

"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." III John 4



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12 Parenting Essentials

1. Love. Love is many a thing, from a feeling that might be selfish, to a service done in secret. Love can be the crest of an emotion, or it can be the toil of assistance. Love can be forgiveness, or it can be judgment, a balm to soothe, or a surgical knife. Love can be decidedly blind or painfully seeing—praise or rebuke.

If love wore one expression, if its hands were always open, if it gave and never retained, then it could exist as a sentiment without thought. But true love places a supreme demand on the resources of wisdom, for manifestations of love are as varied as human need. If the end of love were passivity, the absence of conflict; if it laid aside principles for peace, laid aside conflict for cordiality, it would not be a virtue. It would be vice.

That love sometimes leads one into desperate sacrifice, with no certain promise of return, that it requires trading one goodness—your own—for another, makes it as rare as manifestations of deity. Love must be ready to embrace or to refrain from embracing, to give or to deny. It requires expenditure and vigilance. Love must be ever

alert—a delicate, shifting balance of law and grace. The final measure of love is not the cloak of emotion it wears, but the service it renders. Certain love is not found

harmful as that of hate. As all the Law is contained in this one commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," so parenting is nothing more than the activity



in the good feelings but in the high cost to the one loving.

Rather than say, "Children need love," we must define the acts of love by which children will realize their full potential. For the *sentiment* of love can be as

of love. But as the law meticulously defines the expressions of love, so the works of love must be defined.

2. Security Not just physical security—sometimes parents cannot control the circumstances—

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but security of soul. It is not only that parents provide food, shelter, and clothes, but that children feel their commitment to do so. This is not about what you do; it is about atmosphere, the very breath of home-life. The soul of a parent is the source of this security. Outward circumstances cannot touch that secret place where children feel their parents' love and good will. Morale is of utmost significance in business, war, and sports; how much more in a child attempting to win against the world? The child must be able to assuredly say to himself, "I am worth having people care about me."

This inner security is absolutely essential to healthy development. Without that peace of soul that comes with knowing that you are supremely valued and that there are people in the world who have an unswerving commitment to your happiness, then a child has no ground on which to stand while growing up.

A well ordered and disciplined environment can be helpful, but it is not essential. Children living in poverty, occasionally evicted from tenement houses, cast upon the street with all their belongings, and ridiculed by their peers can still be rich in emotional security. Children of single parents can also be secure and stable. "Disadvantaged minorities" need not be disadvantaged in providing emotional security for their children. Providing for a child's physical needs is insufficient in and of itself. It takes a giving soul, not just a giving hand.

3. Acceptance. This does not

mean that children are to receive unconditional approval, but that whether parents are approving or disapproving, children never feel that they have been dismissed. Our present age is pervaded with the "to each his own" approach to human relations. It is the assumption that there are no absolutes. Allow the child "free expression," never reject any conduct, maintain a positive face regardless of behavior. The error of this is apparent in its fruit.

But the relationship parents have to their children is different from general society. It is the parents' duty, as well as their instinct, to accept and care for their children until they leave the

Children must feel they are a vital part of something significant.

nest. Regardless of children's conduct, they must know that their parents have an unconditional commitment to their ongoing development. For someone else to value your life is to have a life that is never without value. To have someone else forgive, when you cannot forgive yourself, leaves the door of forgiveness ever open. To have someone accept you, when your conduct demands that you be rejected by all, places you under demand to act so as to deserve the sweetness of that acceptance.

4. Respect. Children are future adults—little people. They have the same souls, the same feelings, pride, shame, desire to be accepted, to be approved. Children have opinions, ideas, and views that they like to share. They

may talk you to death, but often what is tiresome to an adult is significant to a child.

A child has a right not to be tickled until it hurts, not to be bullied aside simply because he is smaller. If a child is to respect himself and others, he must be shown respect. A child that does not respect the person, rights, and feelings of others is usually just reciprocating in kind. A human being without self-respect is lower than an animal. Children estimate their value according to how they are valued by others.

5. Communication. Communication is the vehicle of society. Interpersonal relationships are built on communication. It is essential for intellectual

development. Several studies have shown that infants isolated in their cribs, away from human contact, score

much lower on IQ tests taken later in life. Children that are not the objects of communication become incommunicative. Read to your infants. Show them things and give a name to everything. Talk with, not just to, your three- and six-year-olds. Listen to your teenagers and learn from them.

6. Time, not just "quality time" but quantity time. Know this, that when you are not spending time with your children, someone else is. When you received your child into this world, it was like receiving a beautiful book with all blank pages. Like a daily planner, each fifteen-minute interval has an empty line beside it. Your child's history is not yet written. The sum total of life is the accumulation of minutes—minutes listening to someone,

talking to someone, seeing or hearing something said by another, or minutes consumed watching a video produced by a disreputable character from Hollywood. Everyday, you write in that book, line by line; or you take your child to a baby sitter or to school, and you turn the book over to someone else, and they too write into your child's life. The hour you spend with your child is not more influential than the hour someone else spends. Value time enough to spend it on your children.

7. Boundaries. Children must learn quickly that they are not the center of the universe. Others have needs and rights as well. Self-restraint is essential to society. Animals do what they want to do and what they are big enough to do with impunity. Humans must consider what is right—thus boundaries. Just as nature contains innate laws that carry consequences when violated, so the world of mind and soul is governed by laws (boundaries). Boundaries exist even where they are not recognized. When a two-year-old takes something away from a three-year-old, he discovers a boundary.

