

The Lighted Path



101 Practical Lessons Using God's Word As Guidance For
Parents, Grandparents, And Anyone Who Loves Children

Lyn Kirkland

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And Anyone Who Loves Children

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Our prayer at Olive Press is that we may help make the Word of Adonai fully known, that it spread rapidly and be glorified everywhere.

We hope our books help open people's eyes so they will turn from darkness to Light and from the power of the adversary to God and to trust in ישוע Yeshua (Jesus). (From II Thess. 3:1; Col. 1:25; Acts 26:18,15 NRSV *New Revised Standard Version* and CJB) May this book in particular reveal more deep meaning in the Jewish roots of our faith.

To honor Him, all pronouns referring to the Lord are capitalized, satan's names are not. Scriptures quotes are left as they are.

All Scriptures are taken from the King James Version of the Bible.

Dedication

This book is lovingly dedicated to the memory
of my dear mother,

Elsie Geiger,

who was a living example of motherly love.

With special thanks to my

sweet husband and best friend,

Jim Kirkland,

who has taught me so much about the Word of God.

Introduction

The day I became a parent, I took my first step down a different path a new path that I had never experienced before. My life was irrevocably changed, and my journey was then altered for the rest of my days. Being a parent is the best, and most difficult thing I have ever done in my life. Nothing can prepare you for the joys, challenges, pressure, hilarity, and sometimes heartache that only a parent can experience. Yes, others can experience those same emotions, but because they come attached to one or more human beings that YOU helped bring into this world, they are unique.

You can read parenting books, watch DVDs, question and talk to other Moms and Dads, and vow to “do it right”, but the truth is parenting is the most daunting task you may ever face. Each day, year, season can bring with it unique challenges. No parent has ever parented YOUR child(ren), so that fact, in itself, makes YOUR situations exclusive to you.

You may ask, “Can anyone help me through these days and years?” The answer is “YES”. The Lord can! He has made a way for you and me (and anyone else who takes advantage of the opportunity to spend time in His Word). I’m speaking of the Bible God’s own Word. Over the years, I have come to call the Bible “my Handbook for Living”. It is filled with wisdom and advice on any subject you can possibly imagine. The words of the Lord contained in the Bible have become “the light unto my path” of parenting.

But, the Bible is not like one of those parenting books where you look up your subject in the table of contents, and it directs you to the correct pages. You see, the Bible is a supernatural book. It was written by people who were inspired by God Himself; and HE knew exactly what His people would need to hear. As I have been reading the Bible over the years, the Holy Spirit has enlightened me through numerous Scriptures on so many issues. The Lord promises anyone who receives His Son, Jesus Christ, into his or her heart, that if they will spend time in His Word, He will teach and instruct them, strengthen their faith, and inspire them with wisdom. I believe if anyone ever needed wisdom, it is a parent.

I am a firm believer in the promises of God. The Bible is filled with the will of God, spoken in the form of promises by God, thus giving us His will and His ways. The Bible has been the basis for the inspiration provided in this book. The Lord is the One guiding my thoughts and my fingers as I type these words of encouragement and guidance for parents. I thank HIM for the opportunity to do so.

It is my sincere hope that the pages of this book will bring the truth of God’s Word to you in a helpful and interesting way. It is my privilege to relate some of the knowledge I have accumulated from the experience of being a parent myself. These pages are filled with personal stories, advice, and encouragement, combined with Scriptures that apply to a variety of situations. This book is meant to give you daily support and hope. Each page will pertain to a certain aspect of parenting such as consistency, family values, love, affirmation, etc. Hopefully, the readings will impart words of wisdom, guidance, humor, and food for thought to you. Together, let us take the steps down the path of parenting, with enlightenment from the Word of God.

The author’s first book:

Healing for the Broken Hearted:

Effective Coping Methods and Spiritual Healing for Victims of Betrayal

co-authored with her husband, Jim Kirkland

published in 2004 by Xlibris Corporation

The One Hundred One Lessons

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Unconditional Love

“As I have loved you, ye also love one another” (John 13:34).

Have you ever noticed how many songs about love have been written, sung, and played over the years? It may be a conservative estimate to say that hundreds of thousands of love songs have filled our ears and hearts since time began. People can't stop thinking about it. I believe the one thing all creatures are crying out for is love.

