally 'sold out' to do God's will! Gideon (in the Old Testament) felt totally inadequate to fulfill God's call in his life (to fight against the mighty pagan forces), but Gideon obeyed God's high call (despite his terrible fear and feelings of inferiority).***

***A supernatural victory for Israel; was the result! Lay your all on the altar of consecration', and see what God will do through your life of love and obedience! Your life will have a tremendous 'impact' in the lives of your peers (and possibly many more persons). Make your one life count for Christ. Remember, you have only one life, and it will soon be gone, and only what is done for Christ will last for eternity!***



**40.**

***When a child grows up, seeing his parents often praying (before children go to school, at bedtime, before eating, at the 'Family altar', and during time of special family needs, etc.) – that child will realize that all of life's events (routine and crisis times) are times when God's guidance is sought and found by the parents.***

***Such fortunate children learn (by precept and by example of their parents) that humans are created by God, and for God, and that success in life is totally dependent upon the 'grace' (strength) that God alone can give.***

***Praying parents are likely to produce praying children – children who picture God as a God of kindness and caring and provisions and power (power that gives "answers to specific prayers"). When parents consult God (in reverence) for guidance for all of life's challenges, children (as they grow up and when they finally become adults) will likely "turn regularly and naturally" to the "God of their parents"!***

***Children (who have often seen their parents praying) will very likely have a very positive view of God! As children become teens, and especially as teens (from Christian homes) finally become adults, they are likely to say something like the following:***

***"God is a God of infinite power and of abundant goodness. He is lavish in His gifts of love! He wants to bless your life beyond measure! Behind every prayer, there stands God who is 'Almighty'. One whose arm is not shortened that it cannot help; One whose ears are not stopped that He cannot hear; and One whose heart is not hardened that He cannot feel. He is a God who is ready to hear and to answer Your Prayer!"***



**41.**

***Parents will acknowledge gladly, that God often answers prayer quickly and specifically. But He does not always answer in a quick 'fashion' and not always the specific prayer that is requested. Children (in those lessons on the importance of prayer) must honestly be told by their parents that life is filled with inequities, mysteries, and injustices and that many times it is these facts (the result of human sins) which 'complicate' the 'dynamics' (inner workings) of prayers.***

***If a believer prays 'in Jesus 'name' (according to the character of Jesus), prays in faith, prays persistently, prays unselfishly with right motives, and, finally, prays according to God's loving will – then God will quickly, or even immediately answer the prayer request! They may not see the 'visible' reality (outward revealing) of the prayer request for several days (or weeks or even years)!***

***An honest parent must acknowledge (to his receptive child) that he (the parent) does not understand all the 'dynamics' of prayer. Yes, the parent wants God to answer specific requests! However, the parent shares other (important) benefits regarding prayer with his children. He says something like this to them:***

***"I admit that I don't fully understand the 'dynamics' ('inner workings') of prayer, but I do believe that prayer is a joyous time of loving communion with God; that prayer is a time when I receive 'Special Strength' to meet life's challenges; and that prayer is a time of praise for God's great self! I believe that prayer is a time to thank God for countless blessings; that prayer is a time for 'soul purging' through confessions; and that prayer is a time to receive divine guidance! Wonderful privilege!***



**42.**

***Both by precept (Bible teaching) and by parental example, parents must communicate to their children the importance of living a Christ-centered life, rather than a self-centered life. Pride (self-reliance) is the 'Hub' of all Sins! All sins find their source in selfishness and pride!***

***All humans are born with the 'seeds' of selfishness, and when this corrupt human nature has a chance to express (manifest) itself, the result is a behavior that is sinful (rebellious and selfish and self-centered and truly, very unpleasant for all who are the 'objects' of the sinner's selfishness)! Humans are sinners by 'nature' (corrupt heart and disposition) and sinners by 'action' (behavioral outbreaks that reveal rejection of God and hurt toward others).***



**43.**

***Parents, must teach children that the world's philosophy – the philosophy of 'humanism' is dishonoring to God, a philosophy that places 'MAN' at the 'helm of life', rather than God at the 'helm of life'. Humanism, in direct opposition to Christianity, centers on 'Man' as the all-important entity in the world. But Christianity teaches that man is***

***created by God, and is created for God (for God's glory and for service to humanity). Pride is at the 'heart of humanism'; humanity is at the 'heart of Christianity!' 'Glory to man in the highest' replaces 'Glory to God in the highest'. In numerous places throughout Scripture, God is said to 'hate' pride, and God is said to honor humble persons! "God resists the proud, but He gives grace and honor to the humble person!" The humble person seeks 'First the Kingdom of God and His righteousness!***

***Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these other things (of legitimate earthly concerns) will be added unto you so says the 'Master of Life' - Jesus! Those who do not think more highly of themselves than they ought to think - it is these 'servants of God' who have a realistic view of a life, and it is these servants who are prepared to be used of God' to touch and to heal the lost and dying souls all around them! Jesus said, "Ye can do nothing by yourself", and certainly it is correct to acknowledge (in humility) that, without Christ's indwelling presence, a person finally amounts to nothing 'in the end of life!' Unless the branch is attached to the Vine, there is no life and no fruitfulness in life!***

***Finally, it is 'Christ or Nothing!' Because 'self-centeredness' (pride) is the hub (heart) of all sin, the 'goal' of every person should be to 'get rid of the 'heart of sin' (selfish pride which leads to sinful and proud actions). How can such a difficult 'job' (mission) be accomplished? Only through the power of Christ, in cooperation with the willing surrender of man! Only as a sinner confesses all his sins in true repentance and godly sorrow, can he experience the transforming grace (power) of God's forgiveness and reconciliation! This initial act (of confession) involves 'a broken and a contrite spirit' (humility). "There is a way that seems right unto a man (i.e., the 'natural' way of pride and self-sufficiency seems 'right'), but the end thereof are the ways of death (destruction)." The way of the Cross of Christ is the only way to heaven - and that means that a sinner must 'die' to his own pride and self-will and stubbornness!***

***“What does the Lord require of thee – but to do ‘justice’, to love ‘mercy’, and to walk ‘humbly’ before thy God!” Every parent must clearly communicate to his child (teen) that these God-given expectations are not optional; these virtues are demanded! But, also, parents must communicate that what God commands (godly character), God also provides (the Holy Spirit who ‘...sheds abroad the love of God in the human heart’. Romans 5:5)***



**44.**

***Parents must not ‘take it for granted’ that their children (teens) understand both the ‘frightening’ and the ‘fantastic’ potential of human ‘Free Will’! While it is true that ‘fallen created’ beings do not ‘on their own’ (by their own strength and discipline and human effort) have the ability to ‘come to Christ’ for salvation – since it is God’s grace that draws a sinner to Christ, and that makes all human beings ‘saveable! I say, again, that, while it is true that no one can ‘come to Jesus’ to be ‘saved’ on his own, it is also true to say that every sinner must exercise his own volition (free will – choice) before he can come to Jesus for salvation. Christian parents need to communicate to their (well-trained) children that each person is personally responsible to decide whether he will accept or reject God’s call to repentance and faith. No Christian parent can make a ‘salvation decision’ for his child. (“God has no grandchildren, only children”).***

***Perhaps the ‘Biggest Word’ in the English Language is the word IF! This is a ‘conditional word’, a word that reveals the fact that human beings have a ‘free will’. God often says (in the Bible) that if a person does or***

***says 'certain things', regarding eternal truths, God in response to the human response, will do certain things for humans.***

***God does not 'force' His holy will upon any person, but, instead, God gives an offer of eternal life or earthly abundant life, and then God 'waits' for a positive or a negative response from the human to whom God made the offer. To accept the gracious offer of life means that the human receives 'abundant gifts'! To foolishly reject God's offer of life means that the human remains in his 'sinful condition', which has the potential of leading him to eternal death and punishment!***

*Humans are the only 'creatures' who are 'made in God's image', with the frightening, and yet the wonderful capacity to make 'moral choices' which result in either life-giving or in death-delivering consequences. It is life or death, misery or joy, dreadful **degeneration or delightful growth, either selfish preoccupation or self-giving love!** "If we confess our sins, He (God) is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness!" (I John 1:9)*

***This is one of the greatest promises in God's Word – but everyone's life, 'hangs in the balance' in this promise! IF! IF! IF! IF we confess our sins – then there is forgiveness! Yes, I think that IF is probably the 'Biggest Word' in the English language!***



45.

***When humans are young (children and teens), humans (and especially children and teens) do not wish to talk about (or even think about) the fact that every person is a biological entity – an organism (like all other animals) which will someday die! Young persons, who plan to live for***

***several decades of time, have a 'hard time' imagining themselves lying in a 'sick bed' with only days to live!***

***Death (and the dying process) should not be a subject that Christian parents 'dwell upon' in the training of the young children. However, Biblically-oriented teaching must deal with this 'common denominator' of life, for (in their 'heart of hearts') young people have so many (honest) questions regarding the 'final termination' of life, as well as many questions regarding the 'hereafter' (heaven). Because all persons will die ("the old must die, and the young may die"), some quality time (if not quantity time) needs to be given to these subjects (death and heaven). He who is ready to die, is he who is ready to live an abundant life for Christ, and He who lives for Christ will live eternally in heaven with Christ - wise words often to be communicated with every young person! Don't neglect talking about 'Death', but spend most time talking about 'Heaven'! Says God, "Be thou faithful unto (until) death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life."***

***"Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man, what God has prepared for those who love the Lord." Heaven is indescribably beautiful - a place where there is no sin or sickness or suffering or death, a place of joy without competition or strife or envies, a place of glorious worship of the 'King of kings' forever. A place where each heavenly citizen has a fulfilling and significant responsibility, which results in blessing everyone around them.***

***Shortly before Jesus returned to heaven, He gave this promise: "Let not your heart be troubled. You are trusting God, now trust in me. There are many homes up there where my Father lives and I am going to prepare them for your coming. When everything is ready, then I will come and get you, so that you can always be with me where I am. If this weren't so, I would tell you plainly." (John 14:13), Living Bible)***

***We mere human believers (who are in the process daily of physical dying) have a glorious hope of outliving this earthly life. Indeed, as just stated by Jesus, believers look forward to receiving a 'grand new body' (patterned, no doubt, after the resurrected body of Jesus)! For an amazing description of that future 'new body', read what Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 4:16-5:10.***



**46.**

***The Spirit-filled, love-driven parent will seek to live a positive-type life before his children. Such a parent will endeavor (imperfectly) to always speak positively and charitably about other persons – even about persons who are in opposition to the lifestyle of the godly parent. If the godly parent cannot say something positive about another person, he will choose to say nothing at all! Jesus commanded His followers to 'return good for evil; to pray for those who despitefully threaten them' (His followers). A godly parent will strongly encourage his children to speak charitably, to think positively, to forgive quickly, to act compassionately! To pray every day for a 'pure' (guileless) heart, and for 'clean hands' (honest transactions always, at work, school, or play).***

***By precept (teaching) and by example (conduct), the godly parent will strongly influence his children to practice 'Christ like' behavior! What he teaches them are 'lessons for a lifetime' – as follows: Guard your thoughts. Bring them into 'subjection' to Jesus Christ! You cannot help the actual thought that comes into your mind, but you must surrender every 'bad thought' (a temptation from the evil one) to the Holy Spirit, to allow the Spirit to 'check' the thought and to purge your mind of any 'evil thought' (given to you by the evil one, or by some evil person).***

***Ask daily (and even hourly) to have your mind 'purged' of any evil thought. Pray for a pure heart, a clear conscience – the greatest gifts known unto humans (gifts from God to the surrendered person)! Ask daily (and even hourly) to have your mind 'purged' of any evil thought, and to have your heart (affections) cleansed by the 'blood of Jesus'! A clean mind, a pure heart, a clear conscience – the greatest gifts known unto humans!***

*"As a man thinks, so is he!" Be sure to cultivate Christ-honoring, loving thoughts! Guard Your Affections, For They Guide Your Life! "If any man lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who liberally bestows wisdom to the single-minded and sincere person of faith." (James 1) Lean not unto your own understanding, but put trust in God's guidance and total wisdom. He will never lead you astray.*



**47.**

***Every young person should often concentrate upon the person and the work (purpose) of the mighty Holy Spirit (the third person of the Holy Trinity). To dwell upon the beautiful work of the Holy Spirit, is to become aware of the wonderful wide range of the Spirit's ministry in human affairs. Some of those powerful 'works' can be outlined (using a series of words that all begin with the letter "C": (1.) Conviction of sin; (2) Convince of Christ's righteous character and Saviorhood; (3) Convert Sinners to become followers of Christ; (4) Cleanse hearts of believers to become wholehearted in devotion to faithful service; (5) Challenge believers to become courageous in their battle-ridden lives; (6) Comfort sorrowing believers in their losses.***

***Becoming a Spirit-filled (love-driven) Christian should be the 'life goal' of every young (Christian) person!! Parents can direct them (lead them)***

***to this 'high and holy goal'. No Christian is 'perfect', but a spirit-filled Christian is best equipped to live a victorious life!***

***When Christ, through the Spirit, lives within a person, there is a drastic change in his attitudes, his emotions, his spirit, and his choices! There is a marked contrast between a person of God and a person of this world, between a spiritually-minded person and a carnally-minded person, between a self-centered person and a Christ-centered person.***

***A spiritually-minded person has reverent mind instead of a profane mind, a loving nature instead of a revengeful nature pure motives instead of ulterior motives, guileless intentions instead of deceptive intentions, honest 'dealings' instead of 'shady' dealings, charitable words instead of vile words, generous actions instead of stingy actions, prayerful practices instead of careless practices, single-minded direction and goals instead of double-minded and unpredictable involvements.***

***Christian Parents Must Teach Their Children That They Are (sometimes) called to 'stand alone' for righteousness! There is a chorus that speaks about the importance of a believer taking his stand for rightness, when facing non-Christian (worldly-minded) persons. "Dare to be a 'Daniel', Dare to stand alone; Dare to have a purpose true, Dare to make it known." Teaching Christian young persons to 'stand alone' is a task to which every caring parent must give diligence. It is not easy for any Christian to "go against the current of popular thought and worldly practices", - but this is especially difficult for young Christian youth who know that snares and ridicule may be aimed at them because they are 'marching to another drum beat' (that of Christ's standards)! Learning to 'stand alone' (courageously and courteously) against the 'evil crowd' of unbelievers is never easy, but it is always and right. Not to 'be different' to gain attention, but, rather, determination to be different (when it is necessary) for the sake of one's uncompromising witness for righteousness and for the sake of Christ's reputation!***

***Christians are called to live a 'holy life' – a life of distinct 'separation' from worldly thought and sinful 'pleasures of the flesh'.***

***Christians are 'Christ-followers', persons who are committed to a life of 'holiness', that is, separation from 'worldliness' (outwardly), and cleansing of the heart (inwardly).***

***Wrote the Apostle John: "Stop loving this evil world and all that it offers you, for when you love these things you show that you do not really love God, for all these worldly things, these evil desires – the craze for sex, the ambition to buy everything that appeals to you, and the pride that comes from wealth and importance – these are not from God. They are from this evil world itself. And this world is fading away, and these evil, forbidden things will go with it, but whoever keeps doing the will of God will live forever.' (I John 2:15-18; Living Bible)***



**48.**

***Lying is all too prevalent in our society. A child, from the earliest time of his 'moral training' must be taught that the practice of lying is most hurtful, that this practice, unabated, will lead to a disastrous end! The Bible (in the Book of Revelation) declares that unrepentant (practicing) 'liars' will be "cast into the Lake of Fire"! The practice of lying is serious, and it has no place in the life of Christian youth (even though many non-Christian youth indulge often in deceit and lying and 'half-truths!'). Among the 7 things that God especially hates are "lying, false witness"! (Proverbs 6:16-19)***

***There are numerous Biblical references that indicate God's attitude towards all lying, and the sad consequences that come as result of***

***lying. It is profitable (for Christians and non-Christians alike) to 'visit' a few of those Biblical statements regarding 'lying'.***