Children need to have it deeply instilled that they are subject to irrevocable boundaries. Boundaries with no consequences are no longer boundaries. That one should design his own boundaries and be responsible to no one is anarchy. Self-control is the pinnacle of human existence. The essence of sin is lack of self-control. It is the parents' responsibility to clearly legislate boundaries and enforce the keeping of them.

8. Structure. Doing the same thing each day at the same time is structure. Any individual, not just children, left to do as he pleases from one moment to the next will likely do nothing unless it is immediately gratifying. To determine ahead of time what needs to be done and then doing it at the allotted time enables one to do the unpleasant with regularity. A schedule prevents one from procrastination. It relieves boredom, gives a sense of security, and minimizes stress. Good habits of scheduling one's time are best established early in life, before four years old. Without structure, the child lives as an irresponsible rogue. Structure allows children to set goals and sacrifice to reach them. It is the road to betterment.

One of the most common concerns of parents is sibling squabbles. Children that are on schedules are far less likely to gripe, complain, and fight.

9. Belonging / significance. Children must feel they are a vital part of something significant. One feels himself to be a part of that to which he lends significant contribution. A child that is served, but not called upon to contribute, will have low self-esteem. Everyone needs to be needed.

"Positive affirmation" is degrading if it is not based on genuine performance. Children will appreciate praise to the extent that it accurately reflects their real performance. False praise is received as manipulation. When children are part of a family team overcoming real obstacles, they know they are needed. Their contributions are essential, so they are essential. To struggle together and win together is the wedding of

souls.

10. Example. Be what you want your children to be. "More is caught than taught." Children read actions better than words. They are imitators, taking on the likeness of the ones they most admire. If you cannot walk your talk, don't expect them to. When the older child develops bad habits, the younger children will follow his example and probably take it a step further in the wrong direction. Likewise, if you get that first child in control, you have a good example for other children who come behind.

11. Crisis management. Life often moves from one crisis to another, especially for children and teens. There is frustration, disappointment, rejection, failure, sickness, pain, etc. The ability to view supposed crises as opportunities greatly lessens the stress in life. A person with that kind of outlook is called "brave, resilient," or "wise."

You might call this, "coping skills." When you are there beside your child for eighteen years, you will share responses to life's knocks. They will learn from you how to deal with anger and conflict.

12. The meaning of life. A human without purpose is a parasite. In the heart of everyone is the faint knowledge that "I have been placed on this earth for a purpose higher than pleasure. I have a destiny to fulfill." As Christians, we know our destiny is to "be conformed to the image of his son (Rom, 8: 29)." We must teach our children to live in light of eternity. ☺

Dear Mike and Debi,

“Have you heard of **“Attachment Parenting?”** I got caught up in this with my third child. It was through the La Leche League's recommended reading. Dr. Sears recommends this style of parenting, and he claims it to be Christian. This includes: baby-wearing (you put your baby in a sling and carry him or her around all day long), family bed (been there, done that), extreme permissiveness, and paying particular attention to your child's “self-esteem.” I created a little monster by following this rubbish.

This is the new thing, Mr. and Mrs. Pearl. I have friends whose children I cannot stand to be around, and I'm guilty of having had one of them myself! Could you please address this in an upcoming issue, or please forward me your thoughts if you have already addressed it. I believe that some Christian parents are so brainwashed into the “all grace no law” version of God, that they cannot imagine God setting His foot down in any area. They are in turn parenting their children this way. Yikes!

Thank you for standing up for God's truth! By the way, I'd pay big bucks to have your home phone number.

Jennie from the E-mail

Jennie, Nothing like “been there done that” to clinch your case. Very well said, except the part about the phone number. Sorry. If we did telephone counseling, we would never have time to write. When Mike is forced to talk on the phone for the three minutes, he complains of a sore

ear for the next three days.

Deb

Mike responds

It is very interesting how Jennie ties parenting techniques to one's view of God. I have always said that most of my understanding of parenting came from my studies of theology (not studies of parenting), studies of who God is and how he relates to His children in teaching and discipline. It is absolutely true that your view of God and understanding of Scripture is reflected in your approach to parenting. For that reason the unbelieving mind will never be able to understand Biblical parenting. The fact that we get beautiful results, while their approach yields absolute catastrophe, will not persuade them. They will hang on to the University mentality until all their children are in hell and the last Christian has been jailed for producing godly, emotionally balanced, secure, loving, and intelligent children. But we will go on being happy and proud of our children.

Mike

Potty training

Dear Pearls,

Thank you so much for your ministry and faithfulness to God and His Word. I wanted to share with you a little about my friend Robin. I hope some day she will write her story for you. Her sixth child was born a few months ago with Down's Syndrome. As my daughter and I were visiting with her (after the birth) we happened to mention your book. She didn't have one, so we gave her ours. She read the chapter on potty training infants and started with her baby. I won't go into all the details (I don't know them all), but last month her tiny daughter had heart surgery in Cincinnati and ended up with 4 or 5 nurses watching her potty. They were amazed, and Robin left her copy of *To Train Up A Child* with one of the nurses! Henceforth, a larger order this time, as I so enjoy giving your books away.

