



# Raising a Princess

an examination  
of traditions

Ron Decuir

## To Sarah

If I messed your perfect days up, and rained on your parade.  
If you wondered why I said no, to so many plans you made,

It's not because I wanted to spoil your happiness.  
It's just because I'm your father, only trying to do my best.

I want to try to help you, to live without a few.  
of the scars I have upon me, from some sins I fell into.

So when you wonder why we don't always see eye to eye,  
I've been down the road before you, and when I see the holes, I sigh.

Next time I disappoint you, and shut the door again. It's just  
because love you, and I'm trying to save you from some pain.

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When Jesus walked upon the earth, it often made Him cry.  
to see his sheep go straying, and the many that would die,

Without His love and comfort, that comes when only they,  
would put their trust in Him, and bow their heads and pray.

O God our loving Father, your ways are much too high.  
please guide me, and please lead me, and dry my weeping eye.  
(Jesus would say)

So when you wonder why, we don't always see eye to eye,  
I've been down the road before you, and when I see the holes, I sigh.

Next time I disappoint you, and shut the door again, it's just  
because love you, and I'm trying to save you from some pain.

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“Love not the world, neither the things of the world.  
If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.  
For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes,  
and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof:  
but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.”  
1 John 2: 16-17

“Know ye not that we shall judge angels?  
How much more things that pertain to this life?”  
I Corinthians 6:3

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## **Preface:**

Dear Sarah,

One evening several years back, when we used to sit and eat together as a family, you looked at me and said, “Dad, I want to know how you raised me because I want to raise my children the same way.” I was pleased and proud so I set out to write this book.

We have enjoyed great times together. We have closets full of pictures and videos of many of the usual things we did. We picked flowers together, played music and sang together, and praised God together in church bands. Many times we just sat around talking and laughing about the events of days as they rolled by.

I taught you how to work on cars, how to wire ceiling fans in the attic, how to figure the amount of paint needed to paint the house, how to plant rose bushes, and how to cook Chinese food in a Wok.

We floated down a river on a lazy summer afternoon, explored caves and cactus, tasted the salt spray on the Gulf of Mexico, watched clouds drift across the sky, and we turned off the lights of the car in the middle of the New Mexico desert to see the billions of stars that we never saw in the city. Lots of neat family stuff.

When I think about how I raised you, all these things all come to mind. Most families do these kinds of things as they raise their children, smiley peaceful things. Yet there is another side of raising that goes against the grain of a lot of things. There is a serious side that goes against the grain of modern culture, tradition and society. The warfare side of life.

I raised you to be a princess. Spoiled you a lot. Cared for you a whole lot. Many princesses are raised to live in palaces, isolated from common conflict. This is not how I raised you. I raised you to be a warrior princess. This book is the story of the lessons of warfare I taught you.

Last year, I published *A Hand in the Crowd*, a book about my life experiences that brought me from insanity to saving faith in Jesus Christ. *Raising a Princess* begins where my last book ended.

## 1 It's a Girl

The summer of 1980 was blistering hot in Dallas. My old VW camper van and Susan's VW beetle had no air conditioning, and she was pregnant that year.

It was late October now. It had finally begun to cool off. Susan called me from work and said, "My water broke. Come get me." I went home, got the suitcase she had packed, and went in the van to pick her up.

We hadn't picked a boy's name yet because we believed that you would be a girl and your name would be Sarah, which means princess. So as we drove down Central Expressway in the van on the way to the hospital we decided to name you Steven if you turned out to be a boy.

I drove up to the front door of the hospital, dropped Susan off and went to find a place to park. Years later, she asked, "Why didn't you take me to the emergency entrance? I walked through the hospital with my water broken, trying to find admissions."

I said, "I didn't think it was an emergency, you were just having a baby." We are kinda different from each other. She is a New York Yankee and I'm a Crazy Louisiana Cajun.

Sarah, you came by "C" section, so you were a pretty baby. As soon as Susan started to wake up in recovery, I told her. "It's a girl." Her eyes were closed but she smiled and said "Thank you Jesus. It's a girl." And repeated, "it's a girl, it's a girl, it's a girl," as she drifted back to sleep. I stood there at the side of her bed holding her hand, and thinking about the year before.

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### A New Life, a New Wife

It had been a brisk November afternoon. Susan held tight around my waist as we banked the motorcycle through some turns around the lake. It was a start of a new life for both of us.

We had been married that morning. It had been a small wedding. Ray, my boss was my best man, and Susan's friend, Betty, was her matron of honor. My two sons, Jeff and Gavin and Susan's son Mark were there. Susan's brothers, Doug and Ray, and her mother, Ruth, were there with their spouses.

Ruth had a reception for us at her house. Then we went to Susan's apartment, changed clothes and went for a motorcycle ride. We spent our wedding night at the Reunion Tower. Susan's company had treated us to that.

We consolidated the stuff from my apartment into her apartment and put the rest in a storage unit until we could decide what to do with it.

Susan was brave, or shall I say insane for having married me. I was two years down the road from a mental hospital and deliverance from demon possession. I was a peculiar, no, let's say an extremely peculiar person, with some extremely radical un-orthodox beliefs.

Nevertheless, we were excited about being married and excited about Jesus. He was the center of both of our lives and would be the center of our life together.

Thanksgiving had been cold that year. My friend Mike had invited us to come to his property in the east Texas woods. We packed the van and headed for his place. We spent the night in the van under a pile of blankets and awoke to the smell of bacon cooking on an open fire. We opened the door of the van and saw Mike sitting on a log stirring some eggs. He looked up and with his usual grin asked, "Are you hungry?"

After breakfast, we roamed the woods for a while and it started sleeting. I said, "Let's go to New Orleans so you can meet my parents and the rest of the family." The van didn't have much of a heater and was slow as a turtle. We finally reached New Orleans around midnight. We visited for a day then we returned to Dallas and got on with our new life.

Less than a year later, we were parents again. Things were going to be different ... in many ways.

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## 2 Traditions

Susan was resting now, so I left the hospital and returned to our apartment. After telling our neighbors about your arrival, I went inside and walked back to our bedroom. We had put a crib in there for you. I had chosen plain sheets for your crib, without the usual animal pictures, and I didn't want a mobile hanging above your crib. As I stood in front of the crib imagining you lying in it, I noticed that Ruth had put a doll in the crib. I took the doll out and put it away.

I left the apartment, walked down to the creek, sat down on the bank and looked across to the apartment where I used to live. My old life was on the other side of the creek. A life hungry for dragon power.

I threw a rock in the creek. The sun was sparkling on the water and a slight breeze blew across my face. Suddenly, a gust of wind kicked up and I saw seeds blowing in the wind. Some landed on rocks, some in the dirt and some in the water where they floated on to places downstream.