***Give serious considerations to a few of these following references:***

***"A truthful witness never lies; a false witness always lies."  
(Proverbs 14:5);***

***"Punish false witnesses. Track down liars." (Proverbs 19:9, Living Bible);***

***"God delights in those who keep their promises, and abhors those who don't." (Proverbs 12:17, Living Bible);***

***"Deceit fills hearts that are plotting for evil, Joy fills hearts that are planning for good!" (Proverbs 12:20, Living Bible);***

***"A good man is known by his truthfulness, a false man by deceit and lies." (Proverbs 12:17, Living Bible);***

***Telling lies about someone is as harmful as hitting him with an axe, or wounding him with a sword, or shooting him with a sharp arrow." (Proverbs 15:18, Living Bible)***

***Perhaps it 'goes without saying', but the obvious truths sometimes need to be repeated, over and over. Herein is stated the 'obvious truth', namely, "Deceitful actions have as their 'foundation' the sacrifice of truth (the facts). There can be no activity of 'deceit' without the activity of lies!" So, lies and deceit are 'inseparable sisters in evil'!***



**49.**

***Someone said, "Any dead fish can float downstream, but it takes a live fish to swim upstream" (against the 'current' of popular thought and practice). It took a lot of courage and perseverance (staying power) for Noah (amid ridicule and persecution) to build the ancient (huge) Ark! But, in the end, the world perished in the worldwide flood, and Noah***

***(and his immediate family) was saved by God! It takes a lot of courage and stamina for a Christian young person to stand up (sometimes alone) against the world which practices the 'worship of the body' (including the worship of sexual exploitation and sexual 'freedom' and total sexual 'looseness', with no restraints whatever, and no respect for the personhood of fellow humans - and their physical being).***

***Those young people who are seeking to follow Christ must be clearly taught the difference between sexual 'lust' (strictly forbidden by God), and sexual 'attraction' (wholesome and God given sexual instinct). Without 'sexual attraction' no one (obviously) would ever get married, and (in marriage) there would be no reproduction! One (lust) is evil, and one (attraction) is good!***

***However, without proper 'restraints' (discipline by the believing young person, and 'checks' by Holy Spirit), the wholesome attraction can become the 'lustful look', leading to the unacceptable (sinful) sexual act! "Flee youth lusts", exhorted Paul! The Scriptures exhort all persons (including youth) to pursue a totally pure lifestyle (including a God-honoring life that is free from all lusts). The body belongs to God; He owns it! Therefore, all believers (including youth) are to preserve the 'sex act' for marriage only! "Watch out that no one becomes involved in sexual sin." (Hebrews 12:16, Living Bible)***

***Sexual sin is never right! Our bodies were not made for that, but for the Lord, and the Lord wants to fill our bodies with himself. And God is going to raise our bodies from the dead by his power just as he raised up the Lord Jesus Christ.***

***That is why I say to run from sex sin. No other sin effects the body as this one does. When you sin this sin, it is against your own body. Haven't you yet learned that your body is the home of the Holy Spirit God gave you, and that he lives within you? Your own body does not belong to you. For God, has bought you with a great price. So, use every***

***part of your body to give glory back to God, because he owns it. I  
Corinthian 6:14, 18-20, Living Bible.***



**50.**

*Children and Teens need to learn early that all persons are regularly faced with having to make 'decisions' – many of which are moral decisions, decisions that have far-reaching affects upon the decision-maker, and upon persons who are in some way 'connected' with the decision-maker! When young people make 'right decisions', they will get 'positive results'. When young people make 'wrong decisions' they will get 'negative consequences'! There is an 'objective moral standard' (God-given and absolute)! The moral laws are as 'exacting' (uncompromising) as the physical law of gravity! People think they can break the 'Moral Law' (if there even is such a 'thing'), but the law cannot be broken; people who defy God's established Moral Law, simply get (themselves) broken because of their defiance of it!*

*"Whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap!" (The Biblical Law) If a young man 'sows' kindness towards others, he will surely 'reap' (immediately or eventually) kindness towards himself from his peers (and certainly from mature adults). If a young man chooses to 'sow the seeds of evil actions' (promiscuity, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, etc.), that young man will 'reap'; a harvest of hurt (ill health, disease, regret, shame, possible unwanted pregnancies, guilt, etc.).*

*Man (including all youth) can make (must make) the 'initial' choice (morally-speaking), but he/she cannot choose the 'results' (from a positive choice), or the 'consequences' (from a **negative choice**). **A young man can choose (morally-speaking) to regularly 'smoke cigarettes', but he cannot choose the 'consequences' of his choice (bad health and probably***

*premature death). A young man can choose to indulge his sexual passions, but he cannot determine the eventual consequences – sense of guilt and shame, lack of permanent relationship in marriage to a woman, the hurt he causes by treating women as ‘objects’ to be used rather than as persons to cherish and to serve, possible personal suffering from sexually-communicated disease.*

*“Young man, it’s wonderful to be young! Enjoy every minute of it! Do all you want to; take in everything, but realize that you must account to God for everything you do, so banish grief and pain, but remember that youth, with a whole life before it, can make serious mistakes”. (Ecclesiastes 11:9-10, Life Application Bible)*



**51.**

*It is not a popular teaching, but it is a Biblical teaching: Human beings (all persons) belong to a ‘fallen race’! Since our first parents disobeyed God’s clear command (in the Garden of Eden), all their descendants are born with a nature that is prone to disobedience and rebellion! With this sin nature ‘on board’ in the heart (inner desires) of a person, it is not long until this person, with the ‘inherited sin nature’ (the nature of selfishness), it is not long until this sin-prone person demonstrates in action (behavior) the tragedy of the sinful lifestyle (breaking God’s Ten Commandments)! Look at small children!*

*Faithful (godly) parents must explain the two-fold aspects (conditions) of sin: (1) Sin as an inner inherited nature (of selfishness); (2) Sin as a transgression of God’s known laws! Sin as a nature; sin as an action (behavior)! Through His prophet (Jeremiah), the ‘nature’ of sin is described (with vividness)! “The heart is the most deceitful thing there*

***is, and desperately wicked. No one can really know how bad it is! Only the Lord knows! He searches all hearts and examines deepest motives so he can give to each person his right reward, according to his deeds – how he has lived. (Jeremiah 17:9-10, Living Bible)***

***In an age (period of time) when the practice of lying, deceit, scheming, plotting, spinning 'reactions' for selfish advantage – in this age, among the 'youth culture' that denies 'absolute truth' and 'fixed, eternal standards', - Christian youth will need to come out into the open among their peers and boldly proclaim the simple (straight forward) Truth of the Gospel (the Truth of Christ)! It is too easy to succumb to peer pressure, and to compromise the truth of the Bible, simply to gain group acceptance! The Bible says that the believers are not to accept and adopt worldly ways. Love not the world, not the things in the world ("The Craze for sex"), "...the ambition to buy everything that appeals to you", and the "pride that comes from wealth and importance". (I John 2:15, Living Bible) Worldly desires – Sensualism, Materialism, Secularism! Worship of Sex, Worship of Material Things, Worship of Personnel Power (Humanism)!***

***What can parents 'share' with their children (teens), as these precious prodigies face the reality of their own (inherited) 'sin nature' a 'nature' that often has strongly influenced (driven) them to actual 'acts of transmission'? After young people, have repudiated the (worldly) popular 'doctrine of humanism' (namely that all humans are 'inherently' good and only need 'good education' in order to realize their 'inherent greatness), I say after youth have repudiated this 'false philosophy' they are prepared to learn what God has planned for dealing with the 'sin nature' and with 'sinful actions'!***

***Christ's death provides forgiveness for all transgressions, and cleansing for all inward pollution of the human heart. Over and over the Bible speaks about the two-fold solution, for the two-fold (human) problem! Every young person (who is 'born in sin' and who has willfully***

*transgressed against God's known Laws) needs to be strongly encouraged to repent of his sins, and to seek cleaning from his inward (inherited) sin nature! God's grace is provided for both forgiveness (for acts of sin) and for deliverance (from the self-centered inner pollution). Victory in Jesus! These 'basic truths' are important for all young people to know! Will parents tell them about the "all-sufficient grace" of God?*



**52.**

*As teenagers (including especially Christian teenagers) come to the 'stage' in their mental development when they begin to question the 'unseen' world, and the many 'inequities' and 'mysteries' and 'injustices' with which that invisible world confronts them, these sincere teenagers begin to ask many serious questions! Questions like "What is the meaning of life?" Or "Why did I come into this world, and how significant is my little life within the mass of humanity?" "Why are there so many wars, and why can't everyone 'get along' with one another?" "If God is all-powerful and all-loving why can't He (or why won't He) eliminate all human suffering?" "If man is created with 'free will', why does man so often make the 'wrong' choices in life?" "Is there a 'fixed objective moral standard' by which to determine 'right from wrong', or does everyone simply determine what is 'right' for himself, according to his own preference and opinion?"*

*These, and many other 'questions' plague (disturb) the minds and considerations of many young persons (even Christian young people. These questions cause restlessness or even 'doubts' in the minds of young persons, many of whom are trying to establish a 'solid foundation' for a successful Christian life.*

***Christian Parents, whose teens are at the 'point' of asking 'penetrating' questions, might be unsettled by hard-to-answer questions from their teens. Christian Parents often are, themselves, thrown into a 'quandary', wondering how to answer many 'thought-provoking' questions of their teens. Instead of 'pretending' that they can answer many (or all) of these 'piercing' questions (philosophically-oriented questions), Christian parents must readily admit (humbly) that they, alongside their teens, will need to spend quality time (and prayer) in searching (through the Scriptures and with the aid of Christian writers) the 'answers' to some of these 'teen-proposed' questions. Following is 'good' advice for both teens and their parents.***

*Keep your mind alive and inquisitive. Honest doubts are compatible with an honest commitment to Christ, and in fact, the degree of commitment to Christ is often reflected in the degree of serious thinking one does in finding a satisfying answer to the difficult questions of life. One will not find all the answers to life's questions, but not to find the answers is no sin. However, never to ask the questions is a sin against one's God-given intelligence and is evidence of spiritual as well as intellectual sloth!*

*You may doubt any of your beliefs but one. Never doubt the trustworthiness and goodness of God's character as revealed in the death and resurrection of Jesus. God never has failed and never will fail! Never doubt this! Whatever comes and however much the circumstances of life defy the processes of reasoning, never doubt that God is love! Hold to that premise and all doubts will lead eventually to assurance!*



***A Christian father and mother must be keenly aware that their children (teens) eventually will be feeling the challenges of many false philosophies and ideologies in the wider world, all of which will (in one way or another- 'compete' for the loyalty (worship) of their children! As much as Christian parents try to 'shield' their children from those insidious (evil) 'worldviews', eventually teens (and young adults) must confront these 'demon-like' philosophies (ideologies)! Parents, 'ahead of time' should prepare (as best they can) their teens against these 'onslaughts' of worldly battles! Of course, few (if any) Christian parents will be equipped to teach their teens (in detail or with theological expertise) all the 'features' of the various false teachings (systems of worldly thoughts), but, nevertheless, parents can, at least, make their teens aware of the identity of some of the anti-Christian (godless) attacks!***

***There is Materialism. Teens must know that God loves His physical world, that God wants everyone to enjoy some (legitimate) 'things' in the world. But 'materialism' is worship of things (money). Materialism is a 'dead-end road' -because of the inheritability of laboriously-gained riches, because riches cause sleepless anxiety, because riches can be easily lost, because money cannot be taken with you when you die, and because material possessions do not have the ability to satisfy the inner longing of the soul.***

***There is Sensualism (Worship of pleasure and sex). Such pleasure-obsessed persons engage in endless attempts to gratify their lusts, only to find themselves forever frustrated! There is pleasure in sin only for a short time. Ecclesiastics 12:1 says, "Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come and the year's approach when you will say, 'I find no pleasure in them'."***

***There is Secularism (Seeking 'Power and Popularity' without Reference to God). Power and Fame (Popularity) is elusive and short-lived. Jesus advocated (and he personally 'practiced') humility and servanthood***

*(the opposite of pride, arrogance, boasting, self-enhancing and self-promotion). "He who would be the leader of all, must be the servant 'of all!" "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interest, but also to the interests of others." (Philippians 2: 3-4)*

*There is Humanistic (Worldly) Education). Seeking to be 'smart' (educated, with degrees behind your name) is, of course, a 'worthy pursuit' - if God is the center of all your learning. In finding human knowledge, a believer must remember that "all Truth is God's Truth", that more information, without understanding in the proper application of information is 'useless at best' and 'dangerous at worst'. The Bible exhorts all to get knowledge, but with the getting of the world's knowledge to use that knowledge with the choice gift of wisdom and understanding.*

*The humanist believes that he is the central of all knowledge, that (if there is a 'God' somewhere) there is no need to depend on any 'other-worldly' source for knowledge of the Universe! Humanistic philosophy permeates secular Universities, and many professors (and lay persons) (worship' at the shrine of the 'Scientific Method'. (Scientism is worship of science). Christian young people should respect science, but they never must worship service! Jesus (author of all truth) is Lord of knowledge (including scientific knowledge).*



**54.**

*There are three 'Natural Stages' in human development, namely, (1) Dependence (childhood), (2) Independent (teen years), (3) Interdependent*

*(mature adulthood). It appears (with strong evidence) that God made humans in such a way that for the first several years of a person's life, there is almost total dependence upon parents for all the 'basic needs' of physical life (food, clothing, shelter), and most of the (emotional needs (security and protection). When a person leaves childhood he increasingly depends more and more upon his own physical resources (teens often make their own money) and upon their own decisions. Teens often desire 'freedom' from their parent's instructions, but they frequently fail to accept the responsibilities that properly come with their newfound freedom. They take time (with many mistakes) to learn what 'responsible freedom' is 'all about'! If an independent-minded teenager (eventually) gains a more realistic 'perspective' of himself and of the wider world in which he is 'forced' to live, he will finally acknowledge that he is not able to live a productive life without the 'help' (response) of other human beings. It is then that (slowly, perhaps) he leaves the stage of independence (depending on his own resources primarily) and enters the more mature stage of interdependence (the 'give and take' of adults living peacefully together in society).*

*These are the 'Stages' of so-called 'normal human development'. All humans are somewhere in the 'stages' of so-called 'normal human development', but there is a 'basic human problem' inherent in each of these three stages. Humans (at every 'stage') are strongly inclined towards 'self-centeredness'. All humans are born with an orientation towards focusing on selfish interests (putting one's 'self' at the 'center' of one's interests - in thought, in affections, in actions). All things are evaluated by the benefit that one receives for himself. This self-centeredness in children manifests itself in rather obvious (and sometimes ugly) ways, and many times teenagers (when they are 'naturally' wanting to be independent from parental control), manifest their self-centeredness by becoming rebellious (wanting to cast aside all authority of home, school, police, society). This self-centeredness finds expression in the life of a so-called adult in more sophisticated*

*(more subtle, more hidden, more deceptive) ways. But adults (whose corrupt hearts have not been dealt with – cleansed – by the Spirit of God), these adults who are well-trained to ‘use others’ for their own selfish advantages, often are (on the surface) well-adjusted and socially-acceptable persons. They are self-centered persons who are adept at advancing their own ‘selfish agenda’, but who are (most of the times) trained to ‘hide’ their actual dishonest and self-advancing agendas and plans. Some of these ‘selfish persons’ are even religious in some of their practices – but their heart has never been changed!*

*Parents must acknowledge to their teenage children that self-centeredness must be dealt with by the mighty Holy Spirit! Teens must be encouraged to make a full surrender of themselves to God, a surrender to God’s cleansing and creative love. Surrender to the Lordship of Christ leads one (the teenage) to a right relationship with God, with one’s self (with the teenager), and with others. Loving God supremely, the teenager finds that he has a new love for himself, and a sincere (wholesome) love for others (no competition with others, but a genuine complementation with mutual respect as the result)!*

*When a parent teaches his child (teen) the importance of dealing with his self-centered nature (with which the child is born), - dealing with it in the Biblically-defined way – the parent has shared a most important truth – the way to self-acceptance and the way to loving others through God’s empowering presence!*