Thank God my daughter—who is 20—knows the principles of child rearing from reading your book. It is never too early. I see such tragedy all around in families who have not trained their children.

May God bless you,
Carolyn

Read the rest of the story. Now you can read the daily chronicle of Rebekah Pearl, the



daughter of Michael and Debi Pearl, as she sought to adapt to missionary life among the Kumboi people, a primitive tribe in the highlands of Papua New Guinea. This 112 page book tells the awesome story of God's guidance and protection of a 22-year-old girl, all alone where no white person had ever been. Several pages of photographs document Rebekah in her village setting.

Butterflies and Backdoors

With five children still at home, their friends come in like mosquitoes in Louisiana; you just try to ignore the buzz and hope they don't eat too much. When I get ready to sleep at night, I just open the front door and stand by it until they all take leave. I spend a lot of time in my office, at the rear of the house. I especially try to coordinate it with the arrival of a swarm. Its remoteness shuts out the noise. My wife says I am getting older. I think she is inferring more than thinning hair and the senior citizen discounts I am increasingly offered. But I still have one weak spot.

The other day I was typing away, ignoring the recent arrivals; then after a few minutes, when I had forgotten all about them, I heard the door behind me creak. I turned around and looked through the glass, but there was no one visible. Still the door continued to slowly creak open. Then I heard a cheerful little voice inquire, "Mack Peerle?" No, I haven't failed to spell my name correctly. That is the way Middle Tennessee hillbillies pronounce my name. You think that is funny; wait till you see what they do with yours. Again my Tennessee name was called, as close to the bottom of the door a little blond head peeped around the corner. She was not a mosquito; she was a butterfly. It was the most beautiful smile I have seen since I accepted my wife's proposal to marriage. I forgot about the Hypostatic Union, and responding to my hill-billy name, eagerly said, "Here I



am!" She came through my door like morning sunshine through the kitchen window. I returned her smile ten times over, ruffled her hair, and tossed her in the air, which is what she expected. We had a little chat and then she found her way back to the noisy hum. I feel real important when I receive a guest of that caliber.

Now, beyond relating one of the great pleasures of life, that little visit would be of no significance to you unless you knew what occurred just two days earlier. My visitor, Amy, just turned two, has visited with us on several occasions. They call it "baby sitting;" I call it running. She is well above average in her self-control, but still has some rough spots. During the first few visits, I never engaged in discipline. My youngest daughter, Shoshanna, had already gained her confidence and respect and does very well commanding her. I took those earlier visits as a time to gain her respect and devotion—to assure her of my delight and interest in her as a person.

On the visit before the welcomed intrusion, Amy ran in and out of the back door about ten times. The frequency of it, due to

the cold it let in, became annoying. As she started out again, I commanded, "No, Amy, do not go out again." She continued to open the door and push by me. I applied a little resistance to the door as again I commanded her. She exerted all her force to open the door. Now at this point I could have forced the door shut. At six-foot-four and 240 pounds, all of it pure aged muscle, I was quite capable of shutting the door. But to do so would not have taught her obedience, quite the opposite. It would have taught her that she could do anything that does not meet with physical resistance. Forced to comply, she would not have been caused to exercise self-control. For the will to function, outward conditions must permit choice. So I allowed her to choose. She forced the door against the little resistance I offered and continued into the sun-room. One more door stood between her and the judgment seat. To make sure she understood, I gave one more command, "Amy, do not go outside." As she opened the outside door, I took off my belt and surprised my little butterfly with one swat across the calves. She shut the door and looked at me with shock and anger. Her scream was not just of pain, but of defiance.

Now if I had shoved her into the house and left it at that, she would still have failed to learn her lesson. Her will was not yet surrendered. The defiant scream testified that she was still in a resistant state of mind. She was protesting interference with her self-will. She must be caused to recognize the supremacy of government. Her soul depends on it. So I commanded, "Amy, stop

crying.” She screamed louder. I gave her another forceful lick on the legs. She again screamed her defiance.

At this point, if I had become frustrated and shown anger in my expression or actions, it would have poisoned her soul. We would have become adversaries. I would have outwardly conquered, but she would have increased in her rebellion. Everyone hates a bully, and it becomes a matter of principle to resist him or her. Out of fear, one may surrender to a bully, but no one will ever respect him or her. Bullies are angry, self-willed, take offenses personally, exact their due in the pain of compliance, and maintain an attitude of “No one does this to me and gets away with it.” Most parents bully their children.

Here I was with a screaming, defiant two-year-old standing there testing her strength of resolve against mine. I have 53 years of resolve, and it gets calmer every day. Again I gave her one lick on the legs and commanded, “Stop Crying, Now.” She dried it up like an Arizona wind, then turned and voluntarily walked back into the living room. She was sniffing, but the defiance was all gone. She ran to a corner to sort out her feelings, and I left her alone, as did everyone else. In less than five minutes, as I was walking through the house for some other purpose, a little curly headed, blond butterfly flitted across the room and lunged into my arms. Her smile was genuine and her greeting was spontaneous. The confrontation did not leave her feeling isolated. Her spirit was free. A properly administered spanking does not break fellow-



ship.