God was scattering seeds of life. He propagated his creation through the seeds of man, animals, birds and plants. Some of the seeds were good seeds of noble trees and herbs; others were weed seeds, seed of thorns and thistles, the result of the curse. (Matt 12:48, Jer 4:3, Gen 3:19)

I leaned back on the bank, closed my eyes, and daydreamed for a while, thinking about another kind of sowing going on.

Traditions are sown like seeds from generation to generation, planted into minds of people of all ages. Many traditions are great, inspiring and wonderful. But there are also vain traditions of untruth being sown by the dragon. Vain seeds that bring forth confusion. Seeds of the curse.

I had grown up in a family steeped in traditions. I probably took the good ones for granted because of the bitter taste I had from the bad vain traditions had poisoned my life.

Poisoning from vain traditions is a plague, and too many times the sickness is undiagnosed because of ignorance. That is not to say that the good traditions don't bring great pleasure, but when a person has a great thorn in their heel, it takes the spring out of their step and it occupies their attention until the pain is gone.

The poisoning is the work of the dragon. He sows seeds of vain traditions during every stage of a person's life. He starts early with babies and eagerly awaits the confusion that grows in the heart and mind. He is the author of confusion and the father of lies.

As I lay there by the creek I thought about the doll in the crib. That's what got me to thinking about traditions. *Susan and Ruth are going to be upset about me taking the doll out of the crib. I thought. Maybe I'm being too weird. Maybe I'm making too big a deal out of this image thing of mine.* But even though it would be considered a weird thing to do. It somehow it seemed very



important. It was all about the importance of truth.

The doll in the crib was part of a larger popular vain tradition. The tradition of creating a fantasy world into which babies are initiated - a fantasy world in which most children in our society begin their lives, develop their concepts and feed their imaginations - a tradition that would go on to introduce talking animals, fairy tales and other sorts of vain imaginations.

My thoughts ran on: *Children don't know the difference between what is true and what is not. The time comes when a child can tell the difference between a story and the truth, or between a doll and a baby, but until then, whatever is planted in their minds, they believe. Imagination is part of our soul, it is a gift of God. But telling children that a doll is a baby, that animals talk, and that fairy tales are true, is deception- just plain lying – an offence to children. It's so clear – what else could it be called? Jesus said He is the way, the Truth and the life. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth. God cannot lie. So he would not have any part of anything that was not true. Jesus said not to offend the little children.* I was convinced that I had to stand firm in this.

It's funny - no, that's a poor choice of words. It's sad how people think, or rather don't think about the vain traditions they perpetuate. They pass the vain traditions of fantasy on to generation after generation with a mindlessness that seems to give them some strange sort of familiar comfort. The ritual is so numbing, blinding, and accepted that few seem to notice that the seeds are bringing forth thorns and weeds.

How does this happen? Vain traditions are not passed on through maliciousness, but through spiritual ignorance. The dragon drips pride, sentimentality, nostalgia and other such emotions into the minds of unthinking adults, sugar coating the darkness and making their minds impervious to the lies they are passing to others. Those who pass vain traditions feed on the gullibility of innocent children. They may believe they are doing it for the happiness of the children, but it is more than that. They also do it because they enjoy the reaction innocent children have to these deceptions. It's like they look at children as non-people who have not yet arrived as personhood and take advantage of their naivety.

Sweet feelings and memories are not gauges of truth. Sentimentality can sometimes be a strong obstacle to seeing the truth. Unfortunately many people close their eyes and ears to truth so their fun will not be spoiled. They don't realize they are dealing with the dragon.

The dragon is lurking there. He is real. He is alive today, he is Satan, the Devil, the prince of the power of the air, the fiery serpent who roams around seeking to kill, steal and destroy. The deceiver who is out to topple Kings, Queens, Princes and Princesses. The ignorant believe he is a fairy tale. If asked, some people may say believe he exists but they don't seem to see how he is involved in what they do in their everyday life.

The dragon likes it that way. He is the master deceiver. He is the prince of the power of the air, the god of this world and he uses anyone he can get to follow him to do his work. He doesn't

care about who he uses, anyone who doesn't care much about truth will do.

Then I thought about you Sarah. You were coming home to be in our care. I wanted to raise you in a special way. Your experience of life had just begun. With wide-eyed-wonder, you were going to begin learning who we were, who you were, what all God's creation was. What an adventure and what an experience you had before you. God created so many wonderful things. He created the people, the animals, the birds in the sky, the green of the grass the stateliness of the majestic trees the great expanses of desert lands, peaceful lakes, singing creeks and roaring oceans. That was the real world, the creations of God, not the fantastic world of the Dragon. These were the things I wanted you to know.

You were just a little person coming into this wondrous world with new eyes, new ears, tender lips, soft fingers and an open soul. Touching God's creation with you senses, exploring an awesome land. You began to learn concepts, words and ideas from the moment you was born and I believed in my heart that you should learn the real before the artificial, the real before the representation of the real.

Truth is serious business. Truth is the foundation of life. As a Christian, I could only teach truth. I resolved to only teach you truth, no matter what other people thought of me. I would deal with traditions as time went on. In raising you, I was not going to lie to you. To the best of my ability, I was only going to plant seeds of truth. I would labor to shield you from lies and would destroy the seeds of vain tradition before they sprouted, and would labor to help you learn to discern so you would learn to know the difference between truth and lies.

From the onset of your life, I made that commitment to you. I wanted you to learn what a baby was before you learned what a "Baby Doll" was, what a tree was before what a picture of a tree was; what a bear was before what a "Teddy Bear" was. I wanted you to be kept from images until you understood what they were. I did not want them to be part of your environment and surroundings. I wanted you to experience unadulterated reality without having images thrust on you. I didn't want to expose you to images before you had seen the real thing and until you were old enough to know the difference between the image and the real.

### **Trick or Treat**

I opened my eyes and thought. *Heavy thinking for such a special day.* Then I got up from the creek bank, dusted off my jeans and walked down the sidewalk towards our apartment. Jack-O-Lanterns in the windows of some apartments and the posters of witches and black cats on doors set the eerie mood of the season. *More of the Dragon's work,* I thought. It was the end of October - Halloween. Susan and I had been saved the year before and had been shocked when we went to church and found they were promoting the vain tradition of Halloween with the witches and all the occult stuff. When we had said something about it, to others at the church we were told it's just in fun.

As a child I dressed up like ghosts and goblins and running around in the neighborhood yelling

“trick or treat.” Back then I didn’t know the meaning of Halloween. I didn’t know that it was a witch’s festival. Back then I thought witches were just make believe wart- nosed old women with black hats and brooms. But it hadn’t been that long ago that I had been involved in Witchcraft and I knew witches were real. They were not of the Holy Spirit. Halloween was associated with unholy spirits, and Susan and I didn’t want any part of that for us or for our family. Even though people considered us spoilsport fanatics, we were going to speak out against things that were evil and untrue – against the things that were deceiving children.

