

HEBREWS: REPLACING MAN'S RITUALISM WITH CHRIST
"Part XIX: Parenting Our Children By Faith"
(Hebrews 11:1, 17-23)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Just how to raise our children to be happy, mature, godly, fulfilled Christian adults is a common, great concern for many of us:

young people unlike any other age group. No matter where they live, *teens* have been sensitized to the reality that this horror could have happened anywhere -- including their **own school** . . . it becomes an extraordinary challenge to address **your** students' questions . . . "

In view of the potential threat to *any* teen in school in our nation regarding *just STAYING ALIVE*, what is a parent to DO?!

(2) The August 2, 1999 issue of USA TODAY ran an article by Stephaan Harris about the nationwide D.A.R.E. anti-drug program that has been used in our public schools. These police-led class lectures were designed to teach students how to say no to drugs and alcohol.

Yet, according to researchers at the University of Kentucky, the program has had minimal effect. 23% of sixth-graders studied who had participated in D.A.R.E. still smoked half a pack of cigarettes a day in the month before the study's follow-up. 30% used alcohol at least once a week, and 46% had smoked marijuana and 24% had used other drugs like cocaine at least once in the year before the study.

In view of these statistics, how can a parent deal with the threat that even LAW ENFORCEMENT efforts to make his children end up with **BASIC sound CHARACTER might FAIL?!**

(3) Within just the last 30 years, our nation's **government** has legalized late term abortions, accepted gay **family** units and made it almost a crime to put the ten commandments up in a public gathering.

In face of the escalating evils in GOVERNMENT that have risen to counter quality Christian home life, a threat that mortgages away our GRANDCHILDRENS' futures, what is a parent to DO?!

How can we parents effectively face the responsibility to raise our children as GOD wants us to **with any hope of success?!**

(We turn to the sermon "Need" section . . .)

***Need:* "With the growth of evil in this world and the liberty my child has to REJECT my parenting efforts and turn out wrong, is there any HOPE I can claim that my child can SUCCEED after me?!"**

- I. **The author of Hebrews urged Jewish Christians to worship Christ rather than using the temple rituals under godless peer pressure, Heb. 9:7-10, 11-14 (sermon XII); Rylie Study Bible, KJV, p. 1729.**
- II. **Accordingly, these believers were to LIVE by FAITH in Scripture's revelation versus yielding to godless peer pressure, Hebrews 11:1.**
- III. **In an APPLICATION of this, they were to follow Old Testament patriarchs in parenting their offspring by faith, Hebrews 11:17-23:**
 - A. The readers of Hebrews faced great persecutions for their Christian faith (Heb. 10:32-33) which undoubtedly stressed their *children*.
 - B. Hence, the writer of Hebrews reminded them of **like** trials involving **children** their godly patriarchs faced, but handled well by *faith*:
 1. **By faith Abraham** handled the **threat** to his son's *life*, 11:17-19:
 - a. God told Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, his son as a burnt offering, and he planned to do so by faith, He. 11:17a with Gen. 22:1-3.
 - b. We know from Genesis 22:2 that Isaac was Abraham's sole, beloved son, making this threat to Isaac a **great trial**, 11:19!
 - c. Yet, Abraham recalled God had created Isaac through his and his wife, Sarah's "dead" reproductive systems, Gen. 17:15-17; 21:1-3. Hence, he saw God's order to kill Isaac as a test of faith in God's promise to **use** him to produce a nation in Gen. 21:12; so, believing that after he killed Isaac, God would **have** to raise him from the dead to fulfill **His own promise** re: **ISAAC** (Heb. 11:18-19), Abraham grasped the knife to slay him, Gen. 22:10.
 - d. God stopped Abraham at that point, commenting on his great faith in God and His promise about Isaac, Gen. 22:12; 22:7-8.
 2. **By faith Isaac** faced his **concern** re: his sons' **character** growth:
 - a. Hebrews 11:20 says Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau by faith.
 - b. This event involved Isaac's concern at the time about possible poor character growth in his son: (a) When Jacob sought to steal his brother, Esau's birthright, he dressed as his brother and went to see Isaac, Gen.