**55.**

*It is important for Christian Parents to teach their children the nature (meaning) of temptation! What is from Satan’s viewpoint a*

***'temptation' intended to make a human 'fall into sin', is from God's viewpoint (purpose) a 'test' (an opportunity for a believer to demonstrate his loyalty to God and a chance for a believer to become a stronger follower of Christ). A chance (opportunity) to choose honesty rather than dishonesty, kindness rather than cruelty, purity rather than impurity, generosity rather than stinginess, transparency rather than deception etc.!***

***Someone wisely noted that temptation is not the 'penalty' for being a person, but that temptation is the 'glory' for being a person! Each temptation, successfully met, enables one, to demonstrate victory through his 'moral challenge', to ascend to higher (more mature) levels of spiritual growth and understanding! And with greater maturity (from victories won morally), comes greater dependability in God's Kingdom – a closer walk with God and greater understanding of one's fellow human beings. For instance, the loss of a loved one (suddenly or prematurely) offers the occasion (temptation) to become self-pitying, bitter towards life in general, and 'angry' towards God specifically! However, when one successfully goes through the 'Valley of Sorrows' (without succumbing to the temptation of despair and bitterness), such a victorious, suffering believer ascends to a new and higher level of compassion for 'fellow sufferers'!***

***There are so many unanswered (and unanswerable) questions regarding the mystery of human suffering! It is easy to hold God responsible for the tragic death of one who meant 'everything' to a parent! But, "God's grace is sufficient" and "God is Love" – this is what the heart-broken parent says (to family members, and to the wider world of friends and acquaintances) in the wake of indescribable 'pain', due to the unexpected loss of a child or of a close friend or family member!***

***Such is a very sore test (temptation) to become bitter towards God! When this test (temptation) is successfully dealt with (through a***

***growing trust in the God of love who never causes His children 'needless tears') – then this 'hard test' becomes the 'stepping stone' to greater spiritual maturity rather than a 'stumbling block' to utter defeat (loss personally and loss for observers)!***

***When a Christian parent experiences any type of loss (grief of many types), and when such a parent casts his cares upon His Lord (for release and for comfort and strength and understanding during his deep sorrows), the trusting parent (during loss) will make a deep and a lasting impression upon his children! What a parent teaches his children, by example, is as important as what he teaches his children by 'word and exhortations. Someone said (regarding character): "What you are 'speaks so loud, that I can't hear what you are saying!"***

***The comfort (during sorrow) which a parent receives from the Lord is so great, that this comfort is easily (naturally) given to other suffering persons (by comforted parent). A believer receives comfort (during the trials and temptations of life), so that he, in turn, is equipped (by his experience of receiving comfort) to 'pass on' the comfort to other sorrowing persons! Successfully 'going through' times of great loss (grief) – a time of great temptation/testing – enables the one who suffers to experience God's much nearer presence, and it enables the sufferer to give to hurting persons understanding and great comfort to others (present). Though heart-broken, with confused thought, one comes to a humbled (deeper) dependence upon God's Love! When God is your Loving Father, none of your suffering (even so-called irrational suffering) needs to be lost! God will 'redeem' it – for great good!***



***A Christian father, if he is to be 'honest' with himself (his own conscience), and if he is to be accurate in his understanding of the Bible, must acknowledge (and teach his children and teenagers) that the Bible is not one simple book, but actually a complete 'library' of 66 Books, written in three languages, by about 40 authors (very different types of authors) over a long period of time (about 1500 years)! The 'honest' father must admit that, while he loves the Bible and needs it often, he is 'certainly' not a Bible Scholar' (a specialist in Bible knowledge). However, while, admitting his own limitations regarding extensive knowledge of the Bible, The conscientious Christian father will, nevertheless, confidently and consistently teach his children the 'basic truths' of the Bible. He knows that it does not take a 'Bible Scholar' to discern the overall themes of Scripture.***

***The plan for salvation 'in summary' is stated in the Bible (The Golden Text of Scripture): "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whosoever believes in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) God desires the salvation of all persons. Repentance (godly sorrow for one's sins, leading forth to humble confession of all sins to God), and faith in Christ as one's only savior! Casting one's self at the 'foot of the Cross' (in sorrow and in trust) results in the forgiveness of all sins, and a transformed (new) character!***

***This, simply stated, is the meaning of salvation - and the caring Christian father will carefully share God's plan of salvation to his children - and he will strongly encourage (not force) his children to 'personally accept Christ as Savior'. He (as a discerning father) must realize that it is too easy for his children to assume that 'religious education' is the same as 'personal salvation'. The head can be educated in religious knowledge without one's heart being personally converted! Children who are born to committed Christian parents are not automatically 'saved' (converted). We have (cleverly) been reminded that "God has no grandchildren, only children!" Every person***

***(including those fortunate children who are wonderfully raised by Christian parents) must experience (in one way or another) their own personal 'encounter' with Jesus Christ! Christian training without personal application (conversion) can result in very 'moral' children (law-oriented and sincere children), who are yet without experiencing a personal saving relationship with the living Savior!***

***When a teen has a 'deep, rich experience of personal forgiveness', when a teen experiences a genuine 'born-again' event in his life (divine transformation, not humanly-achieved reformation), then - for the remainder of his Christian life - he will learn (slowly) what it means to 'walk in the Light' of truth (to listen for directions from the 'still, small voice' of His Loving Shepherd). "The Good Shepherd (Jesus ) walks ahead of them (the sheep): and they follow him, for they recognize his voice." (John 10:4; Living Bible)***



**57.**

*Mature Christian parents seek to build a 'strong foundation' for their children - a foundation built on Biblical principles (eternal truths) - a foundation which will support their children during all the 'storms' of their future life! Parents do not 'own' their children! Children are 'loaned to them by the Creator (Owner) of their children! During the twenty-one year 'loan' from God, parents are 'stewards' of God. God will 'reward' parents who have been 'good stewards' of God's 'Property' (human lives who have eternal soul).*

*On the other hand, (sad to say), parents who ignore God and His principles for 'child rearing', that is, parents who 'abuse' their children (spiritually, or physically, or seriously) are under the 'condemnation of God'! The Bible says (Jesus says) that if a parent "offends these little ones", it would be better for*

*them if they had a 'millstone' put around their neck and they be 'drowned in the sea'! A most frightening warning from the lips of the One who greatly loved children!*

*To love not only one's own children, but to love all children whom God has created) is of importance (and a great God-given privilege)! But before a man can effectively and meaningfully reach out to children in general, a man must center his love and attention, specifically and continuously, on his own children. Of course, the good father will (even while he is carrying on his own daily work responsibilities) 'feel' the warmth of love for his children (and he will look forward to returning to his home in the evening to be with his beloved children). But when returning home from his long day of daily work, the caring father (even though he is may be tired and weary) seeks to be positive in his speech and loving in his expressions - in his 'connections' - with his children and spouse.*

*The perceptive wife and children will give the 'man of the house' some needed time to himself (for his cherished time for some solitude), but, nevertheless, the head of the home will not only verbalize his love openly and kindly, but he will 'carve out some quality time' each evening for joyful conversation (sensitive to his kids and their needs) and for games, play, laughter, and some recreation. Maybe not a lot of time each evening, but nevertheless, some quality time each evening.*

*Occasionally (even regularly) the good father will take time for spiritual education of his children! Of course, he will see to it that all the family members will read from the Bible or hear it read. There are a multitude of important topics (all life-related) that the good father must spend time discussing. He will be clear but not dogmatic in his declaration of God's eternal truths. (Of course, when there are various interpretations regarding secondary doctrines, the good father will allow his children to give proper consideration to those different interpretations.)*

*One of many important 'topics' worthy of serious discussion with his children, is the most relevant topic of 'sin'! Every serious-minded teen needs better to understand the definition and the nature of sin.*

*There is more than one definition of 'sin'. The technical definition: "Sin Is Missing the Mark" (not hitting the 'target' of God's will). Another definition: "Sin Is a Transgression of The Known Laws of God" (deliberate disobedience of one or more of God's revealed Laws, such as The Ten Commandments). Another definition: "Whatsoever is Not of Faith is Sin." Here is a definition that is not often discussed: "Sin Is a Perversion of a Legitimate Desire". Illustration: Sexual lust (wrong) is a perversion of legitimate (God—given) sexual desire; gluttony is a perversion of the legitimate desire for food; pride is a perversion of the legitimate desire and need for self-esteem. And there are many more examples!*

***A good parent will help his teen to understand what sin is, and, of course, how to avoid sin (and how to be restored to God's fellowship when he does sin). These are very important 'teachings' which responsible parents will not neglect! What happens when a person (teen) sins? Any hope! "If you sin, there is someone to plead for you before the Father. His name is Jesus Christ". (I John 2: 1; Living Bible)***



**58.**

***It is not who you are, it is not how much money you own, it is not how handsome or beautiful or strong you are, it is not how popular you are, it is not how many educational degrees you have earned, it is not how much pleasure you have consumed (pleasure trips), it is not how much authority (power) that you wield on your job and in your profession, it is not how many children you have borne, it is not how many fancy meals you have consumed, it is not how many cruises you have enjoyed, it is***

***not how many church offices you have held! No life does not consist (or find ultimate value) in any of these settings (be they ever so 'worthy' and 'legitimate')***

***What then should you tell your son is the 'essence' of life? Jesus said, "Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these other things will be added unto you." "What is your priority? What (or whom) do you most seek in life?" These are key questions to ask your son or daughter (if you are a Christ-honoring father)! Many of the above-listed activities and relationships are, doubtless, worthy activities and relationships. But the question is simple: "Is God and His Kingdom-interests all-important to you? (That is the question every teen must answer!).***

***Life does not consist in trying to keep a myriad of manmade rules and regulations (as the legalistic Jewish leaders sought to do). Rather, life consists in a person (teen) surrendering his body, mind, spirit, and will to the 'Lord of Life' (to the One Who laid down His life as a ransom for the sins of all persons). It is supreme love for God (issuing forth in daily obedience to God's personal revealed will). "Walking in the Light of Truth", nurturing a loving relationship with the Lord of Love, listening for the voice of the 'Good Shepherd' and seeking closely to follow Him into 'paths of loving service' to those to whom the Good Shepherd sends His Sheep!***

***As a growing Christian, every teen needs to work at developing a virtuous (godly) lifestyle)! What character traits describe a godly person? One of God's prophets vividly (simply) voiced those traits that define a truly spiritual person: "He (God) hath showed you, oh man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God." (Micah 6:8)***

***Do Justly - by God's help, and by the believer's effort and practice, a Christian teen can be honest, truthful, and dependable. The Lord***

***cherishes integrity, and He hates falsehood! Teenagers (amidst a world of deceitful people/teens) must practice 'telling the truth' at all times, with all persons!***

***Love Mercy – Compassion, caring, forgiveness, treating people tenderly and lovingly. Follow Jesus' example! Jesus was full of compassion, as He cared for the oppressed, the suffering, the sick, and the persons who were treated in unjust manners.***

***Walk Humbly with Your God – The Bible says that without Jesus we can do nothing! It is 'good' for a Christian teen to be 'confident' (to have a healthy self-esteem), but it is only a Spirit-led teen who can truly Love God Supremely, love himself-subordinately, and love others sincerely! Concretely speaking, what is a 'profile of humility', as this character trait is manifested in human relationships?***

***The Scripture tells us: "Don't be selfish; don't live to make a good impression on others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourself, don't just think about your own affairs, but be interested in others, too, and in what they are doing." (Philippians 2: 3-4; Living Bible)***



**59.**

***It is a 'common observation' that teenagers are trying desperately to build a true 'self-esteem' (their sense of personal worth and significance) by changing their 'hair style' (women) or by wearing tattoos (both sexes), or by purchasing the latest styles in clothing, or by attaching 'rings' to various parts of their body (even on their lips), or by listening to 'swinging' (high-powered) music, or by 'hanging out' at***

***certain places of youth gatherings (even bars), or by risking their lives (by speeding their cars, or by involving themselves in high risk 'adventures'), or by taking up harmful habits like smoking and drinking and drugs, or by flirting with or indulging in sexual activities, or by learning the 'gross language' of profanity in order to be accepted within the 'cool teen hang outs'! Usually these are teens who have no meaningful relationship with their father!***

***Of course, not all teens 'plunge into the ways of the world! There are a few teens who choose to 'swim against the current of the evil ways of worldly teens'.***

***There are many (probably most) teens who are having a difficult time discovering what the 'solid foundation' is for establishing wholesome (lasting) 'self-esteem' (a sense of personal significance). The 'foundation' which the world offers is a 'crumbling foundation'. It is unreliable, elusive, short-lived, fanciful, disappointing, and untrue to God's established 'reality'. Some teens build their self-esteem on the acceptance (and possible praise) of their peers (friends). However, the praise of peers often is 'conditional' - 'if you do this, then I will accept you'. Those who base their 'self-worth' on their riches, may find that their money (in an uncertain economy) eventually, or suddenly, 'takes wings'! There are millionaires who have had to declare 'bankruptcy'. Some have even died with little of their money left (even to bury them)! The Bible warns people not "to set hopes on uncertain riches" (I Timothy 6:17). Those (teens) who attempt to build their sense of worth on their physical beauty should remember that (as great as beauty is) beauty is only 'skin deep', and beauty fades like the autumn leaves! Don't set your hopes on or attempt to build your sense of self-esteem on popularity, for the world's popularity is elusive and passing. You might be popular today, and shunned tomorrow!***

***Here is what a Christian Father (knowledgeable of God's Word) can share with his child, to encourage his child to discover a God-honoring***

***sense of significance. "Dear Son, you have been uniquely created 'in God's image', a reflection of God's attributes (rationality, emotionality, volitional capacity). Remember that Jesus loved you so much that He died on the cruel cross to provide a 'just' way by which all your sin could be forgiven. Remember that, because God created you, and because Christ died for you, therefore, you are God's wonderful 'property'.***

***And remember, also, that God greatly cherishes and provides for His 'property'. God loves you in a unique way (different from any other person), and He demonstrates His special love in many ways, one of which is by His bestowal of special gifts and talents to you. God has a special 'call' (job or ministry) for you (suited to your own interests and abilities). Remember, Son, that God wants to use you as His 'tool' (instrument or channel) to accomplish great 'things' for His kingdom – loving hurting folks, and partnering with God to bring healing to all kinds of persons (making life most meaningful). Always remember, son, that your body is the 'temple of the Holy Spirit', and that the Spirit has chosen you to 'walk in love and holiness' all of your long life. Remember, too, that, as a Spirit-filled Christian, you will face a 'hostile world'. But take your suffering (persecution) gladly, for the honor of Christ (who suffered greatly to give you life and freedom from sin). Also, Son, remember that, if you suffer (at times) for being a Christian, you will someday share the 'glory of heaven' with your loving Savior Jesus. Even now He is preparing a special place in heaven, just for you! And remember, for the remainder of your life, the Holy Spirit will help you to prepare yourself for your place in heaven. The Bible says, "Without holiness (godly living), no one will see the Lord!" Be sure to live a Spirit-filled Life, dear Son!"***



***A perceptive (mature) Christian father must communicate to his child that there is only one 'thing' (property) that he (his son) 'owns' in life. Actually, he does not even 'own' this 'thing'. Better stated, there is only one 'thing' that has been entrusted to his child in life – by the Creator the true 'owner' of all creation. What is it that has been entrusted to the son? It is the son's 'self' – that unique, God-created inner 'being' that has great significance to the Living Creator.***

***A Biblically-grounded father will declare (to his son) that it is love – God's great love – that is the motivation for God creating the unique 'self' of each person. God willed the son's conception and the son's unique creation, and God ordered every 'step' of his son's development! David, in the Old Testament, declared God's beautiful creation of himself: "You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body, and knit them together in my mother's womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! It is amazing to think about. Your workmanship is marvelous – and how well I know it. You were there while I was being formed in utter seclusion! You saw me before I was born, and scheduled each day of my life before I began to breathe. Every day was recorded in your Book!" (Psalms 139: 13-16; Living Bible)***