About two hours later I was in my bedroom reading, when I again heard the door being pushed open. “Mack Peerle, cun I go outsid?” The kids had all gone out on the front porch to attend to chicken they were cooking on the grill. She was the only one left inside, but she had learned her lesson. I said, “Sure, Amy, you can go out with the others.” She gave me a grateful smile and ran to join them.

When she left that day, I had seen no more signs of rebellion, but I did wonder how she would be when she came back on the next visit. So, when the door creaked open and I saw Amy had come to share smiles with me, I appreciated her parents, and I was thankful that my mother and father taught me how to train up a child. ☺

The Reconciler

When The Reconciler left this planet, He committed unto His disciples the *ministry of reconciliation*. The Church exists not as a celebration of our past reconciliation, but as an army of reconcilers. A Church that is not reproducing itself is as useless as a fruit tree bearing no fruit. The church was not meant to be a well-proportioned ornament—providing shade for its own branches; it is intended that it should sacrifice its limbs to the weight of excess fruit.

We train our children, not that they might rise in the world, but that they might descend into the place of need to deliver captives. The standard by which one measures success in this life will be viewed with sorrow and disdain in the next. The ultimate goal of the church is to reach the world with the good news of Christ. ☺

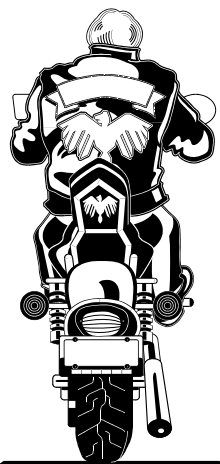
THE BRUISER

This testimony was in a letter to Beka from Larry and Mary Barber of Kentucky. They sent me a copy of the letter, and I enjoyed the testimony so much I thought you might like to read it.

"Once God spoke to me and requested that I visit a particular biker bar in a nearby town, because there was someone there that needed to talk to me. The name of the bar was "Satan's Den." By the door of the bar was a neon image of the aforementioned, holding a pitchfork and grinning. Well, after a short (praise God) while of being a doubting, nervous Jonah, I arrived at the bar...it was packedbikes everywhere.....the image by the door now seemed to be laughing. All just as I had feared (Job 3:25). I told the wife to pray and keep the car's motor running....I didn't know what to expect. Full of faith and putting aside all fears, I snatched open the door, not even giving the image a glance, and strode up to the bar. I found a seat and laid my well worn, 10 x 12 inch Bible on the bar. "I'm here on business...not to party," I said to everyone and to no one in particular.

Let me tell you, I know what it means when God says in Revelation, "Every eye shall see Him." It was almost comical, because everyone at the bar was leaning and craning his neck, so that every eye was on that Bible....and then me...and then back to the Bible.

Trying to be humble and harmless, I set my gaze straight ahead. I was startled by what must have been the chief bruiser of the place, as he placed his elbows on the bar next to my Bible and fashioned his face only six inches from mine, eyes glowing, and speaking real, real slow, he asked, "Can I help you?" So, filled with the Spirit and innocence of God I explained at length how God had told me during prayer to come down here because someone needed to talk with me, but that



God didn't tell me who, and I wondered if he knew anything about all this. I was vaguely aware of a gathering crowd at my back, and could see that all glass lifting at the bar had ceased, and yep, every eye was still on me and the BOOK that graced their bar.

"Just a minute," said the big bruiser, as he slowly dropped one arm and reached under the bar. "He's going for the club," my mind screamed as my heart hammered. "Are you willing to turn the other cheek?" I felt the Lord whisper. I lowered my head, closed my eyes; I couldn't stand to watch. Long seconds passed and nothing happened! Looking up, I saw the bruiser was filling several mugs of beverage for some folks down at the end of the bar. God delivers!!! It appeared the crowd had somewhat thinned out, and the loud music had subsided, as well.

I felt my confidence return. I seemed almost calm, and was rededicated to finding my man.

When the bruiser returned to his former in-my-face position, he asked, "You're for real ain't you?"

"Oh yes!" I replied, taking the opportunity to ask if I might take the stage to make an announcement about the person I needed to find. But he wagged his big head from side to side in a forceful negative gesture. My mouth closed, my mind refused to function...I was silent. There was a long pause as the bruiser stared at the floor, then he quietly answered, "It's me."

In my surprise I stood up straight on the stool rungs, "You???" I stammered, "YOU?" My tongue seemed stuck on repeat as my body regained the sitting position. I was awestruck.

"Yes," came a small, quiet voice, from a now lost and broken looking bartender. We hugged across the bar as we choked back tears and made arrangements to meet after his shift. The mugs at the bar resumed their up and down journey.

The journey of the bartender had just begun. That evening we talked and read Scriptures till dawn, when he finally made peace with God and started his journey of rebuilding the wasteland of his life.