- 27:16-19. (b) Though this ruse intended to deceive blind Isaac, Isaac had reason to wonder if Jacob, not Esau was before him, revealing wonderment as to the **character** of the son involved, Gen. 27:20-22. (c) Not wanting to *deny* blessing **Esau** if the son was *truly him*, by *faith* that **God** would fulfill His Covenant anyway, **Isaac blessed both sons**, 27:23-40!
3. **By faith Jacob** faced concerns about his offsprings' **achievements**:
 - a. While close to death, weak and thus unable to do anything about securing his sons' future actions, Jacob blessed them, He. 11:21.
 - b. However, he **DID** so by elevating the **younger ABOVE** the **elder** offsprings **against** cultural **norms**: (a) Jacob elevated his grandsons, Ephraem and Manasseh, Joseph's sons to supplant Reuben, the eldest as double heirs, Ryrie St. Bib., KJV fn. to Gen. 48:5. (b) Then, in blessing Joseph's sons, Jacob gave the greater blessing to the younger boy, Ephraem, Gen. 48:13-14, 18-19. (c) These reverses strained against the culture of the day as seen by Joseph's objection to Jacob's action in Gen. 48:17-18.
 - c. Jacob went against the norm because he recalled 3 generations of **God's** reverse of the order in blessing the younger over the older, cf. Gen. 21:9-12; Gen. 27:36 and Gen. 48:5.
 - d. He thereby blessed the **younger** as an act of **submission** to **GOD'S** plans, trusting **God** would cause his descendants to achieve well after his death as God had done in **past** family lives!
 4. **By faith Joseph** faced the uncertainties of his sons' **destinies**: he commanded that his mummified body be taken **with** the generation that left Egypt to Canaan instead of being buried in Canaan immediately upon death, He. 11:22; Gen. 50:25-26. That way, Jacob used his mummified body as a vehicle to encourage later generations that **God** would secure their **destiny**!
 5. **By faith Moses' parents** faced the risk of his **vulnerability** as an infant **to a hostile world power** in Pharaoh, Hebrews 11:23:
 - a. Seeing that their infant son, Moses was a beautiful child, Moses' parents believed God made him attractive for practical use, v. 23
 - b. Thus, they feared God more than the powerful Pharaoh's edict and refused to expose him to die in the Nile through hiding him!

Application: We must **ENTRUST** to **GOD** those areas that we parents are **HELPLESS** to influence for the welfare of our descendants. Thus, (1) as a **PARENT**, believe in Christ for salvation from sin to become part of God's plan in our **OWN** lives, **Jn. 3:16**. (2) Then, live by **FAITH** in **GOD'S** love and **PLANS** for our children to handle those areas of their existence we **CANNOT** affect, **Hebrews 11:17-23**.

Lesson: The patriarchs did their best to rear their children well, but left in **FAITH** to **GOD** and **HIS** plans **FOR** their **CHILDREN** those areas of their offsprings' welfare they could **NOT** themselves influence or control.

Conclusion: (To illustrate the sermon lesson . . .)

In a missionary biography I once read but cannot now recall where I read it, I learned that John and Betty Stam, missionaries to China under the China Inland Mission, suddenly faced the huge trial of facing imminent martyrdom for their faith by communist forces.

Added to their challenge was what to do with their infant daughter when the soldiers came up to their house and ordered them outside. Being thousands of miles away from protective relatives in America, and not knowing where the other missionary supporters were, nor having any option of contacting them, Mrs. Stam did the only thing she could do: she quickly prepared a bottle of milk for her baby, tucked her safely into her crib with the bottle accessible to her so that the infant would stay as comfortable and live as long as she could make it possible for her live in view of the sudden limitations she as a mother faced near her martyrdom, and then simply left the house with her husband and the soldiers to be slain!

John and Betty Stam were then gunned down by the invading militia on a bridge located near their home.

Reports reveal that the Lord laid it upon the hearts of supportive Christian nationalist Chinese who witnessed the slayings to smuggle the Stam's infant out of the house, care for her and transport that baby secretly by foot all of the way back to the Mission's headquarters. From there the baby was sent back to America where she grew up in a godly home to become a committed Christian woman!

Like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph of the Old Testament, **Betty Stam did ALL she COULD do, but calmly in faith left with GOD what she could NOT do for her infant as a mother about to be martyred. Then GOD who had initially GIVEN the Stams their baby girl in the FIRST place took over in their behalf at that spot in life's pathway beyond which John and Betty could no longer go.**

That's how we parents must function in regards to the welfare of our children -- live by **FAITH** in God in that calling!

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