***With great joy, David made his affirmation of his own God-ordained conception! David declared that it was God who directed his development in the womb! However, David also (acknowledging the 'reality' of the 'fall of mankind into sin') said that "in sin did my mother conceive me"! In other words, he (sadly) recognized that inherited (at the time of his physical conception) is a 'sin nature' – a 'moral nature' that inclined him to sin against his Creator! When Adam and Eve disobeyed God (and thus became alienated from their Creator because of their sin), all their future children (descendants) would inherit a 'sin nature' – a nature that is corrupt, a self-centered nature that easily would teach their dependents (children and teenagers and adults) to rebel against God's legitimate authority (and, of course against all other lesser authorities). Thus, sin is the 'serious problem' with which***

***every human being must deal! Every person is not only 'born in sin' (not guilty at birth of sinful actions of course, but nevertheless, tainted with a self-centered orientation), but every person (after birth) finds himself willfully committing 'acts of sin' against God's revealed Laws (including The Ten Commandments). All humans are involved in 'sin' on 'two counts' - all humans are born with a 'sin nature' (inherited self-centeredness) and all humans are involved in 'sinful behavior' (wrong choices)!***

***To deal with this two-fold 'sin problem', God has provided a two-fold 'solution'! For the 'guilt' (caused by wrong choices), a person (sinner) must 'confess' his sins to the Savior; this is the 'Surrender' of one's sinful lifestyle to Christ, who, in turn, grants forgiveness of all 'volitional sins'. How is the 'sin nature' dealt with? This is dealt with by the Christian making a 'full surrender' and 'daily surrender' of his 'inner self (the 'control center' of his soul') to the Lordship of Christ. Surrender body, mind, and spirit to Christ!***

***"Father, I see that I have only one true freedom in life - the freedom to choose the Master of my life. How I exercise that freedom determines my destiny - for time and eternity! If I refuse to surrender to You, I choose to surrender to pessimism, to hopelessness, to negativism, to futility to self-destruction!"***

***AFFIRMATION FOR THE DAY: I choose to make a once-and-for-all 'blanket' surrender to Christ, and then to learn daily to surrender every new detail of my life to the lordship of Christ!***

***"Father, as the loose wire surrenders itself to the dynamo, as the paint surrenders itself to the artist, as the marble surrenders itself to the sculptor and as the ink surrenders itself to the writer, so enable me, a mere man, to surrender myself to the almighty Christ. Then I shall find myself throbbing with divine energy, creating love movements wherever I go!"***

***Surrendering the 'title deed' of my life to Christ makes me feel truly 'at home' with myself!***



**61.**

***While there are (thankfully) some young persons in our society today (from all classes and cultures and creeds) who are open and transparent and honest and truly humble (Christian) in their attitudes and actions, unfortunately there are many more teens whose lives demonstrate actions of duplicity, and deception and self-centeredness (selfishness). In the training of young children and teens, Christian fathers must teach their children the fact that all persons (including all young persons need to face the negative facts of human existence, as well as the positive facts of human existence! Negatively-speaking, young persons (sons and daughters) need to face the rather obvious fact that (as the Bible teaches) all persons are born into the world with a 'self-centered' nature (a nature that is prone to choose 'wrongly' rather than 'rightly', a nature that tends to seek one's own selfish pleasure rather than to seek the 'good will of the Divine Creator', a nature that drives one to center on fulfilling the 'lusts of the flesh' rather than on ministering to the needs and hurts of others around him/her! Also, it is an inherited nature that tends to 'do cover-ups', to 'hide secret sins', to decline others for personal advantage, to 'exploit others' to advance one's personal agenda. If acts of sin in one's life are unattended (denied or scapegoated or rationalized), sin goes "undercover".***

***Every young person needs to realize that he/she cannot hide sinful actions from the 'eyes' (attention) of Almighty God! God sees all, and God knows all!***

***There is nothing that can be hidden from God. "There is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed, and hid, that shall not be known." (Matthew 10:28) There is an All-Knowing God who can read every thought and secret intent of man. "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight; but all things are naked and opened into the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." (Hebrews 4:13)***

***"For whatever God says to us is full of living power; it is sharper than the sharpest dagger, cutting swift and deep into our innermost thoughts and desires with all their parts, exposing us for what we really are. He knows about everyone, everywhere. Everything about us is bare and wide open to the all-seeing eyes of our living God, nothing can be hidden from him to whom we must explain all that we have done." (Hebrews 4:12-13; Living Bible)***

***"Whatever they have said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in the inner rooms shall be broadcast from the housetops for all to hear!" (Luke 12:3; Living Bible) "Am I a God who is only in one place and cannot see what they are doing? Can anyone hide from me? Am I not everywhere in all of heaven and earth?" (Jeremiah 23:23-24; Living Bible)***

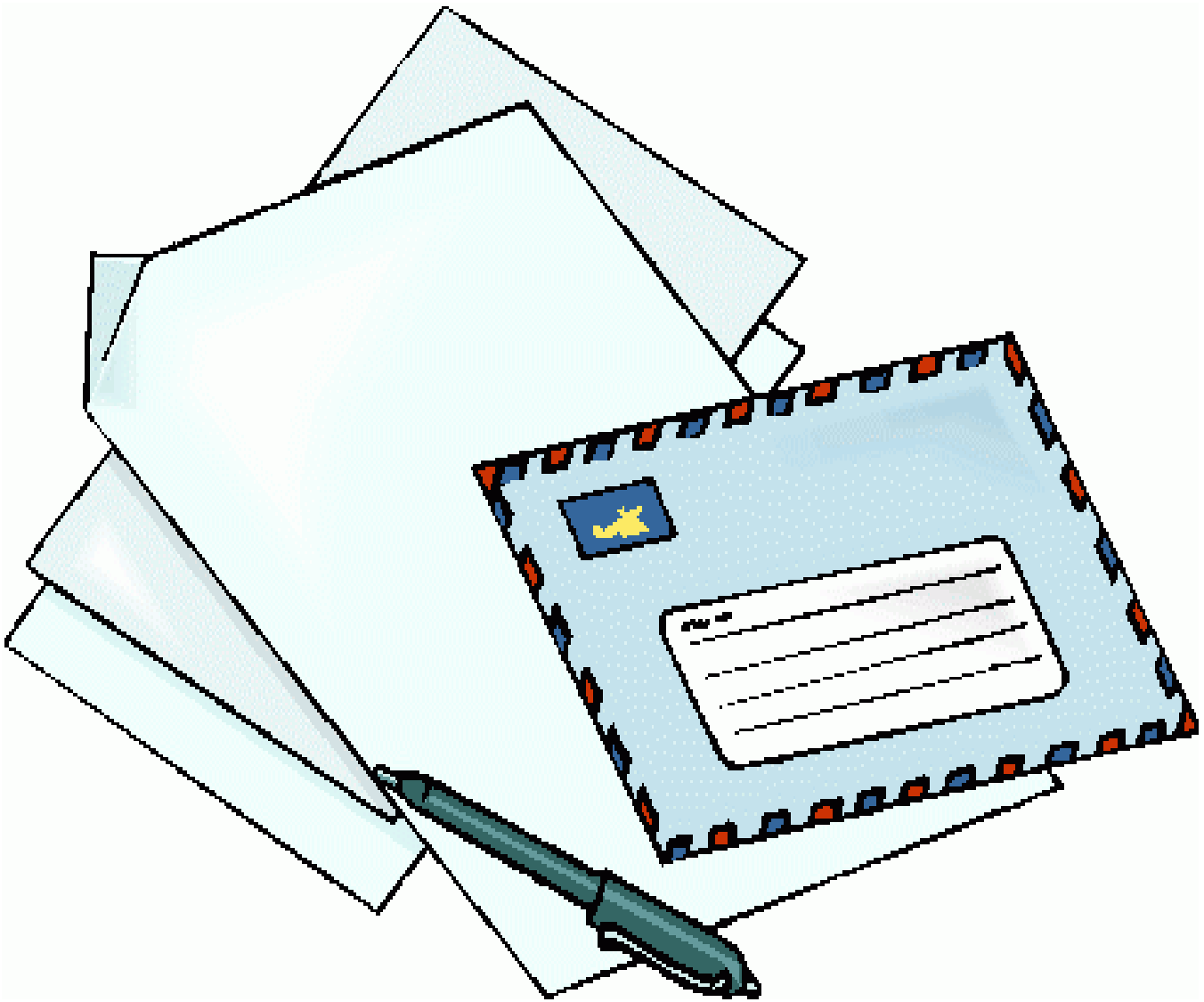
***Every young person (teen) must learn (hopefully from his parents) that, just as there is a two-fold problem of sin (a sin nature and actual sinful actions which derive from the sin nature), so, there is (thankfully) a God-provided 'cure' (solution) for this two-fold sin problem! Christ's death and resurrection provides an atonement (cure) for sinful actions, namely forgiveness, and also provides for the sinful 'bent' of selfishness, namely cleansing. If we confess our sins, God is willing "able to forgive us our sins, and He is willing and able to cleanse us from all unrighteousness!" (I John 1, 2)***

***Young persons must be encouraged to humbly 'confess' their sins (in repentance and faith), and to claim God's forgiveness. Receptive young persons (believing ones) need further to be encouraged to 'Surrender' their 'ego' (inner self) to the Spirit of God (even though 'dying' to self-centeredness may have some 'terror' and some 'pain' connected with this all-important step in the spiritual life). Dying to the 'selfish nature', in order to come alive (resurrected) to the new life which is centered in Christ! Self-surrender to Christ leads to self-realization (becoming the person God created one to be). True freedom! Delivered from self-consciousness to Christ-consciousness!***

***"I have been crucified with Christ: and I myself no longer live, but Christ lives in me. And the real life I now have within this body is a result of my trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me!"  
(Galatians 2:20; Living Bible)***



# ***“LETTERS TO MY SON”!***



S

62.

*My dear Son,*

*It is common knowledge (in the physical world) that there must be a diagnosis of a 'hurt' (disease or affliction), before there can be a 'treatment' (and, hopefully, a cure) of a disease! For instance, a person may show signs of 'diabetes', and yet that same person may choose to deny his symptoms of the disease. He may 'run from his problem', that is, he may refuse to make an appointment with a health professional (doctor). He may attempt to 'minimize' the problem which is so apparent. He may so fear that his symptoms will reveal the presence of a serious disease in his body that he decides to 'delay' seeing a doctor. All kinds of actions he may choose to take to 'run from his problem', but everyone knows (and he should know) that unless a problem is (painfully) faced and acknowledged, there will be no diagnosis (evaluation) of the problem, and certainly there can be no possible (eventual) 'cure' for the persistent medical problem!*

*Most (perhaps all) persons know that it is 'hard' for a human being to be 'honest' with himself/herself – regarding the (painful) 'facing of reality' (in the physical realm)!*

*If this fact is evident in the physical realm, how much more true is this fact (of not facing reality) true in the spiritual realm!*

*It is 'horrible' for humans (sin-bent in their 'nature' and sin-practicing in their actions) to 'face the reality' of their sinful condition! But it is because humans tend to 'rationalize' their sinful nature and their sinful behavior, that God 'comes to the rescue' to help bring sin-driven creatures to their 'senses' (to the reality of the seriousness of their total sinful condition). The 'rescue' is found in the person and the convicting and convincing work of the Holy Spirit! The work of the Holy Spirit is*

***multi-layered, but one all-important work of the Holy Spirit is 'Conviction of Sin' (as well as the convincing every one of the righteousness of the Savior).***

***"And when he (the Holy Spirit) has come he will convince the world of its sin, and of the availability of God's goodness, and deliverance from judgment." (John 16:8; Living Bible)***

***As anyone knows who has endured the 'procedures' of a medical surgery, there must be the unenjoyable experience of some pain! Someone said, "No pain, no gain!" To get a tooth extracted, there usually is the unpleasant experience of some pain (even when pain shots are administrated)! Almost all (physical) surgeries involve some pain! There is usually considerable pain involved in following 'therapy' (for instance, while a broken bone is healing). But thankfully, most persons (patients), after they finally enjoy healing, are glad they endured the 'pain' of surgery (and 'pain' of recovery)!***

***Spiritually-speaking, usually persons (sinners) experience considerable 'pain' when the Holy Spirit exposes (reveals) their sin to them! Just as physical 'fever' (not pleasant) alerts one that there is a physical problem that merits serious attention, so the spiritual 'fever' (the unpleasant conviction of the Holy Spirit) is intended, not to hurt a person, but to alert a person to his need for 'outside help' (the loving help of the Loving savior, who alone can 'cure' one of his 'disease' of sin).***

***Your Dad***



63.

*Dear Son,*

*I feel rather 'burdened' this morning! As usual, I awoke early, while everything around me (in the house and outside) was so still and so quiet! The sun is just now rising and the Eastern sky is a brilliant pink color! Surely, the God that you and I serve is 'beautiful' beyond description, as evidenced in the splendid beauty of Nature! Let all the earth praise our Lord!*

*But, son, that is one of the important reasons I have taken time to write to you while you are still sleeping. I love you more than you will ever know, and even though I have not always demonstrated my love to you in 'concrete ways' I desire to 'pass on to you' some insights that I have learned along life's way! The Bible exhorts the young in life to be open to the 'wisdom' of their 'elders'! (Read the Book of Proverbs)*

*Son, you probably know, by now, that you are living in a 'secular culture' (a culture that has either forgotten God, or that has explicitly denied God). The Bible warns against false philosophes - heretical teachings! In the 'last days', there will be abroad in the world, 'master deceivers', who deny the reality of God, and who deny the deity of Christ, who deny the necessity of believing on the Son and of surrendering the human ego to the Lordship of the Savior! Son, everything that you and I cherish (doctrinally and experientially), these false teachers directly deny! They take 'delight' in ridiculing the 'sacred realities' of life (including the sanctity of the unborn life in the womb, the sanctity of sex and marriage, and the general sanctity of all of life)!*

*They deny the Incarnation. They deny the fact of sin (reality of sin that humans are sinners by nature and sinners also by choice). They deny the need for humans to be spiritually converted by the power of the Holy Spirit. They deny the workability and need and power of prayer.*

***They deny the possibility (and actual occurrence) of miraculous and supernatural events! They deny that there is an afterlife (a 'heaven to gain' and a 'hell to shun'). They 'make fun' of persons (including teens) who speak reverently of God (as a real person), and they ridicule anyone who 'wastes' his time by going to church. They believe the Bible is simply a 'book of fairy tales'!***

***Dear Son, thankfully you are also living in a world that (wonderfully) has been 'visited' by the second person of the Holy Trinity – the Son of God (Jesus)! When Jesus finished His (Redemptive) mission, He returned to His Father's 'right hand of authority' (where He is constantly making 'intercession' for the redeemable 'human race'). Jesus sent the Holy Spirit into the world to continue the work of convicting and convincing and converting souls! The Spirit (like wind) is 'blowing across the world', and He seeks souls who are ready for His multiple work of restoring humanity to its last greatness (fellowship with the Father God)!***

***Son, righteousness is stronger than evil; justice is stronger than deception; integrity is stronger than dishonesty; holiness is stronger than corruption and duplicity; peace is stronger than discord and war; God's love – the essence of God's Nature – is stronger than indifference and hate!***

***Even though 'wrong' seems so 'strong' now (i.e. secularism and humanism), remember that evil will someday be vanquished, and Christ shall have total rule – The Rule of Righteousness!***

***Son, until that future triumphant day (the day of Christ's return when the lips of all shall declare that 'Jesus Is Lord'), remain 'true' and 'faithful' to your Lord! Don't compromise your moral standards! Be willing (like Daniel of old) to 'stand alone'! Have a 'purpose firm' (your deep love for Christ), and be willing to take a little 'persecution' when you gently, and lovingly tell others of life's purpose! Stay 'humble,***

***prayerful, obedient’! What does the Lord require of you? (1) Integrity (justice); (2) Mercy (compassion), (3) Humility (not humiliation)! (Book of Micah)***

***Son, remember, if you bow low at the feet of Jesus (daily), then you can stand tall (confidently) in the face of everything (even in the face of the insidious ‘gods’ of secularism, and humanism!). Son, I gratefully love you, but God’s love for you is everlasting! Son, please remember this letter often, after I am ‘long gone’ from this earth! Thanks! (Through your faith in Christ, may you have a ‘great’ life.)***