Since God made us in His image, we have the capacity to love and to be loved. It is part of our DNA. God not only loves us, He IS love. His love for us, the human race, is perfect. When Adam messed up God's perfect plan by choosing to follow Satan instead of God, the Bible tells us in Genesis that God instantly had a plan for the redemption of the human race. He planned to send His only Son, Jesus, to be our Savior and make a way for us to live eternally with Him.

In order for love to be real, there has to be choice involved. Think about it. Choosing to love someone is what makes giving love to another so meaningful. Otherwise, we would all be robots programmed in advance to love (or not love) another. Well, God did not want a family of robots, so He gives every person the opportunity to choose to accept Jesus into his or her own heart and life. His love for us is given freely to anyone who receives Him it is not earned.

Since we have, once again, the perfect example of true love, we have the capacity within ourselves to love our children unconditionally. It is vital that they know, deep within their own hearts, that this is so. Kids are going to mess up—it's just the way we humans are. But to know that no matter what they do or say, we, their parents, will be there to love and support them, is one of the most fundamental needs every child has.

Be sure your child knows that he knows that he knows (to put it emphatically) that you love him or her—unconditionally. It is not based on their good performance, how they look, the grades they get, or any other qualifier. You love them because of WHO they are, not what they do. I remember my grown daughter telling me one time, “Mom, you were the one person who was ALWAYS there for me, no matter what. I was sure of your love.” What a compliment! And I am able to give unconditional love because I first received it from my Father, Almighty God.

Prayer: “Lord, thank You for loving me unconditionally. It is a gift that fills my heart with overflowing love and gratitude. Because of who You are and what You have given me, I am able to pass this unconditional love on to my children. Help me to remember and be free with this love You have given to me. In Jesus' Name, I pray. Amen.”



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Instill Gratitude

“Offer unto God thanksgiving” (Psalm 50:14).



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I believe “Thank You” are two of the best words in the English language. It lifts your spirits when another person says those two small words to you. When our children are small, it seems that we try very much to teach them to say “Please” and “Thank You”. After dozens (if not hundreds) of reminders, it begins to become a habit with them. However, we must be careful to include in this practice to teach our children the reason behind these words more importantly the purpose behind this attitude of gratitude.

In the Bible, beginning in the Old Testament, people offered sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving to God as a symbol of their gratitude to Him for bringing them through some danger, journey, or event. Usually, they built an altar and presented a burnt offering to Almighty God. Gratitude is something recognized by the Lord as very important.

Have you noticed that our generation seems to have become less interested in expressing thanks to each other? Good manners, in general, seem to be a practice of times gone by. People are in such a rush nowadays—self-absorbed in their own lives, and fail to remember how important expressing thanks really is. This is one of the duties of a parent—to teach our children well the necessity of saying those two little words, “Thank You”. Once again, children learn by seeing and hearing what their parents do. Try to make an effort to first, explain this concept to your children, and second, to let them see gratitude in action.

We used to have “Family Night” in our household when my children were growing up. Each time, we tried to choose a value or topic to center the evening around. One time, I decided to present a craft project of a “Gratitude Box” which we created. I took an empty, square tissue box and cut 4 pieces of construction paper to fit the sides. We decorated the 4 sides in whatever way each saw fit (with pictures of family members, our names, words of thanks, flowers, or anything else we wanted to draw on them). Then we pasted the papers on each of the 4 sides. We placed the box in our dining room in a prominent spot, where everyone would see it many times during the week. I put small pieces of paper and a pencil next to the box. Our directions were to write or draw a note to any family member to whom we wanted to say “Thank You” for something they did during the week. At our next family night, we took the papers out and read them to each other. It was delightful to hear all the little things that had happened that meant so much to another family member. Those notes of gratitude became our way of surprising each other.

I think it is also important to teach your children to write (or draw) thank-you notes to family members for birthday and Christmas presents. It teaches them to be “others oriented” instead of thinking only of themselves. When you are on the receiving end of a thank-you note, it is very uplifting and heart-warming. I know how much I appreciate notes and drawings from my nephews and grandchildren.

So, let your children see gratitude in action through you; and, direct them in ways that will instill this value in them for life. It is an honorable attribute.

Prayer: *“Father, I thank You for showing me how important thanksgiving is in Your eyes. Help me to live with this attribute in my own heart and life, and to use opportunities to teach this important message to my children, so they will grow up to be grateful servants to You. In Jesus’ Name, I pray. Amen.”*

You Make The Rules

“Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Proverbs 22:6).