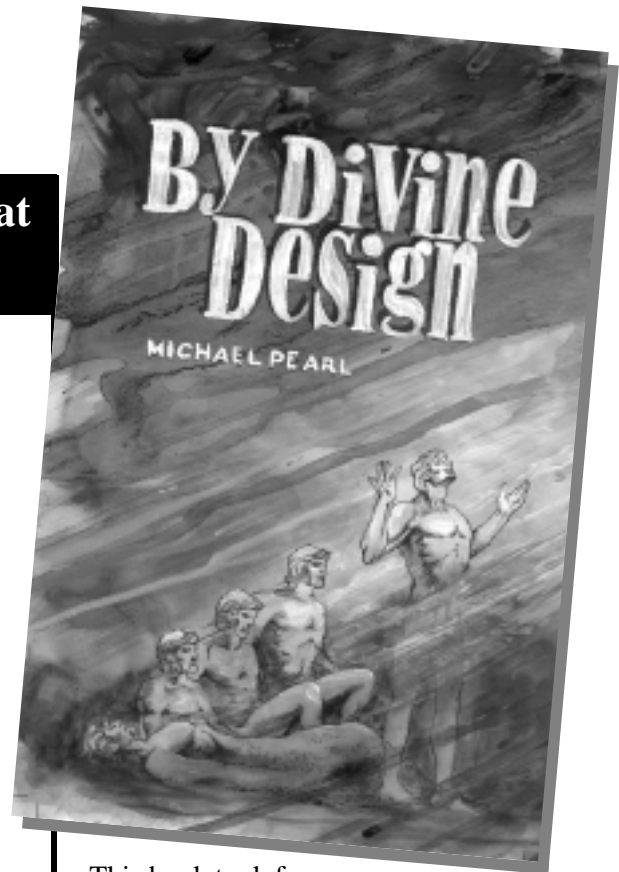
Anyway, God showed me this is what Daniel and the lions were all about. Trusting God through faith, even in the midst of fears and doubts. Don't look at the wind and waves. It's too scary. Nothing we do can pull us through; it is the building of God inside of us that stands."

Larry

New Book

Michael Pearl discusses questions that trouble many but few dare to ask.

- “How can I believe and trust a ‘*sovereign God*’ who allows so much evil? Is God impotent? If not, then does He care?”
- “Why did God even make us capable of sinning? If He knows all and is all powerful, couldn’t He have created a world without sin and death?”
- “Why? Why did God create Lucifer if He knew it would result in sin?”
- “Why did God put the *tree of knowledge of good and evil* in the garden if He did not want Adam and Eve to sin?”
- “If I could help it, I would not allow my children to be subject to pain and suffering. Why would the Creator let souls live forever in Hell? Why would He not just destroy them so they would not continue to suffer?”
- “Couldn’t an all-wise God develop a plan that didn’t involve suffering for so many?”



This book took four years to write—not to produce 100 pages, but to sift 500 pages to its small size.

It is not about child training or the family. It is about man as a creation of God. Some call it *Christian philosophy*. Others call it *theology*. It has been called a *defense of the faith*. Early in the writing I called it *The Ultimate Intention*, finally settling on *By Divine Design*.

Dear Debi,

I wanted to write and thank you so very much for your **Best Homeschooling Ideas** tape. We have 4 blessings from the Lord. Our oldest, who will be 6 next March, has listened to that tape over and over. Her favorite parts are you singing. “5 cents is a nickel, 10 cents is a dime... and also I saiah 53:6. She tries so hard to sing it with your Tennessee accent.” I took your idea about making a tape with a chart. My 4 year old Sara thinks it's GREAT!

In raising my 2 girls; being keepers at home is something I pray they will learn. Baking bread is something fun we have learned together. We mix and measure together; then while I knead, I break off a small chunk and let them knead too. Then they grease an old mayonnaise lid, let their “little breadie” rise, roll it out, and bake it—and then their favorite part, they eat it. Amazing what joy an old mayonnaise lid can bring. May the Lord bless you,

Diana

“What Daddy doesn’t know won’t hurt him.”

Linda, just three years old, loves to go to Grandma’s house. The first thing she does when she runs through the door is ask for the candy. Daddy won’t let her eat candy, but Mama doesn’t see anything wrong with it. Linda knows Mama and Daddy have differences of opinion about things. Daddy says “No” about a lot of things, but Mama is more fun. She knows it is not really bad, for she just laughs and says, “Daddy doesn’t need to know; what he doesn’t know won’t hurt him.” Linda heard her mama tell Grandma this, so Grandma lets the little girls eat candy at her house. Grandma says she ate candy when she was young and it didn’t hurt her. And Grandma says she “wouldn’t want to deprive her daughter of a good old American tradition. There are some things daddies just don’t know anything about.”

Linda loves her daddy. He likes to take her with him when he goes places, and there is nothing Linda likes better. Linda is such a good little girl; everyone says so. She is so obedient and kind to others. She would never dare pitch a fit. Everyone should be so blessed, having a little darling like Linda.

But a dangerous seed has already sprouted in Linda. Its root has begun to grow, spreading its ugly, entwining, choking tentacles around the very soul of this precious child. Mama planted that seed with her laughter; she waters

those roots with her deceit; she fertilizes that unseen plant with her carelessness concerning Daddy’s wishes. Mama is cultivating the plant that one day will strangle the truth from Linda’s heart and life. Mama thinks what Daddy doesn’t know won’t hurt him, but someday it will break his heart. Little girls get to be big girls with bigger issues than eating sweets. Other things get to be “sweeter.” When the day comes that Mama and Daddy discover Linda is keeping secrets from both of them, things she knows they are just “old fashion about, and wouldn’t understand” no one will laugh, not even Grandma. But then Linda says to her friends, “What they don’t know won’t hurt them.” Somebody lied. It’s hurting them—deeper than anything ever has. ☺

READERS:

Many students in all levels of school have written saying they did an oral or written book report using **Rebekah’s Diary**. They relate receiving good grades and opportunities to “tell” other classes. Excellent witness.