***Your Dad!***



***64.***

***Dear Son,***

***On this beautiful, early morning, my heart is rejoicing in the ‘goodness of our God’. “Praise God from whom all blessings flow!” Amidst all the ‘changes and chances’ of my long life, my dear Savior and Lord has been ‘faithful’ to fulfill His many promises in my life! I have so many good things in my life for which I want (daily) to thank God! I am sure that you know, my child, that the Bible says that we (believers) are to give God our ‘thanks’ in all circumstances – even during those times when we are experiencing losses and feeling deep griefs! God can use, both our joys and our sorrows, to bring lasting ‘good’ to our lives (to draw us closer to the ‘side’ of our blessed Savior! All things (good and bad) work into a ‘pattern’ for our increased Christian growth (character development), if we ‘keep our hand in the hand of our loving Lord’!***

***Yes, dear one, you will experience both 'high times' and 'low times' (great joys and great sorrows, great successes and perhaps a few great failures) - as you travel the long pathway of life - a pathway that wonderfully (finally) leads you to the 'gates of your eternal home'! Through 'thick and thin', through the 'ups and downs' amidst all the many trials of life, remain true and faithful to your Lord!***

***One great man (but a very obscure and common man) - a precious believer - prayed this simple/prayer, regularly: "Lord, keep me humble, prayerful, obedient to You!" My Dear One, what victory you will experience in your Christian Life, if you daily pray this simple prayer!***

***One of God's greatest blessings which He has given to me (and to your dear mother) is the blessing of your own conversion to Christ! When you (as a young child) knelt at your bed, and you simply and sincerely asked Jesus to be your Savior, my heart leapt with praise to God for your Salvation! Son, as you continue to 'walk in the footsteps of Jesus' (through the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit), you will increasingly grow in the knowledge of spiritual truths - truths that will wonderfully and powerfully change the way you think about life, and the way you act and react to all of life's relationships. You will become a 'Steward of God' - a person whom God will delight in using to bless and encourage many around you!***

***God (in the Bible) gives this all-important command: "Be ye holy, for I the Lord Thy God am holy!" A 'holy' person is one who is 'separate' from a worldly lifestyle! That is the outward demonstration of 'holiness'. Also, a 'holy' person is one who has been inwardly cleansed (and is constantly being cleansed) of a 'corrupt' (divided) heart. A 'holy' person, far from being 'perfect', is, nevertheless, one who has a supreme preference (love) for the Living God, and he is also one who (even though he does not 'naturally' like everyone) genuinely desires***

***nothing but the 'best' for everyone (even for his so-called 'enemies'). He desires that everyone (without exception) finds Christ as his/her Savior!***

***He desires that everyone finds joy in living. He desires that everyone experiences a spirit-led (wisdom-guided) life. He desires that everyone realize (through the spirit's enlightenment) his/her distinct call from God (and, thus uses all the God-given talents with which he/she is endowed) He desires that ultimately everyone finally enjoys life everlasting in heaven someday! A 'holy' person seeks to love everyone, as much as he loves himself!***

***Yes, dear son, what I have briefly described (regarding yourself, regarding the dear Savior, regarding the meaning of true salvation (holiness), regarding the implications (applications) of God-like love (experienced in human relationships) - these truths (taught in the Bible) can literally 'transform' your life! These 'control' truths, appropriated by you with the help of God's Spirit, will bring you joy, at all times when you are 'on the mountain top' and when you are in the valley! Great is God's faithfulness always! He will never leave you, never forsake you! "What a Friend We Have in Jesus!" Words are inadequate to describe Jesus' love for You!***

***With appreciation,  
Dad***



***65.***

***Dear Son,***

***I, too, like yourself (who are now in the transitional era of your teenage years) had to experience when I was a teenager some rather dramatic 'changes' in my life, in many different 'ways'; (physically with my 'hormones' seeming to go 'crazy'; socially, when I was trying to make myself presentable and approvable to girls, and also to significant 'adults' in my life; mentally when I was trying to 'figure out' for myself the difference between the 'blacks' and 'whites' and 'grays' in ethics and theology; economically, when I was discovering new responsibilities in money management; religiously, when I was adopting the local church as my 'own' church, and not simply accepting the church of my parents).***

***I remember, when my 'voice' changed from the 'sound' of a 'high tenor' to the sound of a 'baritone' (and sometimes even my voice had the 'frightening' sound of a 'bass')! Suddenly I started to become taller, and I wondered (at times) if I would stop growing ("Will I be 6 foot 10 inches tall?"). My muscles began to look like the muscles of some men (in my health club), and I began to realize that I had many of the features of an adolescent, no longer the features of a child! I had mixed emotions regarding these drastic (quick) changes, both elation (excitement) and also fright! I realized that, even though I wanted more independence (freedom), I was unprepared (in many ways) for this newly-discovered 'freedom'! I admit that there were times when I did not always exercise my 'new-found freedom' responsibly! My parents (as loving as they were) had to teach me a few lessons in what it means to be 'responsible' (accountable, mature-like) in the exercise of my 'new freedom' as an adolescent. Because I had received Christ as my Savior (when I was 11 years old), the all important 'fact' God's new nature inside my heart and my mind helped me immensely in learning how to 'blend' my freedom and my responsibility! Of course, God worked through my parents, to help me to mature in this 'vital' balance between 'freedom and responsibility'!***

***My son, why spend this time sharing some of the 'highlights' of my own life as a teenager? Hopefully, by my sharing with you (my beloved Son), you will know that I have at least a little understanding of what it means for an adolescent (particularly you) to go through this 'transitional stage' (as you 'travel' towards adulthood).***

***Son, amidst the several worldly (God-challenging) 'snares' (which, in this brief letter I don't have time to describe), there is one very obvious 'snare' (devil's trap) that I ask you to (briefly) acknowledge! To be 'frank' with you son, it is the 'snare' of sexual immorality! Son, you (obviously) know that God created humans as 'male' and 'female'. God made them to be 'very different' in many ways, but, nevertheless, God made them to complement each other. In marriage, male and female are to become ONE when their bodies unit in the wonderful (God-honoring) act of sexual intercourse. God's plan for sex is this: (1) Sensual enjoyment (a wholesome type of relaxation and recreation for husband and wife; (2) Symbol of life-time unity between them; (3) Spiritual (mysterious) union of the couple with the Holy Trinity, who attends (with joy) the union of two committed believers (The unity (sexually) of husband and wife, reflects the unity between the three persons of the Holy Trinity, the most sacred unity in the human realm, also in the divine realm!); (4) Procreation, if God 'opens the womb' for a glorious conception!***

***Son, "Sin is a perversion of a legitimate desire"! It is a God-given desire for a Christian to want to be united in marriage (eventually)! That strong desire for marriage is inseparably 'tied' to a strong desire to experience 'sexual fulfillment'. But 'sexual lust' (desiring to have sex with any woman, or even with the woman you hope to marry, before you are married) – this 'sexual passion' is a 'perversion of wholesome 'sexual attraction'. Reckless 'passion' (lust) is not 'true respectful love'! You may (at times) 'dream' about having sex with the woman you truly love, but true love always waits for God's 'timing'! Son, commit your***

***sexual 'drives' to the loving God (who created the drives)! Then 'sex' will be 'beautiful', not 'ugly'!***

***Your Loving Dad***



**66.**

***Dear Son,***

***There are certain times (experiences) in life that could be termed 'pivotal points' in one's life! These are times when there are dramatic changes in one's life! Of course, these 'changes' are experienced on different 'levels' of one's life - physically, socially, mentally, and spiritually. Obviously, even at your young age (as a teenager) you 'know' (to some extent) what I am referring to! Even as young as you are, you have (already) felt the inner and the outer 'world' of your consciousness going through some rather 'drastic' changes! Some changes (as you know) are rather 'pleasant changes', and some changes are rather 'traumatic' (even 'frightening') changes!***

***Son, we serve a God who never changes! Never changes in His love for every person - including teens! He knows what you are experiencing - in every way! He understands! Jesus went through all the normal human developments - childhood, adolescence, adulthood! Jesus grew in 'wisdom' 'stature', and 'in favor with God and Man'! Physically, Intellectually, Socially, Spiritually! Jesus grew in all four ways!***

*Son, the most important decision of my life was when I was 11 years old. Even at this young age, I realized that I needed forgiveness, that I wanted peace without a guilty conscience! Despite my Christian training, I had never been 'saved'! I simply prayed, "God, save my Soul!" (I prayed that several times, on that winter morning, while still I was in my bed)! After I prayed that simple prayer, my life dramatically (drastically) 'changed'! I started memorizing entire chapters out of the Bible! On an old flat rock (at the nearby creek) I sat and I began regularly to pour out my heart; to God! I talked openly to my mother about 'spiritual matters'. I placed myself under the 'authority' (kind and loving authority) of my pastor (who taught me a lot about the Lord for about 6 years). Eventually, I enrolled as a student in a Christian College - where I met the young lady who would become my beloved wife - and my partner in Christian Ministry)!*

*Son, you came into our home (our first born) the first year of our long-time pastoral ministry! You have long been (joyfully) known as a 'preacher kid'! You have been (these last 16 years) a delight in our lives! Of course, we have had a 'few adjustments' (you and we, as your parents), but we have always been so 'proud' of you!*

*You, of course (legitimately), have asked us lots of questions about 'life', and you have had your own 'doubts' that you (in your own way) have dealt with (and continue to deal with). After all, life is not always easy (unanswered questions, unexplained suffering, your teenage cousin's sudden death). You have faced some of the world's injustices and inequities and deep mysteries! You have a sensitive spirit, an inquiring mind, a tender heart and a strong will! I, as your father, respect you for the wonderful person (unique person) that God has made you! I am so grateful that you have personally accepted Christ as your Savior! I am thankful that, in spite of your personal 'struggles' (socially) and your doubts (mentally), and your confusions in pondering your educational 'options' - yes, in spite of these 'things', you have a strong commitment to live a God-honoring life, rather than a selfish*

***(self-centered) life! You have demonstrated great compassion as seen in your gentle sprit personally, and in your desire to practically care for the 'poor of the world' (Your parents admire your involvements through your 'youth overseas mission trips!') You are 'God's young man'! You have a 'bright future'! Your parents believe wholeheartedly in you!***

### ***Your Caring Dad***



**67.**

***Dear Son,***

***When you make a serious study (or even a simple reading) of the Bible, you will discover that there are certain 'themes' (subjects and topics) that are repeated, over and over! It is obvious that the author of this sacred book (library of books) is trying earnestly to 'get the attention' of His human subjects! One of those recurring themes is the theme 'Humility'!***

***Ever since you were quite young, I (as a caring father) have sought to 'fix in your mind' that the Almighty God hates pride, and He loves humility! There are countless verses (in both Testaments) that emphasize this truth! Even when you and I were involved in casual (non-religious) activities (like table games) I repeatedly (from one occasion to another) quoted one of the Bible verses which reveals God's great hatred for carnal, self-centered pride. I repeated this verse so many times (in your hearing) that I am sure you could not help but***

***know the words very well! "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall!"***

***It was amazing to me, that when you were probably 7 years old, you wanted to put this truth into 'practice'! You were the recognized 'hero' at a certain soccer game, a game in which you strove hard to win! Yes, your team did win on that day, and the number of points that your team scored (with great effort) was four (4) points (goals)! As you walked off the field, after that 'well-fought game', I congratulated you with many words, because you were the team's 'hero'! You were the one who scored 3 of the 4 points in the game! How did you respond to my many words of (deserved) congratulations? You remained quiet - no words came from your little lips! Your humble response totally amazed me! You held up your right arm (high in the air), and you held up your pointer finger towards the sky - to give 'praise' and 'honor' and 'thanks' to our Heavenly Father! In humility, you recognized that it was God who gave you the strength and the ability to play soccer so very well!***

***My young teenage son you likely (throughout your adult years) will be given the applause and the worthy recognition from your fellow men! (Of course, as is true of most persons, you will also experience some 'failures' in your life). When you (as an adult) are upheld and you are acclaimed before your peers (on your job, or among your friends, or at your church, or in your community), how will you respond? Will you find yourself 'puffed up' with conceit? Will you be glad to take all the credit for your achievements? Will you 'gloat' over your successes? Will you use your successes as mere 'stepping stones' for your further successes? Will you think 'more highly' of yourself than you ought to think of yourself? Will you forget the One who's the 'Giver of all good and perfect gifts'?***

***Son, I trust that your decisive answer to all these questions will be (in the future, when you are an adult) is a resounding NO! No, I will not take 'pride' (the wrong kind of pride which is arrogance and boasting***

***and self-reliance), when God allows me to enjoy 'scoring most of the points in the soccer game' (i.e., in the 'game of life'). No, I will not allow attention to be conferred on me (when I 'score' well in life's adventures). I will 'point my finger' towards heaven and I will thank God for the privilege of using the 'gifts' (talents) He has given to me – NOT for my praise ('glory'), but for the praise and glory of God for the advancement of the Kingdom of God! Also, I will thank my fellow players on the 'soccer field' of life! I will remember what the Bible says: "God resists the proud, but God honors the humble! Humble yourself in the Sight of God, and God will (eventually) exalt (give honor to) the humble person". I will allow people (legitimately) to 'honor' me, but I will glorify God, and I will quickly turn my attention, not to myself, but to other persons! Dad, this is my sincere intention!***

***My dear Son, I am (humbly) proud of you! I will 'give honor to whom honor is due' – and that includes you, my Son!***

***With gratitude for you,***

***Your thankful Dad***



**68.**

***Dear Son,***

***It probably is obvious to you that the 'random nature' of a letter is very different from the 'organized nature' of a 'carefully-thought-out' published article or of an entire book. This morning, as I am thinking warmly of you, my beloved son, I have only a few 'random' thoughts to share with you (in this brief letter) regarding the important subject of***

***'financial stewardship' (frankly on the often talked about subject of 'money')! There are many published articles (and impressive volumes) on this subject, written by 'experts' in the 'field'! You, someday (before you get married), will do yourself a great 'service' by reading some of these helpful resources. However, just now, I would like to share with you a few wise uses of money.***

***First, and most obvious, because you live in a 'material' world, it is essential that you possess enough money, in order that you can 'make it' in this world. God will gladly give you guidance regarding the career that you should pursue - a career that enables you to earn enough money to provide for yourself and especially enough money to provide for a family (if you choose to get married). It is your obligation to provide for the 'necessities' of life (food, shelter, clothing) if you have a wife and children. Of course, many wives work, but it is not easy when small children must be provided for in a 'daycare'. It is best (when young children are 'on board') for a young wife to be at home with those children. There is no 'substitute' for a good mother in the care of small children. The Bible says that "he who does not provide for his family (financially) is worse than an infidel"!***

***Second, plan (with your wife) to enjoy a "simple lifestyle"! This can mean many things. Above all, do not go into 'debt'. "Save now, and enjoy later!" Some couples go into 'debt', thinking they can't wait to enjoy some item, some pleasure! Their philosophy is: 'Enjoy now, and pay later'! By the time their 'new toy' becomes 'old', they (by credit card) are still paying!***

***You should never, never 'run your family budget' with a 'credit card'! If you are so undisciplined as to resort to 'credit cards', you will find (eventually) that your entire 'standard of living' has been 'lowered' (reduced). Because of the 'high interest' payments (of 18 - 20% or even more) that you are forced to pay on your unpaid 'balance', you will have much less 'actual available money' to spend on your family's genuine 'needs'. Of course, there are usually 'exceptions' to a 'general rule'. Son, because your mother is so disciplined (and I try to follow her***

*example – she is much more ‘business-oriented than I am), she and I agreed (after we had been married for a decade) to use a ‘credit card’ as a ‘convenient way’ to make ‘monthly purchases’! However, we always pay off our ‘credit card’ debt at the end of each month . Therefore, we never pay any interest on the card! The other exception: Few couples can pay ‘cash’ to purchase a house. Almost all persons must ‘take out a loan’ (mortgage). But, interest on this loan is ‘tax deductible’ (within limits)!*