Have you ever heard a parent answer a child’s question of “Why do I have to” “Because I said so”? Although this might be true, I don’t think that’s the best way to answer that question. Children do, however, need to know that the parent is in charge, and that ultimately it is the parent who makes and enforces the rules in a family.

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I believe one of the downfalls in family life nowadays is parents’ relinquishment of their obligation to be the head of the family. Children do not bring themselves up. They need guidance, explanations, rules, and boundaries for their conduct and actions. Several decades ago, child psychologists began filling parents’ heads with the idea that children’s egos were so fragile that enforcement of any rules would damage their tender psyches. This, of course, is the subtle way satan introduces his evil ways into society. It occurs slowly over a period of time, and eventually becomes accepted behavior. But when you examine this tendency in the light of the Word of God, you can see that it is one more example of the deterioration that is occurring in families today.

I’ve seen parents in restaurants or stores trying to reason with their child who is in the midst of a temper tantrum. They cajole and beg with the child to “please stop”. It’s pitiful. I’m not advocating physical violence against a child, by all means, but a parent must recognize their responsibility to handle a situation in the proper manner. Trying to “talk things out” with a screaming child is absurd. Simply removing the child from the restaurant or store by taking them out to the car to calm down is a step in the right direction. Children need to know there are consequences to acting up in order to get their own way.

Once again, it takes time and effort to train a child in how to act and speak. When you do take the time to set guidelines and boundaries, children will know what is expected of them. Even very small children respond to rules. These rules and expectations should be set up early in their lives. But, it is never too late to begin.

This is the reason why Proverbs 22:6 guides us as parents to “train up a child in the way he should go”. The Bible is the most excellent handbook a parent could have as reference material on child-rearing. Sometimes children stray from the family rules during those trying adolescent or teenage years, but the Bible tells us that “when they are old, they will not depart from it (their proper training).” Your efforts to do parenting in a Godly manner will be rewarded.

You may not always see it immediately, but as time passes, children will be reminded of their roots. The Lord sends His Holy Spirit to gently awaken remembrance of their training. My daughter is grown and married now, but many times she mentions recollection of some event from her childhood or adolescent years that has helped to form her into the adult she is now. It is heartwarming to know that your efforts will not go unheeded.

As always, God our heavenly Father is waiting for us to trust in His ways, and to follow His guidance. Stay in the Word, receiving the direction contained therein. Guide your children in love and leadership, knowing you are following the way the Lord wants you to go.

Prayer: “My heavenly Father, thank You for the guidance You have provided for me in Your Word, the Bible. I will look for direction from You, knowing that Your ways are the best ways. I will assume my responsibilities as a parent based on trusting Your leading in The Word. Thank you in the precious Name of Your Son, Jesus. Amen.”



Stick Together

“And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand” (Mark 3:24).

The Bible has so much wisdom contained in its verses. This verse from Mark tells us an important truth. A family is designed to support each other, to love each other, and to stand as a united front against the world. Mom and Dad can do much good for their family when they present a unified presence to their children.

I’m sure you’ve seen how children try to pit the parents against one another; they ask one parent, and if they don’t like their answer, they go to the other parent for a better response. Mom and Dad need to confer and agree upon a course of action to be taken in the decisions made.

One of the best lessons you can teach your children is to rely on their family for support. To know that Mom and Dad, or in single-parent families, Mom OR Dad, stand behind their children is a most reassuring thing for children to know. Also, when there are siblings involved, teach them to “stick up” for each other.

When my granddaughter, Cassie, started Kindergarten, her apprehension about riding the school bus home was alleviated by knowing that her older brother, Bradley, in 3rd grade, would sit with her on the bus and take care of her. She knew he would keep her safe and let her know when to get off at the correct bus stop. Bradley felt responsible in knowing he was counted on to help ease her concern about taking this big step in starting school.