I went back to the apartment and straightened the place up for your arrival. Then I got in the van and returned to the Hospital to see you and Susan.

### **The Pacifier**

A couple of days later, when you and Susan were ready to come home, I took one last look around the apartment to make sure it was clean and everything was in order.

We had everything people usually get for their new baby: blankets and bottles and booties. Someone had even given us a pacifier. As I looked at the pacifier, I thought about how babies want to suck for milk and would finally get tired of sucking on the plastic pacifier and fall asleep. I didn’t want that for you. I wanted the real thing for you in every way. The pacifier wasn’t the real thing. Obviously I was and am a fanatic.

When you think about it. Jesus made the statement that, “if a child wants a fish, his parent won’t give him a stone.” The same thing applied here.

People wouldn’t think of serving an adult a rubber steak to chew on if they said they were hungry, that wouldn’t pacify them, but somehow babies get thought of as being some non-people sort of things. It is like so many other traditional things thrust upon babies; the pacifier is really deceptive and takes advantage of a baby’s ignorance. Children are people and adults must not take advantage of their naivety and lack of experience.

### **Picking up the princess**

I locked the door, drove to the Exxon station, filled up the van with gas and headed down Central Expressway to the hospital.

I loaded the flowers and gifts in the van and helped Susan and you into the front seat. It was a strange and wonderful situation for me. I had been in this same hospital when I had been treated for insanity and now from the same place, I was truly getting a new start.

### **3 Raising a Princess**

#### **Baby don't Cry**

We had you at home now and we went through the usual adjustment of sleep schedules. We believed that if you cried, you had a problem; so we would find out what your problem was and help you. Many of our friends told us that if you cried, we just needed to ignore it and let you "cry it out." That seemed cruel to us. We believed that it would just harden your heart, so we didn't take that advise.

We knew that sometimes you were just being selfish when you cried - selfish just like the rest of us. But we believed that there were reasons for crying. Fear of being alone was probably a big one. We always comforted you when you cried. That's what our Heavenly Father does for us when we are upset. We wouldn't want God to just let us cry it out when we cried out to him. You knew that we would be there to comfort and help you if you were in distress.

#### **The Crib**

You didn't like being stuck in your crib. You wanted to be near your mother. So we got rid of the crib and put a twin bed alongside our bed. Then you would sleep peacefully as you fondled Susan's hair.

#### **The Great Outdoors**

I could hardly wait to take you outside to let your experience the wind and sky and leaves and trees and grass and all that neat stuff. Susan was a little apprehensive about it, but it went well. I can remember the first time I wrapped you in your blanket and laid you in the autumn leaves by the bank of the creek, just watching you look around in wide-eyed- wonder.

#### **The Jolly Imposter**

Thanksgiving came and went and then it was Christmas. We celebrated it as the birthday of Jesus even though we knew it may not be the same time of the year when he really was born. We used it as an opportunity to talk to others about Jesus and how he came to save us. We gave presents with Scriptures and toys that taught about Jesus. Our families didn't know what to think about us.

Like most people, the other people in our families also celebrated Christmas as the birthday of Jesus. They had a manger scene and went to church on Christmas, and sang Christmas carols. Their Christmas had another side. Jesus was not all they celebrated. They also sang *The Night Before Christmas*, *Santa Claus is coming to town*, *Rudolph the red nosed reindeer*, and asked children, "What is Santa going to bring you?" Year after year wide-eyed children send out letters like prayers, thinking they are going to the North Pole.

Santa is the jolly imposter. He poses as Jesus Christ. Like Jesus, Santa Claus supposedly knows all, is the moral judge, and is coming again in the air to bring gifts. But Santa is a lie - one of the dragon's masterpieces of counterfeit and deception.

When we told our families how we felt, they said, "Fairy tales are not dangerous, they are not lies. They are just children's stories." But we told them things are either true or they are not. They are either truth or they are lies. It's rather ironic that when I was a child, I got my mouth washed out with soap for telling a "story," but if parents told children "stories" it was OK.

Inflicting this imaginary world on children didn't really start until the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Prior to that time, no one thought children had any special needs or interests; they were simply miniature beings who were taught to act like adults. Their parents read the Bible to them and didn't teach them fairy tales.

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## **Dolls**

I wanted you to grow up having relationships with real people, not relationships with dolls.

Eventually, as you got older I started letting you have the dolls people had given you, I explained to you that they were rags. That they were not alive, that even though people called them babies, they were not babies. They were not people.

When you would get an animal doll, people would tell you "it is a stuffed animal." I told you that it was not a stuffed animal. I told you it was just a rag.

I took you to the Museum of Natural History and showed you what stuffed animals really were; that they were animals that were once alive and were killed and stuffed. Then you understood the difference

One day, I was sitting on the apartment steps when you came up to me with a doll that your brother, Mark, had given you. You said, "Daddy, do you want me to throw this 'Rag' away?" I looked into your eyes and I knew you had reached the discernment and understanding I had prayed for you to have and so I said, "No, Sarah, you can keep it, you know what it is."

You learned to play with dolls, not to depend upon them for your security. You didn't have a "favorite" doll that you had to have with you at all times. Your security was in us, your parents, and it would eventually be in Jesus,

## **TV**

We didn't watch TV and we kept you away from TV sets and movies until you were old enough to understand that they were images. We never set you in front of the TV set and let it entertain

you. We read to you and taught you to read.

Later, we were very careful about the shows we watched with you. And if Susan and I watched shows when you were asleep in bed, we only watched shows that we would be comfortable letting you watch. It wasn't a discipline for us; ... it was natural for us to see things that way. We had been born again of the Holy Spirit of Truth.

### **Little ears-Little eyes**

We took you to play in the parks and for rides in the country, letting you touch and feel the different textures of flowers, rocks, water and grass. To Susan's astonishment, I even let you chew on mud clods in the river.

### **Family Togetherness**

We really loved you and enjoyed your company. You were part of our family. We included you in everything we did.

We had a wonderful life together as a family. We enjoyed playing with you, watching you crawl and learn to walk. We didn't use wind up swings and walkers to occupy your time. We took you everywhere and didn't look for opportunities to get away from you and leave you with a baby sitter. We really didn't want to do things apart from you. That would have been unnatural to us.

We didn't put you in the nursery at church. We wanted you to get used to being around all ages of people and to behave properly in all situations. We took you to church services, Bible study groups, everywhere. You were part of our family and what the family did, you did too. You enjoyed being with us and we included you in everything we did. Wanting you with us all the time was unusual for this day and age. It would not have been thought unusual when I was a child. Things have changed a lot.

Later, as you reached the end of your teen years, you started wondering why Susan and I wanted you to come with us when we went out for our anniversary. We wanted you with us because we enjoyed your company.