*Third, make sure, Son, that you and your wife agree on a carefully-thought-out monthly budget – and be disciplined to ‘stay within that budget’. Both of you must be ‘accountable’ to each other. However, neither of you should be ‘looking over the shoulder’ of the other partner to ‘judge’ how each spends his or her own monthly (reasonable) ‘personal allowance’. Of course, there should be a small amount of money in the family budget for ‘family recreation’. Obviously, as the ‘family needs’ change the ‘budget’ should be adjusted.*

*Fourth, the following is a good way (generally-speaking) to ‘organize’ a family budget. The first 10% is a tithe (given to your local church for ministries); the second 10% is for your savings or financial investment, to slowly build your financial estate for future needs, or for an ‘emergency buffer’ or for eventual personal ‘retirement’; the remaining 80% to be budgeted for monthly family needs.*

*It was the famous John Wesley who warned (in several sermons) that ‘greed’ – love of money – would destroy one’s ‘walk with God’ (Christian Life)! It is not money, but the ‘love of money’ that is the ‘root of all evil’! Son, never let money ‘control’ you; rather, you ‘control’ money! Money is a wonderful ‘servant’ but a horrible ‘master’! Money is a ‘medium of exchange’ to be used to benefit you and your (eventual) family, and to bless many people through your generous giving. Here is a ‘challenge’! Son, monthly read (in many translations) I Timothy, Chapter 6!*

***Excellent Guidance.***

***Love Your Dad***



**69.**

***Dear Son,***

***Have you ever wondered how the 'Invisible' God makes Himself known to us human creatures, especially when (as you know) we humans are so closely 'connected' with the tangible visible concrete, touchable world? Well, in this brief letter I don't have the space to give a 'full' or 'adequate' answer to these honest (philosophical) questions, but I would like to suggest that one very vivid way our invisible God makes Himself known to us 'earthbound creatures' is by the 'beauty' which is displayed in our world in so many ways! Son, when you someday study the 'philosophy of religion' and 'theology' (which two subjects I enjoyed when I was in a Christian College many years ago,) you can probe the answers to the above questions, with more depth and understanding. (This is one 'advantage' when a young man or woman attends a Christian College, namely, opportunity to investigate the 'lasting values' with 'eternal significance').***

***In this brief letter, think of the amazing revelation of God through the various demonstrations of 'beauty'! I will confine myself only to this particular way in which God reveals himself to us humans: the manifestation of God's 'reality' through 'beauty'! Even the 'casual' observer realizes that (every day, in countless ways) the 'beauty' of the***

***earth is displayed! Someone wisely said that there must be a 'Beautiful Creator' for the creation (world) is filled with exquisite beauty! Just as 'a stream cannot rise higher than its source', so the wonders of earth's beauty cannot be greater than the wonders of the Source of this vast beauty!***

***Son, we are constantly surrounded by beauty. The Bible (many times) declares that the beauty of nature is the visible manifestation of the God who is Beautiful (loving) beyond description! You and I, when we are jogging in the early morning together, have often observed the little squirrels in the trees, and we have chuckled together while we watched the scampering bunnies darting across our jogging trail! We together have been entertained by the sweet (heavenly) sounds of the various flying birds above our heads. Admittedly, neither of us are well acquainted with the distinctive sounds of the large variety of birds that we see and hear. We probably should ask our local pastor to jog with us as he is an experienced 'bird watcher'!***

***I have been fascinated by the hundreds of willows that stick up their fuzzy heads along my jogging paths. Occasionally, I have been awed when I have caught a glimpse of the beautiful deer that find their home among the thick trees, not far from where I regularly take my early morning jogs.***

***There have been numerous mornings when, after I have started jogging in the near dark, I am taken back when I suddenly view the entire eastern horizon light up with bright colors as the sun peeks up on the horizon.***

***I am so grateful that our loving and beautiful God created colors for His creatures to enjoy. Black and white are meaningful colors, of course, but there is something about multi-colors that causes me to be prostrate before my great Creator. If color is wonderful here on earth, how much more wonderful will color be in that glorious Home above!***

***The Scriptures often exalt the works of God, as seen in Nature! "The heavens are telling the glory of God; they are a marvelous display of his craftsmanship. Day and night, they keep on telling about God. Without a sound or word, silent in the skies, their message reaches out to all the world. The sun lives in the heavens where God placed it and moves out across the skies as radiant as a bridegroom going to his wedding or as joyous as an athlete looking forward to a race! The sun crosses the heaven from end to end, and nothing can hide from its heat." (Psalms 19: 1-6; Living Bible)***

***It is true that this earth is not our home, and that we (believers) are only 'pilgrims passing through' this temporary dwelling, but, nevertheless, God has promised to give us (His followers) all things (on this earth) 'richly to enjoy'. And the splendor of His creation is one of those 'things' that is intended to give us (believers) 'great pleasure and great delight'. Of course, we do not 'worship nature', but we are permitted (even encouraged) to enjoy the 'works of God's hands' (Nature)!***

***Son, throughout your long life, let your heart 'well up' with praise (daily) in thanksgiving to the Creator of Nature, for the beauty of nature reveals vividly something of the infinite beauty of the Invisible God whom you serve! Of course, the 'beauty' of the 'crown of God's Creation', namely, 'human beings' (you) is a greater 'beauty' than all the 'beauty' of Creation! You are made in the 'image of God' – there could be no greater 'beauty' than that!***

***Love, Dad***



70.

*Dear Son,*

*I am so grateful that God allowed ('willed') for me to be your father! I humbly acknowledge that I am 'far from perfect', as a Christian (God knows this), and as a 'father' (God, of course, also knows this)! However, I hope that you realize that, even though I have made some mistakes in my role as 'father', I nevertheless, have a deep, and an ever-increasing, love for you! Son, when you see my 'imperfections', please find in your heart 'to forgive me' (by God's grace), and please look beyond me (during my own 'low times') and please behold the loving 'face' of your Heavenly Father (the 'perfect' Father who will never let you down)! Remember always, Son, Jesus is called the 'Rock of Ages'! You will never be a 'failure' in life, if you build your entire life (regularly) upon that stable Rock! Jesus said, "I will never leave you; I will never forsake you!" There is no 'shadow of turning' with Jesus! He is nearer to you than even your hands or your feet are near to you! He lives within the 'inner sanctuary' of your Soul! He guards you and He guides you, every step of your long life's journey! If you stray (unfortunately) from the 'path' that God has designed for you, you can be sure that God will give you His 'gentle warnings'. You must confess any known sin to Christ, and when you do confess (admit that you have 'strayed') and if you repent of your errors, God will restore you quickly to fellowship with Him! In response to your confession, God will give you total forgiveness!*

*Son, you know that (once in-a-while) I had to correct you - when you were not 'heading' in the right direction (disobedience of one kind and degree or another)! I always found it difficult to punish you, but (as a conscientious and loving father) I was 'compelled' to do the 'unpleasant' thing! Thankfully, you 'learned your lessons', regarding*

***obedience and respect for parental authority quite readily! In His word, God gives clear instructions regarding the training of children. When you (in a few years) become a father (parent), you will be well informed regarding the training of your own children (including the unwelcome task of correction and punishment). You and I have had long discussions regarding Biblical training of children!***

***Before I took the vows of 'Holy Matrimony', I spent much time reading the Bible particularly regarding what the Bible says about the proper (loving) application of discipline to children! "And now a word to you parents, don't keep on scolding and nagging your children, making them angry and resentful. Rather, bring them up with the loving discipline the Lord himself approves, with suggestions and godly advice." (Ephesians 6:4; Living Bible) Son, this instruction is God-given instruction to parents!***

***Of course, there are detailed instructions for children and teenagers! I am thankful, dear Son, that you accepted the Biblical instruction for yourself (as a child) – that is, you conformed to and you adjusted to and you submitted to your parents' godly instructions and requirements! Yes, the 'will' (even the 'strong will') of a child must be 'broken' (submitted to parental authority)! But, above all things (in parental training) the parent must never 'break' the 'spirit' (personhood) of a child! It is not only the child who must deeply respect (obey) the parent, but it is also the parent who must always respect the personhood (inner spirit) of the child! Jesus once said, "If you offend one of these 'little ones' (children), it would be better for you to have a 'millstone' (large weight) tied around your neck, and you be cast into the sea!" (Jesus had a great love for children)!***

***Son, I have tried (imperfectly) to serve my Lord, for many years, but I must admit to you that, just as you have experienced some 'discipline' from my loving hand (infrequently), so I, too, (as an adult Christian) have occasionally received some (unpleasant) discipline from the hand***

***of my Loving Heavenly Father! When I have sometimes been 'spiritually negligent', or when I have been 'worldly-minded', or when I have been 'drifting away from a close walk with God', or entertaining feelings of resentment', etc., etc., I have felt God's hand of chastisement on me! Son, you too, will (occasionally) sense the 'pains of God's chastising hand' on you! This is part of God's 'good parenting' - all because He loves you, and because He doesn't want you to become a 'backslider'!***

***"Let God train you, for he is doing what any loving father does for his children. Whoever heard of a son who was never corrected? If God doesn't punish you when you need it, as other fathers punish their sons, then it means that you aren't really God's son at all - that you don't really belong in his family. Since we respect our fathers here on earth, though they punish us, should we not all the more cheerfully submit to God's training so that we can begin really to live? Our earthly fathers trained us for a few brief years, doing the best for us that they knew how, but God's correction is always right and for our best good, that we may share his holiness. Being punished isn't enjoyable while it is happening - it hurts! But afterwards we can see the result, a quiet growth in grace and character". (Hebrews 12:7-11; Living Bible)***

***Love, Dad***



71.

*My dear Son,*

*There are times when I need an unusually helpful (relevant) Christian book (as you know I love to read books), or when someone (a friend) shares an unusual article with me. Just recently, I received a very insightful and interesting and practical 'paper' (short article). It is entitled "Partial Profile of a Godly Man" (a concise list of descriptions of what the writer of the article considers to be a 'Godly Man'). Of course, the article is too long for me to share all the 'descriptive points', but I thought you might profit from considering some of these descriptions. Some the following are the writer's 'insights'! I think most (perhaps all) of the 'points' could be 'supported by scripture'. After you read these 'descriptions' let us get together (just you and me) and discuss them! The material is 'to-the-point' (straight-forward)! Maybe God would choose to use these 'ideas' to help me to become a 'better man' (husband and father) now! Maybe you, too, could profit from these 'insights' – especially as you diligently prepare to 'take on the important role' of husband and father someday! Son, give some prayerful contemplation to these 'ideas' – as to what is involved in becoming a truly godly man – a man who 'meets' God's standards for being a husband and a father!*

*A husband is a man who greatly loves children and youth. A man who has established an habitual 'Daily Quiet Time' with God – for prayer, meditation, and scripture reading.*

*A Man who is financially able to provide for a wife and children, and one who greatly enjoys his respectable employment and enthusiastically engages in his daily work.*

*A Man who is a strong leader as a husband and father without being autocratic (in any way) – that is, a man who is committed to true partnership with his wife in an easy way.*

*A Man who is wise and discerning in judgment-making and one who is glad to humbly accept godly counsel from other godly persons.*

*A Man who is versatile in interests and talents, and one who has both discovered and is using his God-given spiritual gifts to bless others.*

*A Man who is hospitable, outgoing, extroverted, courteous, warm-hearted, affectionate, expressive, without in any way being unwholesomely 'familiar' or flirtatious with persons of the opposite gender.*

*A Man who profoundly respects and worships the Triune God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit), and who finds it 'natural' to share his love for God with wife, family friends, and even with strangers (discreetly).*

*A Man who is constantly open (within his inner spirit) to the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit, and one whose life beautifully manifests the "fruits of the Spirit" – love, joy, peace, etc. (Galatians 5)*

*A Man who values and enjoys the material things of the world (since they are gifts from God) but who is not "greedy for gain" and who finds it easy to be generous with his material possessions – to help uplift the poor and the distressed persons and the needy widows.*

*A Man who has a 'mission heart' and who desires to give money and time in the name of compassion to suffering persons in other countries.*

*A Man who can wholesomely see the 'funny side of life', and one who has a personal 'good sense of humor', and one who enjoys laughing with people (never laughing scornfully at people).*

*A Man who has a fair sense of decisive discipline with teens and a father who maintains strong order in the home. 'Fair, firm, and fun,' are the principles that he uses as guidelines for his discipline of teens.-A good listener to the concerns of the teens in his home.*

*A Man who is committed to utmost integrity (sincerity and honesty) in all his business dealings and interpersonal relationships with family and friends.*

*A Man who is cheerful in countenance and joyful in relationships and full of faith and hope and optimism, and, because of strong commitment of obedience to God's will, even during times of great testing and trials and adversities.*

*A Man who is teachable in attitudes, with a strong desire to learn God's truth from many different sources, but primarily from the eternal Word of God (Bible).*

*A Man who believes in and who personally and habitually practices 'intercessory prayer' – expecting God, in His own time, and ways, to wonderfully answer prayer (removing evil and establishing good in the lives of his family and friends and even strangers).*

*A Man who is "slow to speak, slow to anger and quick to listen". (Book of James)*

***A Man who affirms the Biblical promise: "God hath not given us a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power, and love, and a sound mind (discipline)". A positive-minded and faith-filled man*** who dwells upon God's powerful promises, not a negative-minded man who dwells upon the world's many injustices, inequities, and mysteries of evil happenings. A man who trusts God during personal tragedies.

*A Man who is good-humored and good-natured, one who is very easy to 'get along with' not easily offended, quick to see the best in others (not the worst), not critical in thoughts or words, and one who is very careful in the use of his tongue (i.e., not given to slander, gossip, tale-bearing, and lying). A Man who seeks to 'build up persons', and never to 'tear down others'. Thinks the best about others, not the worst! Always giving others the 'benefit of the doubt' in all situations.*

*A Man who enjoys affirming others, with no jealousy when others succeed.*

*A Man who, by God's daily grace, seeks to love God supremely, and who deeply desires (as God commands) to love his neighbor as he loves himself.*

*A Man who exercises regular faith in the living God of Providence, and who therefore believes that all things (good and bad) work into a 'pattern for good' to those who continue to truly love the Lord.*

*A Man who daily leads his family (wife and children) in Family Devotions. During these Daily worship times, he loves to lead his family in joyful worship, singing, and making melody unto the Dear Lord!*

***The person (Christian) who is highly esteemed and honored by God - i.e., the person who is seeking to be truly mature in all his ways - is the person who seeks earnestly to make Christ the Lord of his entire life. This choice person daily attempts (with the Holy Spirit's enablement) to bring all the activities and relationships and involvements of his life 'under the umbrella' of Christ's Lordship! He wants all that he says and all that he does, and all the relationships of his life to honor his God and to bring glory to his Savior and Lord! He wants his lips (words) to bring honor to Christ, and he wants his actions and his reactions to exalt Christ and to bring great blessings to his fellowmen. In the ways he relates to his family and friends and co-workers, he wants to have the 'smile of God's approval resting upon him'!***

***God richly bless you, my Son, and may you someday become a great husband and father.***

***Love, Dad***



72.