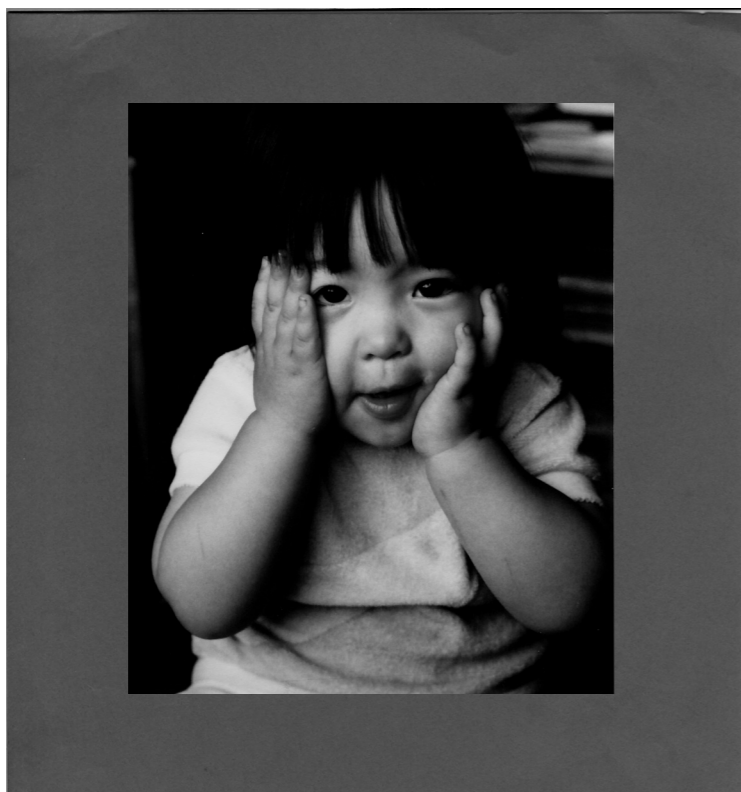
Teach your children to cheer for each other when they accomplish some feat or event. Before Cassie was old enough to participate in sports herself, she would be Bradley’s biggest fan on the soccer field or baseball diamond. He smiled from ear to ear knowing that his family was in the bleachers cheering for him. Now that Cassie plays soccer too, Bradley likes to cheer her on in her own matches. Not only in sporting events, but in all matters, children need to know they are being supported by the ones they are closest to—their families.

Today’s verse from Mark tells us that a “kingdom divided against itself cannot stand”. A family divided also cannot stand. It makes life together so much more harmonious when each member knows the others “have their back”, so to say. Join together in supporting each other—loving and defending the ones we love most and are closest to—our family.

Prayer: *“Dearest Lord, help me to stay close to my family members, to treat them with love and respect, and to be their greatest defender (after You). Knowing YOU are always there for me gives me the perfect example and desire to do so for my own family. Thank You for always leading the way for me in all aspects of my life. I love you, and in Jesus’ Name, I pray. Amen.”*

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In Times Of Trouble



“Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee: He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved” (Psalm 55:22).

One thing is certain—as long as you are living on this earth, you WILL have times of trouble. It’s inevitable. But, don’t let that statement send you into a panic. In John 16:33, Jesus Himself tells us, “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” Jesus didn’t say, “You might have troubles”, He told us we will. But, we’re not to worry, because Jesus has already fought the battle for us. He died, went to hell, and rose again victoriously to conquer satan’s hold on our lives.

OK, if Jesus did that for us, why do we still have troubles? Because satan is still the “god” (notice the small “g”) of this world; and he is an “outlaw”. He doesn’t go by the rules he tries to force his way into our lives, stealing, killing, and destroying wherever he can. It’s up to US to use the powerful authority Jesus bought for us with His own precious blood. Once again, it comes down to this: the Lord provides the power, but WE must provide the voice to enforce that power.

Ever since his rebellion against God, satan has been trying to BE god. He wasn’t satisfied to be one of the top angelic creatures in heaven. Please read the description of satan in Ezekiel, Chapter 28, verses 13 through 19. Then read Isaiah 14, verses 12 to 16, which describes how satan’s pride caused him to want to be even higher than God, his very Creator. He did not succeed, and ever since his fall, his main goal has been to steal as many souls away from eternity with God as he possibly can. By sending troubles our way, he hopes to discourage and turn us against our Creator, just as he himself turned against God.