### **Learning to Read**

Susan began to teach you to read early. She read you the Bible and Christian Books. We taught you truth, not lies. We did not teach you the lies and fantasy of the worldly nursery rhymes.

Animals do not talk, neither do they wear clothes or engage in human activity. What an absurd ridiculous falsehood to inflict into the minds of little children who should be taught the truth. Yet it is considered absurd and ridiculous to criticize such standards of traditional childhood legacy such as Mickey Mouse and the other abominations of Walt Disney. Something is wrong with this picture where lies are promoted and those people who are calling them lies are ridiculed. We

were told we were weird because we taught you that animals don't talk. Imagine that!

Most importantly, we taught you to discern between truth and lies by teaching you the Bible.

### **Stay five**

I wanted you to stay five years old. I told you, "Stay Five." What was so special about that age? At five, your personality was in full bloom and you had not yet been burdened with responsibility. You were carefree. I suppose that was just a time that I had laid my sword down and was not looking forward to picking it up again to deal with your introduction into the school system. I dreaded the day that you would have to go to school.

### **The little Chef**

You always liked to cook. You were also business minded. You would have your breakfast diner with a menu and all. With grand pomp, you would invite us to the dining room table and give us a menu. We would visit with each other as you prepared our food. After we ate, you rang up the bill on your toy cash register and thanked us for coming.

### **Home School**

Susan heard about home schooling and was interested in pursuing it. I was opposed to it at first. I wasn't keen on the idea. I thought that home schooling was just an outgrowth of the hippie movement with its anti-establishment ideals.

There was going to be a home-schooling seminar by Greg Harris. I agreed to go with Susan and when it was over, I was a believer in home schooling.

Home schooling receives a lot of criticism. Some say that Home schooled children are maladjusted, socially retarded, and have not properly bonded with their peers. Our relatives were concerned too.

Those who criticize teaching children at home have some questions to answer: Did God institute the family or did He institute the school system? Where in the Bible does God say that School Institutions are supposed to teach a child the way they should go? What are Home Schooled children mal-adjusted to? What and who should children be adjusted to? What is the proper point of reference? The ways of the world, or the Word of God? God says to teach our children his ways, but He and His Word are barred from the school system.

### **October vacations**

We always looked forward to October. It was the time we took vacations. Because we taught you at home, we were free to travel when we wanted to. It was beautiful traveling in the fall. Our vacations were adventures and education all wrapped up together.

## **Youth Groups**

I was always cautious about youth groups. They fragmented the family and re-enforced the peer bonding many times to the exclusion of the parents, which hurt the family life.

One day you asked me “Daddy, one of the girls in our home school group invited me to go skating with her. Her father is a pastor of a Baptist church. He home schools his children. He said he’ll talk with you so you can see if you think it would be ok for me to go.”

We attended church there for several years; we even started a youth band at the church. I was glad to see you make friends. They were a pretty good group of kids, however the children of the pastor were going to prove to be a great fascination to you, and would incite a lot of worldliness in you.

The change was very subtle. It finally reached a point of you wanting to spend more time away from us and more time with the pastor’s family. I suppose a certain amount of separation is to be expected. I knew that eventually you would move on to have a separate life, but it was not the way I thought it should be, because it affected our family relationship.

Looking back, it was a time of growth for us all.



## 4 The Princess Papers

As you got older, in your later teens, like a fledgling bird you began to test your wings. Giving you guidance passed the point of just taking you by the hand and having you follow me as I walked.

You started to examine traditions for yourself, some old, some modern, some good, some not. Some you followed; some you didn't.

This is when I began to write you letters. Some I gave you, some I couldn't – it was not the time. Because discerning when to speak and when to just pray, is a lesson that takes a lifetime to learn.

What follows in this chapter are The Princess Papers. They are strategies of warfare against the Dragon and his vain traditions. They are a collection of things I taught you along the way in form of letters I wrote you, cuttings from the little "Talks" we had, unspoken thoughts I had about how to raise you, and prayers I sent up to God for you.

Some of the lessons you have already learned, some not yet. Keep in mind, however, that these are not mere formulas for success.

God said in Deuteronomy,

"O that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well for them, and with their children forever!"  
Deut 6:29.

The commandments were not given as formulas for success. They were signposts pointing to the way.

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again." John 3:6,7

## **Be Picky**

One day we were looking at new pianos. You knew could get a good price for one from the music store where you worked. I told you “Make sure you get the right one. Don’t settle for something less than what you really need.”

You probably think I’m picky, picky about your friends, picky about your taste in entertainment, picky about your purchases, picky about everything you do or want to do.

I am picky. I look for quality, not just easy purchases that are done for the sake of convenience or “cheap deals.” I want you to be picky. Be picky about everything you do, everything you eat and drink, everything you read or watch on TV or at the movies, every person you befriend, every plan you make, everywhere you go - every choice you make.

Too often we make choices and do things out of haste, laziness, and boredom. We just slide into a rut. We make a choice because it feeds our fantasy of the moment. We make relationships just because someone conveniently crosses our path or just because we want to get out of loneliness. Unless they are quality relationships, they are not such a “good deal.”

God wants us to be picky. It’s called discernment of His perfect will. It’s called walking in His Spirit. God wants a quality life for us - quality choices, and quality relationships.

It may seem that I am overdoing the point about relationships, driving it into the ground. That is exactly what I am doing. Relationships are the grounds for everything. They are the most important of all things. First our relationship with God and second our relationship with others. There is never anything trivial about a relationship. Every relationship influences you to either be closer to God, farther from God, or lukewarm about God. This is the criterion by which you must measure everyone you know and everything you do. Ask yourself that question. Does this person or this activity encourage me or influence me to draw closer to God, do they influence me to draw farther from God and closer to the things of the world, or do they neither encourage me nor discourage me. Are they lukewarm and do they influence me to stay just as I am?

Think about this as it applies to men who have an interest in you. Where do their life interests lie? In romance? In things of the world?

Where are your interests? What are your goals, how do they fit into the plan that God has for you? Are they mainstream? Or just a worthless diversion?

## **Beyond Obedience The reason for Rules 1998**

Rules are not ends in themselves, and obedience to them is not an end in itself either. Rules are protective and instructive. Rules are the schoolmaster that leads us to life; rules are not life itself. Obedience to law and rules is a framework, an image, and a picture that hints at the fruits of the spirit. Obedience is a virtue, but it is not life. It is not itself a fruit of the spirit. Rules teach by inference, they introduce what is good by teaching both what is good, and what is to be avoided as bad.

Jesus says, "If one would enter into life, keep my commandments." The letter of the law brings conviction, and kills the flesh. The Spirit gives life. If you walk in the spirit, you will obey the rules by your walk, but you don't walk in the spirit by obeying the rules. As we submit to the rules and declare that they are good, God leads us into life.