Potty training

Dear Michael and Debi,

Thank you so much for all your articles on “Potty Untraining.” We’ve just tried it out with our 3rd child. Our **newborn** successfully “oopsied” on his first try on the toilet at only 4 weeks old. He’s 7 weeks old now, and we’ve only had to wash 2 oopsied diapers and one was Mama’s fault. [We don’t think she meant this like it sounds] He oopsies 5 or 6 times per day. You can imagine how happy this mama is, especially since we use cloth diapers. When we excitedly shared this news with my husband’s folks back in Holland; they, of course, did not believe it. While we were trying to explain, we realized that the root form of the Dutch word for diaper literally means, “lazy.”

Also, an interesting side note: our 30-month-old had not “oopsied” on the pot despite all our best efforts to encourage him...until he saw his baby brother do it. Thanks for all the clean laundry!

Nap Family

Mike Responds

Dear Naps,

Your letter was refreshing and fun. We have received letters wherein parents told us that we lost credibility by making such absurd claims about potty training infants. Americans, and Europeans, are going through a renaissance of the Dark Ages in family and childcare. Thank God for many bold enough to break out of the bondage.

Mike

Dear Pearls,

"Fat has cursed me all my life. I have hated every bulge. I have hated every diet. It's a battle I've had to fight, lose, and then fight again. Being fat is an embarrassment. It dictates what I can do, where I can go, and what I can wear. My health is shot due to this curse that could have so easily been avoided. My mother indignantly told everyone that it was instinctive, that "children knew when to stop eating," and anyway, "it was baby fat, which we would outgrow." In a way, she was right. We all starved ourselves in our teens and lost some weight, only to blow up as soon as we married. She kept plenty of junk around for us to munch. She also let us spend our free hours in front of the TV. She was not obese. She was just too "sweet" for our good. She didn't know the curse she put on us kids. I decided when I had children they would not have the sin of THIS parent passed down on them. Neither would my parents be allowed to influence my children's eating habits.

By God's grace my children are all slender, healthy, hard working, and happy. Every time I see them playing and running, and every time my teenage daughter bounces in the door with a delighted tale, I am profoundly thankful. I know that for every donut I refused to buy, I was giving them the gift of a happy, healthy life.

I see parents that are giving their children a wonderful education; they get up early to teach character traits, they have poured their lives into making them happy, and yet neglected to teach and enforce self-control. I believe they are failing miserably as parents. What's the use of all that if we allow a pattern to develop that will in the end destroy our children's health, and will set them up for struggles,

defeat, and depression. The lack of self-control will make it difficult for them to walk in truth, due to the fact they lie to themselves and to others about what they have just eaten. Any time you defile your conscience you weaken your resolve in every area. I know because it has been the story of my life.

Thankfully, my children will not have to walk in the path I have trodden. They will not have to feel my defeat, anger, frustration, and lack of self-worth. They know and appreciate what I have done for them. I wish every parent who is

truly seeking God in raising their children could know the misery they are bringing to their children by simply not teaching them self-control.

I have never seen you address this problem, which I believe is a key issue in child training, and it is so prevalent among homeschooling families. Please do. Sherry"

Dear Sherry,

You said it all. Thank you.

The Pearls

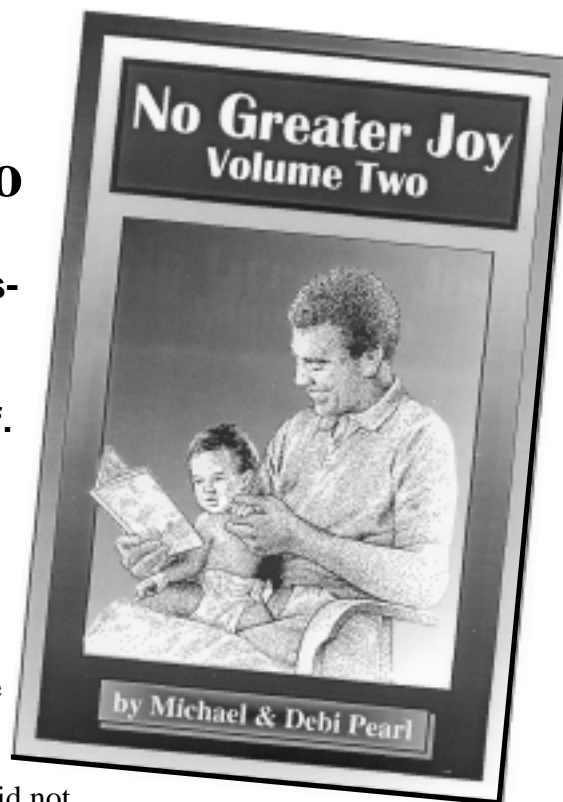
New Book

Finally! Volume Two

A reprint of over two years of newsletter articles.

Resuming where Volume One left off.

Every week—nearly every day—Mike and Deb sit down and write answers to your most oft-asked questions. The newsletter, **No Greater Joy**, is the chronicle of their responses. If you did not read the articles from 1994 through 1997, you will want to get a copy of **Volume One** &, now, **Volume Two**. 106 pages of answers to your questions.