In the past fifty lessons, I have been telling you about the wonderful words of wisdom contained within the Bible. Reading it daily will bring knowledge of God’s nature and power to you. Meditating on (or thinking about) what you’ve read in the Bible will reinforce His words in your heart. Discovering His promises and speaking them into our lives, and over our children, is how we plant His Word into our own circumstances. Sometimes, those circumstances include troubles. But, as you read the Bible, you will find many, many verses of comfort and encouragement, such as verse 22 from Psalm 55 listed above. I encourage you to let the verses that you find soak into your spirit so that you are absolutely convinced that, although times of trouble may come, the Lord has promised to make a way for you to come out of every one victoriously. One of my very favorite Scripture verses, Isaiah 54:17, tells us that “no weapon formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn.”

Because the Lord is on my side, and because I believe His promises of victory, troubles may come and troubles may go, but none shall succeed in accomplishing the devastation that satan desires to inflict. In faith, you can cast your burdens upon the Lord, knowing that because Jesus is your Lord, “Greater is He that is in me (you) than he that is in the world”.

Prayer: *“Heavenly Father, I thank You for Your many promises to help me in times of trouble. Just knowing Your truth brings comfort to my soul. I pray Your words of protection over my children and our lives daily, knowing that You are true to Your words. Your power and my faith will bring us out of times of trouble victoriously. In Jesus’ powerful Name, I pray. Amen.”*



Speak Life

“I will speak of excellent things; and the opening of my lips shall be right things” (Proverbs 8:6).

The Book of Proverbs is filled with wisdom packed into brief, simple statements. I like that. It uses few words and plain language to get the point across. But it’s not just in Proverbs that the Bible tells us about the power contained in what we say. If you have a concordance (a book that lists every word in the Bible and where it can be found), look up the words “speak” and “say”, and you will find them listed hundreds of times. (Some Bibles contain a condensed concordance in the back pages.)

I think too many people are not aware of how their speech affects themselves, those around them, and the circumstances of their lives. Many people are in therapy as adults due to the words spoken at and about them as a child. I know we have talked about this before, but I want to emphasize how very important it is to speak life and goodness into your life and the lives of your children.

Proverbs 18:21 tells us that, “Death and life are in the power of the tongue; and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.” Isn’t that something? Your tongue (and the words that flow from it) hold the power of life and death. I didn’t make that up it’s right there in the Bible. So, if your words hold that kind of power, do you think you might put more thought into the words that you say?

As always, it comes down to a choice—our choice to really think about the words we speak before we say them. Exercise some self-control and decide not to speak negativity, criticism, or destruction into your situations. Choose to speak productive, life-filled words. Don’t talk about defeat and sickness. Speak about wellness, life, and growth. You might think it sounds like a fairy tale—that it can’t be that simple. But, it is!!! I know, because once I learned about the Bible principle of “speaking life”, I began to do so into my life and the lives of those I love, and I began to see results.

Find Scripture verses that talk of safety, promotion, health, prosperity, and goodness. Write them down; speak them out loud every day over your children and yourself. When my grandchildren stay overnight, as I check on them before I go to bed, I speak “life” words over them as they sleep. I lay my hands on them and claim them for the Kingdom of God. I profess good things into their spirits and lives. If the Bible tells me to “speak life”, then I’m going to do it.

Please join me in professing goodness and life into your own family’s life and circumstances. Believe this important Bible truth and use your own tongue to declare the words of the Lord to work for goodness. They will be the wisest words you have ever spoken.

Prayer: *“Heavenly Father, it seems too good to be true that my own words can bring goodness and life into my life and that of my children. But, if Your Word says so, then I believe it and profess LIFE. And I will declare Your good works, giving You all the praise and glory. In Jesus’ sweet Name, I pray. Amen.”*

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No Bad Dreams



“In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul” (Psalm 94:19).

As children grow up, they are bombarded with so much stimuli from the world. It is difficult to protect them from all the unpleasant news and influences that make their way into their spirit. Even cartoons nowadays are filled with violence and innuendos. Most parents have become accustomed to the ways of the world, but it doesn't take long for unpleasantness to weasel its way into our children.

My granddaughter, Cassie, was troubled by bad dreams that began when she was about 4 years old. She would awaken many nights frightened by ghosts or some other scary thing. When I learned about the bad dreams that were plaguing her, I determined to do something to help her sleep peacefully.

II Corinthians 10:4 tells us that “the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds.” I used that Scripture as the basis for prayer for Cassie. I prayed against the spirits that were intruding into the sweet sleep that God has promised His children.