Sarah, you are seventeen years old. You are obedient and you still ask me what are the rules. My prayer and fervent desire is that you go beyond obedience to understanding what the rules are there for; and that you taste the Spirit behind the rules so you can enter into the life of the spirit that the rules hint at.

What are the reasons behind the rules? Some examples:

### *Driving:*

The underlying reason for traffic rules is not traffic control. The reason is safety. Those who are not interested in safety must be made to follow the rules. Those who want to be safe are not bothered by the rules.

### *Dating:*

Rules for dating and courtship are not to control relationships, but to teach what good healthy relationships are about. They teach how a bad relationship can be avoided and what can be gained in a good relationship. If the rules about dating are scorned, a good relationship will not be tasted. Only cheap imitations will be found. And the taste left in the mouth will be bitter.

### *Curfew:*

Curfews are not for control. They are for health.

### *Practice:*

The rule to practice the piano an hour a day is not an end in itself, but it will show what type of performance is possible when dedication is made to mastering the instrument.

As long as rules seem to be restrictive, the spirit behind them has not been tasted.

King David said that He loved the law of God, that he relished the commandments. He went beyond obedience. He had tasted the Spirit beyond the rules.

## Control vs Discernment

And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Ephesians 6:4

The law is the schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. In the same way parenting is the schoolmaster that brings children to discernment and takes them from under the law to walking in the spirit of truth.

I prayed for you and guided you to be able to recognize the dragon behind the many disguises that he would wear through the unfolding stages of your life.

My goal was not to control you, nor was it to have you come to me with every question that may arise. It wasn't that I would tell you everything you could or could not do. I wanted to get out of the role of guide as quickly as possible.

When you turned seventeen, it was hard for me. That's when I wrote the song to you "*Trying to Save you from Some Pain.*" My heart ached for you and I cried a lot inside as I saw you draw farther and farther away from me and from the things I taught you.

Your independence was hard for me to accept. Seeing you following the guidance of your peers frightened me. Not fright for myself, but fright for you. It's something only a parent can feel, but it cannot be explained. God feels that way about me, about you, about all of us. If the things I present in this book appear to be foolish, and you may wonder if I am a fanatic. Yes, I am a fanatic, a fool for Christ. Many call me a "Legalist". I am by no means a legalist. I trust in grace and faith alone for salvation. But I am a strong believer that everything we do as a Christian should edify.

All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not. 1 Corinthians 10:23

I wasn't raising you by a book of dos and don'ts. I tried to keep my relationship with you alive and tried to encourage you to pray about all of your decisions, grow in your relationship with Jesus, and feed each day from the Word of God rather than feeding from the ways of the world.

Sometimes when I warned you about the influences of some of your friends you defended your actions to a point that I sometimes wondered if you no longer listened to my advice. I don't think you took my silence as approval, you just didn't see that the worldly influences were taking a toll on your spirit and were keeping you back from the life you could have. Be careful of your fascination for the things of the world. Don't believe the promises of the world. The promises of the world are sinful and lead away from the promises of God. We do not stay in the same place. It is a fight for all of us.

## **Control vs Discernment page 2**

Jesus is the victor. He will deliver us from sin when we repent and submit to Him.

## **Dancing with the Dragon**

Youth is such a romantic time. Dancing is such a grand form of intoxication. The dragon loves to dance and romance. He spins a sensual web to capture curious hearts. He appeals to the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life.

The dragon is a mastermind and he wants to master the minds of youth. He comes as an amuser, flatterer, and as a friendly tempter sowing seeds of rebellion in the carnal mind. He is subtle. He does not go around with a sign that says "This is of the world, watch out." He comes as a roaring lion, seeking whom he can devour, but he dresses like a cute little lamb.

Love not the World, neither the things that are in the World. If a man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father but is of the world. And the World passeth away, and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever. I John 2:15-17.

Watch ye therefore that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak .Matt26:41

In The Lord's Prayer, Jesus says "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." Jesus also showed us that our part is watching and praying that we don't enter into temptation. The flesh is weak. It is insatiable; it follows after the things of the world: the fashions of the world, the vanities of the world, the dainties of the dragon.

The soul - the intellect, emotions and will - is a seeker. It either seeks from the world or from the Holy Spirit. There is no neutral middle ground.

We must watch to see the muses at the gate of the soul. We must discern the smoke of the dragon. Where there is smoke, there is fire!!

God gives us many warnings against deception:

"Would to God ye could bear with me a little in my folly: and indeed bear with me. For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." II Corinthians

"Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the

## **Dancing with the Dragon (page 2)**

woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it [was] pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. Genesis 3:1- 6

Eating of the fruits of the Tree of Knowledge and Good Evil brings death. The dragon knows how to dress up all kinds of fruits to make them seem good and innocent. He disguises their real nature and makes them look like good things.

There comes a time for all princes and princesses when they have to face the dragon and the fruits he offers, reject him and decline to dance with him.

**Deliberation about School** (A letter from March 1997 when Sarah wanted to go to Turner High School)

Dear Susan and Sarah,

I have been praying a lot about the future of Sarah's education. These are my deliberations I have made so far about Sarah stopping Home Education and going to school. Our desire has always been to raise Sarah in the Godly environment of the home, different from the world's ways. I consider this a sacred trust.

Pros about going to school:

The only reason that comes to my mind that I may consider letting Sarah go to school is not for her, but for her children.

I have always hoped and prayed that Sarah would be committed to Home Schooling, that she would see how much of the good life she has is the result of being Home Schooled, and would also want to Home School her children that she may eventually be blessed with.

Since she has such a curiosity about school, it seems that at this time, she has not developed a commitment to Home Schooling.

So perhaps if she goes to school this next year, she may have her eyes opened to the contrast enough that she would gain that commitment to Home Schooling for herself and for her future children.

This is a sad reason. Is this reason enough?

Cons about going to school:

Sarah is curious about what it would be like to go to school. Curiosity alone is not a motive for making decisions. Curiosity must be tempered by the Word of God. Curiosities have let many into the ways of the world, sex outside of marriage, drugs, alcohol, immodesty, and many other the works of the flesh.

Home schooling has worked for Sarah. She is an obedient child and has good relationships with both of us, She has good values, and she has learned to learn and has done well in her studies. I don't see any reason to change the course of teaching we have adopted. I don't think any person ever "arrives" enough to be put into the school cesspool. I don't see any reason that we should give place to the unnecessary family problems that I believe schooling would bring to us.

For eleven years, we have read and heard about the subtle mind twisting, anti-God



## **Deliberation about School (page 2)**

things that are being taught in the public school system. I have no doubt that they are really that way. It is naive to believe that the school system may not really be as bad as we have been told. Look at what the school system is producing.

We have seen families in torment because their children have rebelled because of peer influence in the schools.

Some of our friends wanted to put their children into the school system so that they could be lights in the darkness and ministers of the Kingdom of God in the school. It didn't work that way. Their children who were model children became rebellious.