Firstfruits

Dear Michael and Debi,

I read Michael's new book, "By Divine Design." I'm trying to get my husband to read it to see his reaction. You addressed one of my biggest confusions about God. I couldn't figure out why Jesus had to die. I heard all of the worn out verses about Jesus' death, but I could never relate to it. My mom was brought up Jewish so I always heard that Jesus was just a good man. Then one day I real-

ized he was more than that and I came to God in submission, and I have been trying to be even more submissive to show him my faith in his ways; but until I read the story about the king that was blinded I didn't get it! What a story! The picture was so real and so touching. It actually caught me off guard, because I recognized that you have to be consistent or law and order vanishes. When the king had on the hood, I thought

that was so he could remove himself from the emotion of the problem at hand. When he took off the hood to expose his blindness, I was just as shocked as the rest of the courtroom. I finally understood. I don't know why I am so blind myself when I feel so willing to learn, but I am thankful that God pointed it out through your book! Thank you is the wrong word because I know you are doing and fulfilling God's plan for you, so I'll say God bless you for carrying out his will so willingly.

J. K.

E-mail from Rebekah Rebekah is the oldest child of Michael and Debi Pearl. She is serving at Bethel, a Christian youth hostel in Haifa, Israel. When she informed us of their need for gospel portions and Bibles in over 100 different languages, we immediately set out to locate and ship the material. Tourists from nearly all countries of the world come to Israel. Bethel and its sister hostel, The Shelter, are great places to give out Bibles. Rebekah has seen several tourists come to know Christ through their witness. The cost of shipping is greater than the cost of the literature. If you are traveling to Israel and have extra space for Bibles, please contact us and we will send them to you. When you get to Israel you can mail them, or you can visit Bethel Hostel, deliver the Bibles, see the work first hand, stay overnight, and say Hi to Rebekah.

Rebekah, from Israel

I'm freezing! The latter rains finally came about three days ago and the temperature dropped with them. Everything turned bright green overnight. I got your birthday package yesterday! It was fun and I loved the present too. I guess I'm going to have to start writing again with a diary that nice [birthday gift] sitting on my desk. I like the shampoo too and have already used it. I am mighty impatient to get your snail mail letter!

Two big shipments of Bibles came in from different people. The whole KJV Bibles and the Romanian and Russian N.T.s. I packed up a bunch of Romanian stuff, and Mr. Valero and I went hunting Romanians on Friday afternoon. We gave away a lot of stuff. We found three guys living in the bottom of a huge building they are constructing way out in the middle of nowhere. When we knocked on their door and handed them some Romanian literature, they said in total amazement,

"How did you know we were here?" Mr. Valero laughed and told them that God had sent him. "Wow!" they asked alarmed, "What did He look like and what did He say?" They must feel like nobody knows where they are and nobody cares. Sad, but true. Mr. Valero is taking most of the Romanian stuff to John at the Shelter today. They will use it right away. The colorful ULTIMATE QUESTIONS booklet in Romanian was a huge success and is all gone already. We could use more of those. Beka

Project Whole World is on schedule. Our Artist has now completed over 80 pages. He does a minimum of three each week. We have recently secured a translator for Arabic. We are looking for volunteers for every language in the world. This three-hundred page book—the picture below is finish size—will not recount every Bible story, but it will be a chronological account of those stories essential to communicating the gospel message. We deal with every major event that bears on one's understanding of who God is and how man must relate to him. We expect this one piece of literature to be sufficient to communicate basic Bible truth to one that previously knew nothing. It will take another year or more to finish the artwork. We are still looking for a computer artist to add gray shading to the pictures. We are prepared to pay. We also need volunteer translators. Does anyone know of a program that will insert various languages, previously translated, into the appropriate bubble frame, resizing as needed? If you can help us, please contact us. immediately.



Dear Mike and Debi,

Our grandchildren are always asking to listen to "Becca's tape" (From the Ends of the Earth), and they will sit very quietly for long periods of time listening intently while the tape plays over and over again. Wina

Mr. and Mrs. Pearl,

I was blessed to receive your book as a gift. It has been of great encouragement to my husband and me. Nothing for us was working, our girls were becoming defiant and terrified of us. But praise God for you and this book for truly giving us hope in regaining our girls and training them properly. Roci

Dear Pearls,

Thank you so much for your ministry. I have been helped in a number of ways by your books and your newsletters, but one thing in particular stands out in my mind. One of my sons has a real temper. I had tried everything I could think of to help him learn to "manage his angry feelings." Well-meaning Christians had written books that convinced me I would "ruin him for life" if I squelched his need to "express himself." So, I essentially continued to let him throw screaming fits, all the while wringing my hands and wondering what deep psychological trauma had left him with such anger.

Then I read something you wrote. I don't remember your exact words, but your main idea was that fits were sin and not to tolerate them. It was a simple concept, but it was as if a veil had been lifted from my eyes, and at that moment we began the "zero tolerance" policy for temper tantrums at our house. The first few days were a real shock to my little boy. He offered every explanation and manipulation he could think of to defend his tantrum habit. He seemed to be most bothered by the fact that I was no longer worried about it. My only assurance to him was that I knew he was a smart boy and it wouldn't take him long to figure that it wasn't worth it to act badly any longer. I don't remember exactly how long, but it seems to me that it was less than a week when the regular display of tantrums disappeared. Every few months after that he would test me on this (to see if anything had changed, I suppose), but the tantrums became less and less frequent and much milder in intensity. And now, a year and half later they are virtually nonexistent.