Do you remember how many times in previous chapters we have learned about the power and authority in the Name of Jesus? I use this supernatural truth as a weapon against the harm that may try and come against my children and grandchildren. I looked for an opportunity to talk with Cassie about her bad dreams and fears. I explained to her how I had been praying for her, and suggested that we work together on this problem.

I told her about how the Bible gives us promises that we can say and believe for ourselves that will protect us from the bad things that come into our lives. One Scripture that I pray for my grandchildren is Psalm 94:19 that says, “In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul.” I told Cassie that if we believe this word from God together, it would be the basis for the Lord's protection for her during the night as she slept.

I also took the opportunity to discuss angels with both my grandchildren, reinforcing what God's Word says about the heavenly beings He has given us for our protection. Psalm 34:7 says, “The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear (reverence and love) him, and delivereth them.” I told them that their reverence of the Lord guarantees that this word applies to them (and anyone else who loves and reverences the Lord). Even though Cassie was only five years old at the time, she was wide open to receiving this truth. Now she sleeps peacefully. If dark thoughts or bad dreams even try to creep back into her life, we use God's Word against them every time.

I hope this lesson on how to fight back at the forces of darkness that seek to harm even the smallest of God's children will encourage you. If your children or grandchildren are troubled by bad dreams or fears in the night, fight back!!! Not in the physical realm, but in the spiritual realm, where those fears and dreams actually come from. Use the mighty Name of Jesus; call in the heavenly protection of the angels; teach them about the beauty of God's Word to combat every evil thing in their lives.

Prayer: *“Father, You are so good to have made a way for me to combat all the evil forces the enemy uses to corrupt my life and my family's lives. Thank You for the power of Your Word that allows me to have a part in fighting back at these evil forces. I love You, Lord. In Jesus' Name, I pray. Amen.”*



What's the Rush?

"He that believeth shall not make haste" (Isaiah 28:16).

Does it seem to you that everyone is in a hurry these days? I'm sensing more every day that people are in a big rush. I believe I come from a "kindler, gentler era". I function much better in an atmosphere that fosters calmness. In fact, I think everyone does.

How about you? Do you find yourself with too much to do, and not enough time in which to do it? Are you rushing about many times, hurrying your children along, chiding them (and yourself) for taking too much time to perform everyday tasks? Does it bother you that your spirit seems to be frazzled and frayed by the constant rush of life? If this describes you, take heart there is help for you.

I used to be one who set the alarm clock to ring at a time that ensured me every last minute of sleep. Then I'd jump up, perform all my morning rituals, and rush out the door to work. That was fine when I was responsible for myself only. Once children came into the picture, I quickly realized that I needed to plan more—MUCH MORE—time to do the simplest, everyday tasks.

To alleviate that "frazzled-inside" feeling, I had to re-invent my morning routine. I set my alarm clock at least one-half hour earlier so I had "me" time to perform my personal morning routine. When I had myself ready to face the day, I was available to awaken and help my children do the same. That extra half-hour was a life-saver for me.

Another time-saver for me was to make lunches, check/sign homework, prepare back-packs, and lay out our clothes the night before. It saved morning pandemonium with everyone needing me at the same time. We designated coat, shoes, and back-pack areas so everyone knew where their "stuff" was each morning.

To me, it was well worth giving up that extra half-hour of sleep each day. Maybe you might need more time. Whatever you can do to eliminate the dreaded "rushing" from each day will be a definite step in the right direction. You may want to re-read lessons # 2 (Make a Plan) and # 26 (Rest a While). These suggestions may help you to realize the necessity of planning a "cushion of time" around your family's events. What a relief to realize that there is a way to alleviate the stress that is caused by constantly hurrying.

I can tell you in all honesty that my life took a definite turn for the better when I began to spend fifteen minutes of quality "alone time" in the Bible each morning before my children awoke and our day began. Putting that Bible-reading time first each day added peace to my spirit and patience to my inner being.

May I suggest to you that, while you are making your plan to remove rushing from your lives, you place God's Word foremost in your day. The Lord rewards those who put His Word in a place of importance. Try it I believe supernatural peace will flood your life.

Prayer: "Heavenly Father, I know from Your Word that You value order and good planning. Help me to form orderly and timely routines in our lives that will eliminate rushing. Give me a peaceful spirit to deal with my children in a way that will be pleasing in Your eyes. In Jesus' Name, I pray. Amen."