At one of the teacher's meetings, a man came up to me in desperation asking, "What can I do to get my daughter back. She is rebellious and disrespectful." He had taken her out of school. We recommended to him that he get her some good Christian friends in the church.

Others, who after having been in the system and having been taken out, are depressed and sulk until they are put back into the system.

We always have believed in the advice we give people about the problems they have with their children. Mothers do better if they stay at home with their children and home school. I don't see a reason why we should think that this advice wouldn't apply to us.

There is no need to subject Sarah to that environment to see how tough she is.

In my mind, if we are warned about the danger of something, curiosity is not a reason for trying it.

The Bible says to keep the Word of God before you, to talk about it as you walk and go through the day. It is sheer folly to join up with a school system that forbids God and His word from the schools.

These are my thoughts for now. Sarah, study this issue in the light of the Bible. You have a choice. Take out time and prayerfully make the Godly decision.

## **Don't be afraid to try**

Perfectionism is a good goal, but it can also be a disease. Many people are embarrassed to use a talent because they are not perfect.

My mother, your grandmother, Mamay, was a good inspiration to you as she was to me when I was growing up. Mamay wasn't afraid to try anything (anything good that is).

She would cook and sew and garden and play the piano. She'd hit some bad notes, but she had a great time doing it. Her enthusiasm was contagious and appreciated by all.

We encouraged you that way and you went for it. You delighted in demonstrating all the things you learned to do,

## **Don't mess with my culture!**

Culture is a strange thing. It is accepted by many as the way things should be. Just "go with the flow," they say.

Like little lemmings running off a cliff into the ocean, people follow the Pied Piper of culture. They want to be in with the "in crowd." They don't want to be an odd ball. They want to fit in. Many just follow the crowd and its fashions, tastes, traditions, and entertainments without regard to where the crowd is really headed.

"Don't mess with my culture," is the silent unwritten sign that people point to when their traditions are challenged by the Word of God.

Jesus confronted his culture and its religion on every front. He did not hold traditions sacred. He did not hold cultures sacred.

He held Truth, holiness, and Godliness sacred.

## Entertainment

Entertainment (a-musement - running with the muses) is a romantic, fantastic thing.

When I was a youth, I had false expectations about what love was supposed to be. My expectations of love were formed from the books I read, the movies I watched, and the songs I heard on the radio. Movies and recorded music wove fantasy into my life. The influence of media on my life was staggering. I embraced the values of my society and culture, a culture addicted to Movies, Television and Recorded music. It's the same today- like a drug, affecting everyone's life it touches, but sometime the effects are not immediately seen. Music creates tremendous expectations. The lyrics of the music I listened to set the standard for what I should be thinking, doing and feeling - the standard against which I measured my life.

I was concerned about the movies you and your friends were seeing - for something to do. I saw that movies and TV programs with their stupid sit-coms were setting the pattern for normality and expected behavior. They were encouraging behavior contrary to the Word and will of God, They promoted modern culture with its independence, immorality, selfishness, self-sufficiency, foolishness and pride. They were ungodly; not only in their sexual immorality but also in that they mocked the older generation and the family.

I wrote a series of articles for the youth group on movies asking them to examine what they were wanting to watch and to do something better with their time. The articles entitled *Movies - What Does WWJD Mean To You* are included in this book.

## **Fairy Tales and other “White Lies”**

When I was a child, I looked forward to Christmas Eve with awe and wonderment. I sang about Rudolf the Red Nosed Reindeer, put out a glass of milk and a cookie for Santa to enjoy, I hung my stocking, and went to bed. I'd try to stay awake all night until he would come so I could see the mysterious elf, or maybe hear him land on the roof of my house but I never succeeded. I'd always fall asleep before he came. In the morning I would wake up, rub my eyes, put on my slippers, and run into the living room to find the milk and cookies gone and presents under the tree with the note “To Ronald from Santa.” I was always amazed that Santa could carry so many toys in his sleigh and deliver them in such a short time to sleeping kids all over the world. My parents never got presents from Santa Claus. That always puzzled me. When did he stop caring for them?

I never doubted that there was a Santa Claus. It was one of many family traditions that I was taught. I was taught that Santa Claus was true, that Jesus was our savior, that the Easter Bunny brought candy eggs, and that the Tooth Fairy took my tooth as I slept - leaving a dime under my pillow. I was childlike- naive and gullible and believed everything I was told, whether it was true or false. The question of truth had never crossed my mind one way or the other about anything.

Later in life my friends told me that Santa Claus was not true, that it was just something that people had made up for kids to believe. I argued and defended my belief. I told my parents what my friends had said and they assured me that Santa Claus was real. I believed everything they told me as truth. So I went back to my friends and defended the reality of Santa Claus some more. Eventually I finally got the truth about Santa Claus out of my parents and that made me sad; not because the presents from Santa stopped, but because my parents had lied to me, and they wanted me to perpetuate this lie by not letting on what I had found to my sister and brother. I hardened my heart and vowed I wouldn't be deceived again.

Sometimes I wonder if some adults know the difference between fantasy and truth themselves. They either don't realize that little children don't know the difference between truth and lies, they don't care, or the issue of truth never crosses their mind. Lies such as Santa Claus are called “White Lies.” But there is no such thing as a “White Lie.” The devil is the father of all lies. God hates lies. Those who perpetuate this lie are deceiving and offending little children. Adults may enjoy the look of wonderment that gullible children have on their faces at the story of Santa Claus, but they should take telling the truth seriously. Jesus does not take lying to and deceiving children lightly. Santa Claus is not a harmless innocent myth. Santa Claus is a lie, a deception.

Teaching the lie of Santa Claus to little children is offending them. Jesus said:

“Whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Matthew 18:6.

## **Fairy Tales and other “White Lies” (Page 2)**

These things may seem petty and insignificant and not worth making an issue over, but the issue is, what spirit is behind traditions? The Evil spirit of lying, or the Holy Spirit of truth. There is no in-between. We must be careful what we teach our children. Always teach them truth. If we teach a Child that Santa Claus is true, and that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is true, then the child finds out that he has been lied to about Santa Claus and that Santa Claus is a lie, what will they think about the real truth they were taught?????????

The word lie is as unpopular as the word sin. Lies are sometimes called fables, sometimes legends, sometimes myths, sometimes traditions - Fancy names. But when you get right down to it, beliefs are either true or they are not. There is no neutral ground. People seem to want to hide from the truth, to deny the existence of truth. Fable is a “nice” word for untruth, which in turn is a “nice” word for “lie.” Even Webster’s dictionary defines a Fairy Tale as “a made up story usually designed to mislead.”

“ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.” II Timothy 4

The cost of truth is free because it was paid for by the Blood of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ. It costs us vain useless things that seem to be so precious to us because of our pride. It costs us all of our opinions, the lies we believe, all of our vain religious rituals, all of our works. Once we receive this free love, we gladly let the vain things that we once treasured fall through our fingers as dust to the ground and we lift up our hands in praise to Jesus Christ - the one who set us free. Truth costs. It cost God his Son - the pain Jesus bore when he carried our sins to the cross and was separated from His Father for the only time in eternity. It cost me everything I had built my life upon: my pride, my good works, my anger, and disappointments. Some day it will cost you the same price, princess.

My family says I think too deeply about things. But that is not true. The truth is that the thinking of many people is too shallow. This shallow-mindedness of the worldly spirit keeps them from knowing truth. The dragon loves to keep people ignorant of truth. The Bible says that our spirit should search the deep things of God. 1Cor 2:9. If only people would think deeply. Jesus says in the book of Revelation:

”Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and my enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.” Revelation 22:14,15.

This is a serious admonition, one that should be carefully considered.

### **Fairy Tales and other “White Lies” (Page 3)**

JESUS is the Way, the Truth and the Life. He is our moral judge, advocate and forgiver of our sins, the giver of good gifts and eternal life. Jesus has a list. Is your name written in the Book of Life? Jesus is coming in the Air to bring those who love Him home to be with Him forever. This is The Good News.

## **FAMILY MEETINGS - a good tradition**

When strained situations occurred in our home, we would have a family meeting. These made you nervous, since you were the only child at home. You thought we were ganging up on you and you were outnumbered. You had a point. But we would pray for Jesus to guide us and he was always faithful to do that. We could commit the problem to Jesus, pray for one another and then go on. Jesus always did what was best for us.

New Years day is special to us. We get away, turn off our cell phones and discuss our goals for the previous year. Then we make goals for the next year. We keep this all in a notebook.



## Fantasy

Dear Sarah

I'm writing this to encourage you for you to ponder the issue of Truth vs. Lies in the area of "aliens" and demonic spirits.

The Spirit of God is the Spirit of TRUTH. Fantasy is not of the spirit of TRUTH. It is of the spirit of falsehood. This is why I oppose and will always oppose *Star Trek*, *Star Wars*, *ET*, *Men in Black* with their cuddly or clever demonic abominations or any other presentation of the spirit of falsehood and demons in the name of aliens. Besides being false, these alien movies and TV programs are occultic (transmutation of elements), are full of abominable demonic characters, and are desensitizing people preparing them to receive the demons that will be poured out in the last days as described in the book of Revelations (REV 9: 3-11). Those who are led by the Spirit of God are the Sons of God. Jesus is the way, the Truth and the Life. What spirit are those following who are led by the spirit of lies? Satan is a liar and the father of all lies. We should be zealous for TRUTH and should always uphold it and oppose lies and fantasy no matter what anyone else says or does.

You must not care what people may think about your strong values. Their flirtations with fantasy and demonology are between them and God. Don't compromise. Keep exercising discernment and preaching it to those with ears to hear. People can think that you are a stick in the mud or just not any fun. That's Ok. Love the true and good and hate the untrue and the evil. Just because your friends don't care what they feed their spirits with, nor do their parents, should you, out of boredom, or wanting to fit in, change your Godly values to follow along and accommodate them?

No! Jesus has better things for all of you to do. Exposing yourselves to worldly values slowly erodes your own Godly values. It starts in small things that you may reason out that it really doesn't matter – "it's just in fun," slowly it growing into bigger things because it is the spirit of rebellion against God. It grieves the Holy Spirit. Satan will say to you, how can that be wrong? Everyone is doing it except for a few fanatical Christians like your parents. This is how all bad habits start. Cut them off before they take root. Remember the song, "I have decided to follow Jesus ---though none go with me, still I will follow-- no turning back, no turning back."

Read the following Scriptures and see that these are the equivalent of today's alien movies:

"And he said unto me, Go in, and behold the wicked abominations that they do here. So I went in and saw; and behold every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, portrayed upon the wall round about...Then said he unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? for they say, The LORD seeth us not; the LORD hath forsaken the earth." Ezekiel 8:9, 10 and 12

"Then said I unto them, Cast ye away every man the abominations of his eyes, and defile not yourselves with the idols of Egypt: I am the LORD your God. Ezekiel 20:7.

## **Fear of discomfort**

I looked up on my boss Bob's wall and saw blotches of color on a piece of paper that someone obviously made by placing the hands of Devin, his handicapped daughter, here and there on the paper. What a cross Bob bears with love as he tries to help his daughter have happiness amidst all of her difficulties. Bob travels all over the country and is gone so much of the time.

I pray for an easy life. I'm beginning to wonder if I am praying for the wrong things. I always pray for things that will make me comfortable.

Maybe God has some uncomfortable things for me to do that would be more fruitful for His purposes. Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane prayed, "take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt."

Maybe I am just spoiled. Maybe I just want a padded cross.

## **Fear turned to prayer.**

Sometimes fear came upon me like it comes upon us all. When I looked at circumstances, dread came upon me like a blanket, and despair knocked at the door of my heart. Time after time this drove me to pray. I turned to Jesus and said “Lord Jesus, I know that you are faithful to hear my prayers. I trust you Jesus. You have always answered my prayers and done the best for us all.”

Guide Sarah in all her relationships and activities.

Change me where I need to be changed so I can hear from you and so I can be a good father to Sarah.

Magnify the spirits of evil to her so she might recognize them and turn away from them.

Magnify the evil of worldly music and worldly movies.

Magnify the evil of alcohol to Sarah.

Magnify the sweetness of Godly Music to Sarah

Magnify the peace of your Holy Spirit to her so she may see you and turn to you.

Keep her away from destructive relationships. Jesus, remove everything and everyone from her life that are impediments to your perfect plan her life.

Keep her away from schools and studies that will destroy her faith.

Protect Sarah from emotional or romantic relationships with anyone who is not 100% committed to serving you, and to loving her and caring for her.

Prepare Sarah to be a godly wife for the Godly husband you are preparing for her. Prepare a marriage for them that will minister for your kingdom

Deliver Sarah from the ways of this modern world and its independent spirit

Keep her with us at home as a family for as long as you want her here.

Prepare Sarah for the ministry you have planned for her. Lead her to it.

Help me to not get in the way.

Amen

## **Fornication\* or Forever Faithfulness**

\*Fornication: Human sexual intercourse other than between a man and his wife. Marriage is a covenant of Forever Faithfulness.

Fornication is unwillingness to enter into Forever Faithfulness. Fornication is an experiment. Fornication is a great eroder of Faith.

Dating is an experiment. Dating is a great eroder of faith.

God is forever faithful to us. He sent his Jesus to testify to that.

The Church is often referred to as the Bride of Christ. Jesus is spoken of as the Husband of the Church. Is this talking about sex? No, it's talking about intimacy and forever faithfulness.