*Dear Son,*

*You have probably heard the statement: "No one is an 'island' unto himself!" In other words, each of us humans are surrounded by other persons throughout our entire earthly existence. That means, of course, that each of us (who live in 'society' with many other persons), is 'influenced' by others! The life of each of us is largely 'shaped and molded' by the words and actions and reactions and attitudes and decisions that other persons exercise in our presence.*

*Many of us (especially young persons, like yourself) tend to gravitate towards 'certain persons' whom we 'like' (admire). Many young persons 'pick their heroes' – persons whom they wish to imitate (in their own lifestyle). This tendency is 'strong' among young persons, and this 'orientation' can become 'good thing' or a 'bad thing' – depending (of course) on the kind and the quality of the person whom the young person seeks to 'imitate'!*

*My dear Son, the effects that 'influence' can have on young people can be powerful (for 'good' or for 'bad')! Remember, the day will come (in the not-too-distant future) when there will be some young person (maybe your own son) who will 'look up to you' for guidance and direction and wisdom! You may be the 'best Christian' that someone knows! Son, use your influence (now and throughout your entire long life) to guide persons into the 'Kingdom of God' (into the 'joy of Christian living')*

*A brief discussion (with you) regarding the 'power of influence', is directly 'tied into' the discussion of 'legacy'. What will be your own 'legacy' (enduring influence) after you have 'passed away'? I know, as a*

*young person, it is very difficult for you to spend much time thinking about your own future - the decades ahead of you! However, God willing, there will come a time when you will see your bride come down the aisle to meet you; there will come a time when you will 'catch your breath' when you see the birth of your 'first born'; there will come a time (many years from now) when you will play 'hide and seek' with your own grandchildren; and yes there will come a time (many years from now) when you will 'run the last mile' in your 'Race of Life'! After you have 'crossed the finish line' of life there will (of course) be many of your descendants who will (at least occasionally) spend some time focusing their thoughts (their memories) upon you! What kind of 'legacy' will you leave behind?*

*Remember, my beloved son, each of us possesses the 'power of influence' - an influence for either 'good' or for 'bad', a positive influence or a negative influence, an influence that brings 'hurt' to others or an influence that brings 'help' to others, an influence the memory of which will call up attractive thoughts or repulsive thoughts!*

*There is no such thing as a 'neutral' presence in our world. By the decisions, we make and by the life we live (godly or godless), we leave our 'mark' on this world!*

*Each of us is simply a 'link' in the long chain of life, and we are either a strong link or a weak link in that chain in which we inevitably 'fit'. We will leave this world 'better off' or 'worse off', because of our having lived in this big world for a few decades.*

*People (especially our children and our grandchildren) will remember us as being a kind person or as being a cruel person, as being a thoughtful person or as being a selfish person, as being a giving person or as being a grasping person, as being an understanding person or as being a close-minded person, as being a tender-hearted person or as being a calloused person!*

***Our descendants will remember us as being an amiable person or as being a stubborn person, as being a person who was adaptable or as being a person who was rigid and unyielding, as being a person who was forgiving or as being a person who was bitter and vengeful, as being a person who followed the Lord Jesus Christ or as being a person who was pagan in words and in thoughts and in actions.***

***What kind of influence are you presently having in your daily life? When people (honestly) think about you, what do they think? Does your loving (godly) character attract persons to you, or do people (in their moments of discernment regarding you) discern that you are not 'for real' (that you are double-minded and manipulative and impure in your motives)?***

***Do people love to be with you, because you are sincere in your motives (guileless in your motives), because you are trustworthy in your commitments, because you are compassionate in your mission?***

***Son, if you sincerely seek to 'please' the Heavenly Father, to 'glorify' the blessed Savior, and to 'honor' the mighty Spirit, I am sure you will (now and always) exercise a loving and authentic witness (positive influence) upon those whom God brings into your life - family, friends, acquaintances, even strangers! When you are vitally (daily) 'connected' with God (like a branch is connected to the vine - John 15), you will enjoy a life of health and winsome love for everyone around you! Yes, at times you must exercise you own 'will' in your 'good attempt' to influence persons, but because God's life is constantly 'flowing' into you by faith, you will be (most of that time) simply 'spontaneous' in your loving acts toward people! A 'natural' loving Influence!***

***Love, Dad***



**73.**

***Dear Son,***

***It is true that human development is a 'long process'. It takes a long time for a newborn (human baby) to grow from infancy to mature adulthood, at least 20-25 years! I am not a 'scientist', but I recently heard, from a college professor, that the 'human brain' is still being developed (maturing biologically) into the early 20's of a person's life. Of course, each person develops at a different 'speed'; therefore, it is difficult to determine just when a person can be termed a 'mature person' in his/her thinking – in other words, 'intellectual objectivity'. Son, tell me (some time) what is your understanding of the Biblical command: "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus!" How do you (as a young believer) think this wonderful 'goal' for life can be (increasingly and gradually) accomplished? To the extent that a person has 'incorporated' the 'Mind of Christ', to that same extent is a person 'truly mature' in his thinking (understanding of all human life)!***

***I believe that it is quite apparent, if you have the 'Mind of Christ', you will see all of life as 'sacred'. The simple tasks of everyday living are 'sacred' (cooking, cleaning, yard work, changing the baby's diapers, working 8 hours every day at one's job, and many other routine tasks). The life of the 'unborn baby' is sacred (Son, one of the greatest tragedies today is aborting millions of babies! Enjoyment of the beauties of Nature is sacred. Son, think of your Uncle (my brother). Even though he is somewhat 'crippled' in his feet and ankles (as a result***

*of his contracting polio when he was eight years old), your uncle has, nevertheless, hiked (literally) thousands of miles on mountain trails! When he was a young man, he actually climbed Long's Peak (Rocky Mountain Park) eight different times!*

*My dear Son, I thank God for your 'developing brain', and even now (even though you are only a teenager, and you have many years to live - 'God Willing') you, my son, are reading the Bible (often), and you are learning to meditate and to pray, and you are learning to discern the Spirit's direction in your life. I am so thankful that you love to listen to good sermons, and that you love your 'youth pastor' and the kids in your youth group! I am impressed that you have gone on a couple of 'short term mission trips' through our church's 'Mission Outreach Department'!*

*Son, you are not only discovering some of your 'special strengths' (academically and spiritually), but you are (slowly) discovering ways to exercise those talents and 'spiritual gifts'. I know you are presently at a 'state' of discovery. Doubtless, there are some of your abilities and skills and aptitudes which still 'lie dormant' (uncovered and undiscovered). You have shared with me that you are still wondering which 'field of study' (academic major) you should pursue in college. Son, don't 'panic' regarding what should be your lifetime profession or career! God will guide you! Continue to pray (in a 'concentrated' way and yet in a 'relaxed way') to your loving Heavenly Father! "In all thy ways 'acknowledge God, and He shall direct thy path!" (A promise from God to all honest 'seekers' for God's will). In seeking direction for your life career (your 'life mission'), it is helpful to seek the 'godly counsel' of others who truly love you (parents, pastor, mentors, etc.).*

*Son, if you truly surrender your own 'will' to the 'good and perfect will' of your loving Lord, you need not 'fear' that you will end up on a 'dead-end' road! When I was a teenager, I loved to read the Bible (in fact, I memorized many New Testament Chapters). My pastor 'took me under*

***his wing'! He really loved me! He was a 'student of scripture' (very smart, older man). On one Sunday afternoon (as a young teen), I was preparing a writing (notes) to present, in my own 'simple' way, at a youth program. My pastor saw my 'rough notes', and he sat me down beside him. He turned my notes into a 'sermon outline', and he told me that I was going to preach that very night! Son, that was my first sermon' I knew God had called me to be a preacher/pastor. I went to college, I majored in Religion, I graduated, I was assigned to a small local church! For 27 years, at that one Church, I preached hundreds of sermons! Son, God will guide you, too!***

***Love, Dad***



**74.**

***Dear Son,***

***Let us (you and me) think for a few minutes about the great variety of 'spiritual gifts' and unique 'talents' which God has given to His 'human family'! This is a fascinating subject to contemplate! God is the "Giver of all good and perfect gifts"! God, our Creator, created every person to 'mirror' His own creative powers. God is the 'Master Creator', and we (His children) are 'created in His own image'. That is to say, we creatures are 'little Creators'. We are created by our Creator to continue the creative work which He started. God, of course, originally created our wonderful world, but God chose to leave the world in an 'unfinished' condition! God designed a world that is an 'unfinished***

***product' – a world that must 'have the hands of humans on it' if it is to be completed! There are countless examples of how this 'principle' works – that is how God (the Master Creator) works in cooperation with His 'little' (human) creators. God sovereignly distributes abilities and talents and skills and 'spiritual gifts' to His human 'subjects' (to you and to me and to the earth's multitude of persons of all ages and backgrounds). The Bible reveals the vast variety of 'spiritual gifts' which God gives. I think this list of 'Spiritual Gifts' (distributed according to God's choice is only representative of the countless types and kinds of 'gifts' that God freely gives! Some persons, it is easy to discern, have been given several 'gifts', and other persons have been given only one or two 'Spiritual gifts'. No person is 'left out' of the Spirit's distribution of gifts!***

***All persons are 'called' by God to develop (use) their gifts, for the glory of God and (of course) for the 'good' of their fellow persons! At the end of life, each person must give an 'account' before God, as to the faithfulness with which he/she used the God-given gifts, for use on planet earth! God will 'reward' each person (believer) at the 'Judgment of Evaluation', and some believers will (according to God's wisdom and justice) receive a 'small reward' and some a 'larger reward' for the degree of faithfulness to the stewardship God gave to each person!***

***Son, the following is the clear Scriptural exposition regarding God's distribution of His 'spiritual gifts to His dear children. Focus on these truths! These insights come directly from God Himself (from His Holy Word)!***

***"Now God gives us many kinds of special abilities, but it is the same Holy Spirit who is the source of them all. There are different kinds of service to God, but it is the same Lord we are serving. There are many ways in which God works in our lives, but it is the same God who does the work in and through all of us who are his. The Holy Spirit displays God's power through each of us as a means of helping the entire***

*church. To one person the Spirit gives the ability to give wise advice; someone else may be especially good at studying and teaching, and this is his gift from the same Spirit. He gives special faith to another, and to someone else the power to heal the sick. He gives power for doing miracles to some, and to others power to prophesy and preach. He gives someone else the power to know whether evil spirits are speaking through those who claim to be giving God's messages—or whether it is really the Spirit of God who is speaking. Still another person is able to speak in languages he never learned; and others, who do not know the language either, are given power to understand what he is saying. It is the same and only Holy Spirit who gives all these gifts and powers, deciding which each one of us should have.” (I Corinthians 12:4-11)*

*Son, as you are getting older, I increasingly am becoming aware that God has wonderfully ‘gifted’ you – to bring honor to Christ and to bestow blessing upon persons whom God brings into your life (now and in the future). When you were quite young, I observed your ‘doodling’ (sketching) during your spare moments. I think you decided that while I was preaching, that was a good time to ‘develop your artistic talents’. Ha! Now that you are a teenager, I can’t believe how remarkable is your talent in ‘cartoon art’! I know that God was ‘good’ to you, to allow you to inherit your dear mother’s artistic genes! As you know your mother is an unusual artist. In my church office, I have displayed one of her colorful portraits that she drew when she was about the age that you now are (about 16 years old)! That painting of an African Child is amazing – color, mood, realism, everything that brings alive the facial features of that child! My Son, our God must have decided that you are like your mother, to enjoy artistic expression! I myself have no artistic ability!*

*Also, Son, I saw you flex your muscles recently! What huge biceps! Another ‘gift’! And, also, perhaps God allowed some of my writing ability, to be inherited by you! I was so impressed with your two*

***'creative articles'! Your teacher, in the creative writing class, was so impressed with your unusual articles that she kept a copy of your writings, to use as examples for future classes in 'creative writing'. As you may know, even though I am not greatly 'gifted' I do have a particular 'gift' that God has given to me, namely, the writing of Christian Devotional Books. For most of my life I have been engaged in concentrated writing of Christian Devotional Books, as well as writing sermons and articles.***

***Son, as a long time pastor, I have observed 'gifts' of all kinds – some of which have been used for the glory of Christ, and (unfortunately) some for self-enhancement! Love must motivate the use of all the gifts, if the Church of Jesus Christ is to be edified (encouraged and uplifted). When a church is full of love-driven believers, each of whom is exercising their 'gift' for the glory of God and for the mutual edification of fellow members, this church demonstrates to the 'world' what authentic Christianity is 'all about'!***

### ***Love Dad***



***75.***

***Dear Son,***

***Basically, there are two kinds of people on this earth! There are people (Christians and non-Christians alike) who have an inner desire to follow and obey a 'higher power'. For Christians, that 'higher power is Christ. And there are other people who are 'set' (determined) to live independent of any 'guidance' (direction or insight) from anyone***

***outside of themselves! Submissive persons (to divine help) and self-created persons (sole reliance upon their own 'human resources').***

***Son, the latter type person (i.e., the independently-oriented person) has no regard for the available 'resources' from the 'spiritual' (invisible) world. Such a person may not declare that he is an 'atheist', but, because he never seeks 'divine aid' (wisdom or guidance) this person, in reality, must be declared a 'practical atheist'. He lives, and he acts, independent of God's presence. In other words, he lives 'as if there were no God'. He never really 'seeks God's will'; he never humbles himself to listen for the 'still, small voice of the Holy Spirit'; he never reads the Bible; he is unteachable in the company of teachers and preachers and counsellors! He is a proud 'know-it-all' person - a person who takes pride in his own knowledge (his own learning and academic degrees), and in his own hard-earned 'achievements'! He is a 'self-reliant', 'self-sufficient', independent thinker! He has a condescending attitude towards "those ignorant simpletons - those naïve Christians"!***

***Son, the Bible says, "The fool hath said in his heart that there is no God." The Bible also says, "There is a way that seems right unto man, but the end thereof is the way of death!" Son, always remember that the 'sophisticated' atheists (i.e., the humanists, and secularists, and materialists, and hedonists, and sensualists, and those who 'worship' science) - these non-Christians, some of whom are self-declared 'atheists', these 'tragic human beings' are on a 'dead-end road'! The Bible declares that (unless they repent of their 'atheism') they will ultimately experience 'death' and 'destruction'! God's righteous (just) judgement 'rests' upon them! (John 3:36)***

***In stark contrast to those persons (just described) are those who seek to do God's will - to please the Heavenly Father, to glorify the Son, to honor the Holy Spirit! These God-seekers will find deep fulfillment on this troublesome planet, and ultimately, they will experience eternal life in heaven some glorious day!***

***Son, your attitudes and your actions (even at this young period of your life) indicate to me that you want to be a God-centered person, not a self-centered person! God declares, "Without me, you can do nothing!" It is the surrendered person, not the independently-oriented (rebellious) person, who will find a true 'purpose' for living. After all, each person is made 'by' God, and, indeed, made 'for' God! We are not made to live independent of God. As the lungs are made for air, as the stomach is made for food, as the ears are made for music, so your soul and my soul are made alone for God. There is a 'God-shaped vacuum' inside of you, designed to be filled by your Creator! There is no true happiness, aside from your having sweet and loving fellowship with your God!***

***Son, I believe that you have established your commitment to be a 'Jesus-follower'! You are very 'open' to find out what God's will is for you – personally! Of course, the 'general' will for all human beings is 'salvation through Faith on Jesus Christ'. God does NOT will (desire) that anyone should perish, but that all persons (sinners) should repent and be 'saved'. Beyond that 'general will', there is a 'specific will' of God for each person!***

***Son, God reveals His will to sincere Christians (1) Through the counsel of others (wise and godly and caring persons); (2) Through the circumstances of life (i.e., when God closes one door, He will soon open another door); (3) Through the prayer of a believing heart (i.e., when you earnestly and persistent pray in faith, God is delighted to hear your prayer); (4) Through the Bible (i.e., when you read and study the Word of God you will know the promises to claim)!***

***Son, I would like to talk in detail with you regarding these four (4) ways that God uses to reveal His 'specific will' for you. I would like to share with you how our Loving Father, in 'person' or by means of love, has***

*directed my own life (many times), through these 4 means. Perhaps 'in person' or by means of another letter, I can be more specific.*

*Love,*

*Dad*



76.