I want to thank you for this. I also want to thank you for the overall tone of your books. Your books have been encouraging (as opposed to condemning). I never feel that I might as well hang it all up since I made mistakes when the children were two and three. I always feel that you genuinely want to help the poor misguided mother and not just laugh at her (my) mistakes. Thank you again for your ministry. Cynthia

To Everyone:

Did you notice her resolve? She saw the truth and was unshakeable in her actions. Her son could see it as well, thus he gave-in easier. It was her steadfast resolve that won her son's victory. She came to complete understanding of what was right, and nothing he said or did shook her. I could see conviction, dignity, determination, and victory as she told the story. The pitfall for most parents is, "I'm not absolutely sure if what I'm doing is right," thus a child's broken pity will weaken resolve when a thing gets too emotionally painful for the parent. When a child sees the weakening resolve, the battle is lost.

Deb

Dear Deb,

Enclosed is a check to order 10 Me? Obey Him? God has been working in this area of my life for 3 years now, but this book made it very clear to me, and now I'm so excited to share it with other wives up in our area. If wives will catch the conviction and the vision, there would be a whole lot more godly men around and happier families. Not to mention the powerful witness this would be to others.

Mrs. Charlie

From our Mailbox



The Pearls

After reading your book for encouragement, the Lord allowed an unusual training situation. Our 18-month-old was "requested" by her nine-year-old brother to come inside. She refused and staged a major tantrum. If I had asked, normally she would obey, but her brother asked. So I supervised the training session, and my nine-year-old took charge! For every wail of rebellion, I instructed him to calmly, quickly say, "Be quiet!" and to switch after each subsequent howl. Twenty minutes later she still defied him and reached toward me. She wanted me, but having just reread an article about discerning their lust and making sure they don't get it, and about both parents standing together, I supported my son by taking the switch and switching her as she sat protesting upon his knee. Ten minutes later, she ceased crying and gave her brother and then myself a hug. What interested me most was her response to him in the vegetable garden that morning. She followed him everywhere and responded so well.

Among the older siblings, often I will hear the younger say to the older, "You can't tell me what to do!" Especially if the older is reinforcing an instruction we have made. I have often wondered how to conquer such disloyalty. Do you have any suggestions? Sometimes the rebuke may not be given in a right spirit of love, but if it is, how to foster loyalty? Meads, from New Zealand

Dear Mead,

You just told us how. As your older children are given responsibility, they will act more responsibly, and the younger children will come to respect and honor them. Wonderful example! More of the same. Good job.

Pearls

Sirs:

I am a student with the Telos Institute International and have been told that one of the required readings for a course this semester is *To Train Up a Child* by Michael and Debi Pearl. Would you please send me information on purchasing this book.

Aaron

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Pearl

....One thing my son really enjoys is "training walks," where I get him to walk, run, stop, turn around, touch the ground, etc. He even requests that I bring the wooden spoon with me. If he doesn't respond or responds slowly, he gets a wee tap, but he actually loves these sessions. I have started training him to drop everything and look into my eyes when I clap hands, but I have discovered that I can't clap while holding the baby! Maybe I should have chosen a different signal, I just can't decide on a word I wish to use instead of "TENNN HUTTTTT!!!" I look forward to receiving your newsletter.

Vanessa, New Zealand

Dear Michael and Debi,

I wanted to share with you the impact *Me? Obey Him?* has in my corner of the world. I gave the last copy I had to a friend at church who was looking to change the way she was raising her children. I threw in *Me? Obey Him?* with my copy of *To Train Up a Child*. She devoured the book and passed it on to a friend. The friend finished the book and drove it over to another friend's house the same afternoon! This woman wants to use it as a Bible study in her church. My friend and I want to use it as a Bible study in our church. The message is spreading like wildfire. Women are hungry for the truth.

Cynthia

Dear Mr. Pearl,

I have attended one series of seminars and another individual seminar held here in Dallas/Ft. Worth area. I would like to bring to your attention something that you conveyed during those seminars that isn't stressed in the books and literature. You relayed the message that what makes the training effective is the relationship with the child. You stated that you took your children with you often and told several stories of the fun you had together. I don't feel that the attitude of desiring the company of your children is always shown in what you write. I know that is how you feel and sometimes that comes out in the newsletter. Most of the time I don't see that it is addressed, and I didn't pick up on

it much in the book. I have found in my own parenting, when the children are not being desired and enjoyed, our relationship deteriorates and discipline takes over.

I greatly wish you could come back for another seminar. I need a refresher course. It is all too easy to fall back into lazy patterns. It takes a lot of work to have a good attitude. I am very consistent, but I struggle with laziness and selfishness. That makes the switch ineffective.

Thank you for your ministry.

Kelly, in Texas

NEW TAPE

You asked for it!

Two tapes—two hours—of Michael Pearl speaking on Child training. These two tapes are particularly geared toward the father's role in the family.