*My dear Son,*

*In my last letter to you, I described the 'stark contrast' between a God-oriented person, and a self-centered person! The God-oriented person humbles himself before God. His 'teachable' (attentive) attitude allows God to speak to him, to provide guidance and direction for his life's decisions (especially his major decisions, like marriage and career). The self-centered person thinks that his own independent mind is sufficient to guide him in his life's decisions. He does not look 'upward' to a 'higher power' (i.e., he is earthbound)!*

*I have great confidence in you, my dear son! I don't believe you are among the foolish 'masses' of human beings who are attempting to live their lives independent of the wider and deeper (spiritual) available resources. Son, there is a 'well-beaten pathway' that leads to heaven! Millions of persons (believing children) have traveled that pathway ahead of you and me! God most clearly has (mercifully) revealed various (complementary) ways, by which you can discover God's 'personal will' for your own personal life!*

*Counsel: sometimes God uses one man to reveal His will to another man. The Scriptures point out the importance of seeking the counsel of others. "...where no counsel is, the people fail: but in the multitude of counselors there is safety." (Proverbs 11:14) "...the way of a fool is right in his own eye, but he that hearkened unto counsel is wise." (Proverbs 12:14) "...only by pride cometh contention, but with the well advised is wisdom". (Proverbs 13:10) "...without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counselors they are established." (Proverbs 20:18)*

***Oftentimes young or immature persons can save themselves from many a pitfall by heeding the advice and counsel of a more mature person.***

- I. Circumstances: God many times reveals his will through circumstances. If it is important to realize that God is big enough and powerful enough to control the laws of nature and the events of history, then it is equally important to realize that God is loving enough and fatherly enough to control the circumstances of life which determine one's personal destiny. As the scripture says, "... we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28)***
  
- 2. Prayer: Effective prayer must be accompanied by obedience and wholeheartedness. For one to say that he is willing to be anything for God, except one thing, is to be less than whole-hearted in commitment to the lord of life! There is no 'if', 'buts', 'excepts', or 'maybe's' in effective praying.***

***Effective praying must be accompanied with a spirit of surrender, submission, and contrition. He who prays right must follow the example of Christ who said, "not my will, but thine be done".***

**4. Bible: Oftentimes people come to know the will of God through reading the Bible. The Bible outlines God's plan for man's salvation, and gives instruction for right living. The Bible tells us how to live life successfully. "The whole bible was given by inspiration from God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives; it straightens us out and helps us do what is right. It is God's way of making us well prepared at every point, fully equipped to do good to everyone." "All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly quipped for every good work. (II Timothy 3:16; Living Letters)**

***If the Bible is the kind of book as above described, is it not reasonable to expect guidance from its reading? However, for one to receive guidance from the Bible, he must not read it mechanically or magically, but instead, it must be read with consideration of its total context.***

***To get guidance from the bible, one must approach it reverently, humbly, and open-mindedly. The one who can say 'I delight to do thy will, O' God' will come to know God's will. "...thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and light unto my path. The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple." (Psalms 119:105, 130) The Bible should be used as the final guide in making decisions, for the Bible is God's own word and revelation. It is the revelation of God's 'objective truth', the 'judge' of man's mere opinions!***

***Remember, son, God loves to guide those who are humble, receptive, teachable, and expectant! In summary, remember: God reveals his will through the counsel of others. Be willing to listen to others, and don't feel that your wisdom is all-sufficient, or that your judgment is infallible.***

***God reveals his will through the circumstances of life. When God closes one door and opens another, be ready to walk through the newly opened door. God is sovereign and living and makes all circumstances work together for good to the one who loves God.***

***God reveals his will through the prayers of a believing heart. Pray in faith and expect God to answer. God will surely answer in his own time and way. God is the one who is the infinite source of wisdom, Who has promised to guide your path. Such comfort and encouragement to a mentally-confused and emotionally – distraught teen!***

***God reveals his will through the bible. Spend much time mining the inexhaustable treasures of truth and wisdom, truths which will be a lamp to your feet and a light to your path. "...your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path." (Psalms 119:105)***

***Love, your caring  
Dad***



**77.**

***Dear Son,***

***There are many 'traits' in your life for which I feel admiration and appreciation! Even though you are only 16 years old (presently), I am so thankful that you are a follower of Jesus! I am thankful, in addition,***

*that you are beginning to develop certain 'holy habits', as a result of your dawning understanding of the deeper dimensions of Christianity – the more mature perceptions of the 'holy faith' of Christ. Christianity is the growing relationship of love and communion with your precious heavenly Father. In other words, Christianity basically consists of learning the 'dynamics' of communion (fellowship) and communication (prayer) with the Lord Jesus Christ (through the ministry of the Holy Spirit)! You are discovering the joyous experience of 'getting alone' with God, to listen for the 'still small voice' of the blessed Lord, and to respond in conversation with your Lord. Of course, this 'listening' to God is experienced in the 'context' of hearing God speak to you, as you read His matchless word (Bible)!*

*Son, following the example of your dear mother and your dear grandmother (and several of your loved ones), I encourage you to make it your goal to become a faithful 'prayer warrior' (throughout your entire life)! I vividly recall, when I was a small child, kneeling beside my own Godly mother, as she silently prayed in the evening, just before she retired for the night. She maintained this practice (of kneeling at her bed), well into her old age! In her obituary (after she died at age 95), it was noted that she was a 'prayer warrior'! I hope the same tribute can be written (in the distant future) about you, when your family writes your obituary! The greater responsibility (indeed, the greatest privilege) in your life (as a Christian) is prayer! Prayer is your 'lifeline' to God! You will be either a strong Christian or a weak Christian, depending upon the degree of your praying and the quality of your praying that you do! Son, practice having a short prayer with anyone that you are with, especially when you are visiting with another Christian. When someone gives you a prayer request, stop right there and pray with them about their request, if possible. Son, please pray now!*

***“Dearest Lord, there is no greater privilege than the privilege of spending time alone with you, the creator of all things and the one who begot me as one of your lowly but significant creatures. Communion with you, as a son with a loving Father, is the essence of prayer. I know that you know all things, even the thoughts, and motives, and intents of all humans.***

***“Nothing is hidden from you! When I share my burdens with you, O God, I realize that I am not informing you (the all-knowing one), rather I am simply ‘casting my cares’ on you and listening to your voice that instructs me as to what I am to do (to help answer my own request to you)! Help me to hear your voice (in my heart and mind) and give me the courage to obey your voice. “Sweep over my spirit, in fathomless billows of love”, and then I will be able to be a true servant of love to many hurting ones! Let me “take time to be holy”, to speak often with my loving God! May my daily ‘quiet times’ (usually in the early mornings) be times of unusual closeness to you, my precious lord!***

***“Let me be lost in wonder, love, and praise as I behold your glory and majesty! For then it will be easy for me to spend both quality time and quantity time alone with you – the lover of my soul! Amen!”***

***Son, the power that God releases into the world through prayer is very great! Note what the Bible says, “The prayer of a righteous (Godly) man availeth much!” (James 5) If we ‘meet the conditions’, God is glad to answer our prayers! Remember the motto: “more is wrought through prayer than this world dreams of!” Son, talk often to the ‘lover of your soul’!***

***Love, Dad***



78

*My dear Son,*

*Let me state something that may sound 'radical' (extreme) to you - but, nevertheless, what I state is true: if you have a PhD degree in many 'subjects' of man's 'learning', and yet you do not have knowledge of, or belief in, or appropriation of, the Holy Bible, you are not truly 'educated'. You do not possess in your heart and your mind that 'wisdom' from above (divine wisdom)! Without true knowledge of the Bible, you don't know what life is 'all about'! On the other hand, you may not have much 'formal education', yet, if you have a 'thorough knowledge' of the contents (truths) of the Bible (and, indeed, if you are seeking to live by the Bible's 'principles'), you are God-led and wisdom-directed, and truly an 'educated' person! Son, my grandmother fits the description of the last statement! Unfortunately, difficult circumstances kept her from attaining the kind of 'formal education' that she desired (even though she was certainly 'sharp' mentally)! Even though she had only an eighth-grade (public) school education (in the late 19th century), she had great 'hunger' for knowledge, and especially a 'deep desire' to read and to study the Bible! She incessantly read the Bible, and she also read books other than the Bible. My grandmother's favorite book (other than the Bible, which was the primary book of her reading) was 'Pilgrim's Progress'. (The ancient book by John Bunyan is said to be the most popular book, second only to the Bible itself.) She read 'Pilgrim's Progress' several times throughout her long life (she*

**died at age 89 in 1972). She was no 'stranger' to 'suffering', but my grandmother found much comfort in her extensive reading of the Bible, and through her much reading of Christian books. By her own diligent study, my grandmother became so 'knowledgeable' of the Bible's content, that she became 'qualified' to teach the Bible in her local church for several decades! She never attended Bible school, but, instead she was a 'self-educated' woman of God! Through much study of the Bible, and through the 'anointing' of the Spirit' (both in prayer, of course), my grandmother (a 'hero' to me) became a seasoned (respected) Bible teacher (of adults, in her local church)!.**

**Son, above all else, become an 'habitual' reader of the Bible! There are many 'plans' (aids) to facilitate your earnest, thorough, systematic reading and study of the Bible! 'Try out' some of these 'helpful plans'! Variety in studying is enjoyable! Read the Bible in several translations! You have resources at your 'fingertips'! We are living in the greatest time for Biblical resources (including the internet)!**

**Son, I mentioned (in a previous letter to you) that, after I was 'saved' (converted), when I was eleven years old, God changed me drastically! During my previous public school years, frankly, I had little interest in studying anything, (any subject). I 'got by' with making B's and C's (with a very few A's)! I had no interest in 'reading' any more than I had to! My favorite 'subject' at school was recess. For at 'recess' I could 'show off' my skills in running! I usually came in 'first place' in running competition! Son, God really 'changed' (transformed) me, when I accepted Christ as my Savior! No, I didn't suddenly begin making straight 'A's in my school academics, but (amazingly) as a brand new eleven-year-old believer, I had a great desire to spend lots of time (near my old creek, alone) memorizing entire chapters of the New Testament! Not only 'chapters', but entire books of the New Testament!**

**God 'quicken'd' my mind to enable me quickly (with review of course) to memorize the word of God! Son, my mother was a very 'saintly'**

woman - a woman of prayer, a woman who (with a tenth-grade education) had a great love for the Bible, a woman who manifested the 'Fruits of the Spirit' in her life (Galatians 5). My mother was my greatest 'encourager'! She spent much time nurturing me in 'the faith' of Christ, and she also often listened to me repeat the Bible chapters that I had memorized! She was an amazing 'teacher' and 'enabler' to me! The best disciple 'in the faith' I could ever imagine! (My mother also memorized many passages of scriptures. Before she passed away (in my home, at 95 years old), she still repeated dozens of verses)!

Son, God prepares all of us, in His own loving and wise ways! When I memorized so many verses (entire chapters) from the New Testament, I did not know (during my very early life (in junior high and in high school) that I soon would be seeking to 'rightly divide the word of God' (seeking properly to outline scripture and to expound Biblical passages) - all to guiding and strengthening and encouraging and comforting the 'People of God' (the church of Jesus Christ). When I was memorizing hundreds of verses (while sitting on a flat rock, near Fountain Creek), I never 'dreamed' that God someday (when, I was a pastor) would 'direct' me to write and to write and to write (for more than 40 years!) dozens of Christian devotional Books. Books that are useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives; To straighten us out and help us do what is right. It is God's way of making us "well prepared at every point, fully equipped to do good to everyone." (II Timothy 3: 16-17; Living Bible)  
Thanks, son, for letting me share with you!

Love,  
Your Dad



79.

Dear Son,

May I encourage you to have a 'clear' (Biblically-informed) mind, when you seek to understand the proper understanding between the Bible teaching regarding 'faith' and 'good works'! Briefly stated it is this: we humans (sinners) are saved by grace, through faith for good works! Works (good deeds) do not save us, but if we are truly saved, we (as believers) will 'produce' good deeds! Good deeds are not 'redemptive', that is, good deeds cannot save us. But if we truly have been saved, we will have lifestyle that is (gradually) 'full of good deeds' (Christ-honoring deeds of compassion)! Of course, the 'thief on the cross' (whom Jesus 'saved' because of the thief's 'elementary faith) had no 'chance' (opportunity) to 'do' any 'good deeds'! He went to 'paradise', as Jesus promised he would, only because of his 'act' (condition) of 'sheer, simple faith' in Christ! But, if a newborn Christian has any time on earth), following his conversion, this newly-changed person (because of the miracle of his transformation) will desire (intensely) to demonstrate his love for his newly-recognized Savior by 'reaching out in love' to his fellow human beings. The love of God, which is shed abroad in his heart, compels him to seek needy persons (saints and sinners alike) whom he may bless (with his witness, and by his practical gifts of compassion)! Son, always keep a 'clear mind' regarding this Biblically-defined relationship: We (believers) are not saved by the 'good works' that we 'preformed', but, rather, if we are truly 'saved' (by God's grace),

we will evidence (demonstrate) that we are 'truly saved' by Christ by the life that we live - by the loving acts of compassion that we 'do' (in humility and in gratitude to our God of love). As the saying goes: "a bell is not a bell until you ring it!" So, it is also true to say that "love is not love until you show it by acts of kindness and compassion." Love is a 'feeling' (of warmth and closeness and high regard for a person), but love is truly 'proved' when love becomes a 'verb' (action), not only a 'noun' (feeling)! Love is concrete and practical and personally involved with real people who have real needs! James (the half-brother of Jesus) forcefully wrote about the practice nature of true 'faith' (that is proved by 'works') "...so you see, it isn't enough just to have faith. You must also do good to prove that you have it. Faith that doesn't show itself by good works is no faith at all—it is dead and useless. But someone may well argue, 'you say the way to God is by faith alone, plus nothing'. Well, I say that good works are important too, for without good works you can't prove whether you have faith or not; but anyone can see that I have faith by the way I act." (James 2:17-18: Living Bible)

One of Jesus' disciples (the Apostle John, sometimes called 'the apostle of love') 'echoed' the same message that Jesus' brother declared: "But if someone who is supposed to be a Christian has money enough to live well, and sees a brother in need, and won't help him—how can God's love be within him? Little children, let us stop just saying we love people; let us really love them, and show it by our actions. Then we will know for sure, by our actions, that we are on God's side, and our consciences will be clear, even when we stand before the Lord." Son, of course you know (from reading the Bible yourself, and by the careful training I have given you throughout your young life, that, as I repeat in the first part of this important letter, humans are 'saved' by God's grace, through faith in Christ's saving atonement, and not by means of any human 'merit' (Ephesians 2:8-10). This is the 'clear teaching' of the Bible (especially as expanded in the powerful book of Romans). With these truths in mind, how would you 'interpret' Jesus' teaching regarding the rewards that are promised to compassionate persons? Is

*it possible (according to **Matthew 25:31-46**) that humans 'make it to heaven' or 'don't make it to heaven', based solely on their response to hurting people on earth? It sounds to me (by what **Jesus** says) that "compassion is the passport to heaven"! It is not the accuracy of the 'head' knowledge), but, rather, it is the compassion of the 'heart' that determines one's worthiness to enter heaven! It sounds as if there will be compassionate persons who will be 'surprised' when they are 'ushered' into heaven - based solely on the 'fact' of their life of compassion on earth! Son, is it possible that (according to this passage) persons (sinners) who are 'faulty' in their 'head' (ignorant), but who are, nevertheless, 'walking in all the light they have' (and are right in their 'heart' - that is, who are compassionate) will be 'surprised' to find themselves in heaven? It certainly 'seems' to be a 'proper interpretation' I personally believe the (very serious) teaching of **Jesus** is this: "compassion is the only passport to heaven". Sorry! I have been attempting to interpret a scripture which you (yourself) have not yet read! Here it is (**Matthew 25: 31-40; Living Bible**) "But when I, the Messiah shall come in my glory, and all the angels with me, then I shall sit upon my throne of glory. And all the nations shall be gathered before me. And I will separate the people as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and place the sheep at my right hand, and the goats at my left. Then I the King, shall say to those at my right, 'come, blessed of my Father, into the Kingdom prepared for you from the founding of the world. For I was hungry and you fed me; I was thirsty and you gave me water; I was a stranger and you invited me into your homes; naked and you clothed me; sick and in prison, and you visited me.' Then these righteous ones will reply, 'Sir, when did we ever see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you anything to drink? Or a stranger, and help you? Or naked, and clothe you? When did we ever see you sick or in prison, and visit you?'...And I, the king, will tell them, 'When you did it to these my brothers, you were doing it to me!'" (**Matthew 25: 31-40**)*

**Son, may God's love, shed abroad in your heart by the holy spirit, inspire you, motivate you, compel you - to go out into a world of needy and hurting persons, and may God use you to comfort the disturbed, and to heal many!**

**Love, Dad**