## **Freedom**

What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and suffers the loss of his soul? What can a man give in exchange for his soul? Matthew 16:26

Freedom is not always what we expect it to be. Most things we think will make us free are mere fantasies. They are delusions in our mind that have been woven and solidified through years of following the ways of the world and the fools of the world.

Sometimes, the so-called freedom we talk about is really fantasy- selfishness and distortion that we nurture in our carnal mind. We build our lives and hopes and dreams around them, and when our eyes are opened to see that they are wood, hay and stubble we mourn over the years we wasted in their pursuit.

There is a true freedom, however, a treasure hidden in a field, a pearl of great price, which is free yet it costs us everything to obtain. It costs us our petty plans, our fantasies, our self, and our pride. True freedom is found in the cross. In the cross of Jesus and in our own cross we must bear.

True freedom cuts the ties the carnal mind has made to the soul, casting off the ties that bind the imagination, affection, reason and memories to the beggarly elements of the fallen world. True freedom is putting out the worldly eyes, ears and piercing to death the worldly heart. This is done with the sword of the spirit: The Word of God. True freedom is independence; it is independence from the world and the things of the world. The world promises independence but delivers bondage. True freedom is dependence, dependence on God, walking in newness of life with eyes of faith, ears of hope, the touch of love and true worship and reverence towards God.

Sarah, remember you are a princess reborn, a woman with the sovereign power of the Holy Spirit living in your heart. Be strong and do exploits for the Kingdom of God, you have been equipped to do so.

Sarah, you know these things. This gives me great joy. But there is another side of my care for you that carries a certain sadness. I see that your heart is set on an odyssey, you've heard the sirens call, and the muses wait that turn men into swine. Your journey is one you must make, but life is not measured in terms of time.

Listen not to the sweet voices blowing in the wind. Learn to hear the still small voice of God.

## **Friends or Foes**

### **Do your “Friends” draw you closer to God or to the World?**

Are your friends really friends, or are they foes? They are friends if they encourage you to draw closer to God. They are Foes or enemies if they do not. Friendships are never neutral- they are either constructive or destructive.

Be careful with whom you associate with. Do not be friends with a person just because they say they are a Christian. Make friends with people who are Hot! for God. With those whose life obviously comes from Jesus and not from the world.

Keep your distance from those who are lukewarm - Christians in name only. Jesus says that not everyone who says Lord, Lord will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven but those who do the will of God the Father in Heaven.

“Blessed is the man who walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, or standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.”

Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go: lest thou learn his ways and get a snare to thy soul. Proverbs 22:24,25

Back when the Bible was written, there were no records, radios, movies or TVs. However these images of people in programs and commercials are as much an influence for peer pressure as real people we hang around with. They are either feeding the lust of our flesh or they are feeding us with the Holy Word of God, There is no middle ground. Either a person is for Jesus or they are against Him.

If you find your friends to be fools, they are foes - break off your association with them. Pray for them that they may repent and get right with God. If they get right with God, then you can have fellowship with them.

By their fruit you will know them. By your fruit, you will be known.

## **Godliness with contentment is great gain**

Lust and dissatisfaction are battles we all fight. We always want to change things thinking that our life will be easier and better. But change without wisdom brings complication, confusion and dissatisfaction.

We want a boyfriend or a girlfriend, we want a new car or want to move away from home thinking that these things will bring fulfillment.

There is a time and season for all things. We want things to happen on our timetable, and don't really hear from God. We pray about things and because we don't see lightning crash with the voice of God thundering NO! So we assume He is blessing our plans so we go our own way and are surprised when the results are not what we thought they would be.

## **Hedonism:**

The Pendulum has swung too far.

There has been a time and there are still some instances when youth have been collared with an oppressive yoke of sadness. They have not been allowed to do anything that is “fun” because fun was considered worldly.

What has happened now is the other extreme. To counteract the oppression, church organizations have bent over backwards to give kids “Christian Fun,” and it is pushed so much to prove that being a Christian can be fun, that most kids are spoiled worldly self-centered brats.

This doesn't just apply to youth, but that is the group that is on my mind as I think of these things.

Many youth today are absorbed in the way they look, smell and smile and how they impress their friends by being in fashionable dress and amusement. They are so absorbed in themselves and having a good time that they shun anything that is the least bit difficult or demeaning to their status as a pleasure seeker.

They are very interested in what their amusement centered “friends” are doing, can spend hours on the telephone passing idle time in chit chat and show great delight in doing things with their friends. They seldom if ever ask their parents what they want to do and what they can do to help around the home, and if they are asked, they scowl and pout and act like anything they are asked to do is too big a task and they usually do it late and halfway. They are never late to do things with a “friend.”

What kinds of friend are they if they do not Honor their Father and their Mother? Do they have friends? Are they a friend? Why don't they treat their parents with the same attention and enthusiasm as they do their friends? Because they are self centered and hedonistic. Walking in the flesh and not in the Holy Spirit.

The solution to the problem posed by many churches is to get the kids involved in missions. They talk about how great a time the kids have going to some far off place to minister. I say if they don't first minister at home, extended ministry may be just another hedonistic adventure.

Teens are looking for a good time, but they are missing out on the biggest blessing that is right under their noses: Charity that begins at home.



## **HOMESCHOOL GRADUATION SPEECH**

This has been fun! I wish we could do it all again. It's been such a blessing to have the freedom to have a really natural home life. Home schooling has proven to be a way of life and not a set of isolated activities. It's not just educating in the home away from the school. It stands in solid opposition to the family fragmenting values of the school system. It is educating to be a member of the home, the family. It could be called family education.

The biggest problem for me was dealing with how really different Home Education can be from the non-family (anti-family) oriented school system that I constantly compared it with. I resisted advantages and changes from the confines of the regimentation that prevails in the school system.

I pray that you and the other graduates will Home School your children that the Lord will bless you with. You have such an advantage over us. We were schooled. You were educated into life. Your background and educational basis is very different from ours, and now as your generation goes on to Home Educate your children you will be operating from a background and basis that we did not have, and even in this increasingly complex technological age will do a better job than we did going further to restoring educating of the family to the values set forth by God.

I know what a tough taskmaster I am and I appreciate your patience with me, and your obedience. Raising you has been a challenge and a joy and a great learning experience for me. I accepted Jesus as my Savior the year before you were born and through raising you I have learned what a Loving Father our God is and how through his grace and mercy as we turn to him, he instills His character into us.

I look forward to my next 18 years as your Father.

I Love You

**If it ain't broke , don't fix it.**

## **Laura**

The first time I remember talking to Laura was at a field day at the Dallas Arboretum. I was impressed that she wanted to talk to an adult and that she was intelligent. That may seem prejudiced on my part, but that had been my experience with most young people up to that point.

Laura was my favorite of your friends even though she would never guess that. You had a lot of nice friends, but in my estimation, Laura was the most spiritual, and the most influential. There were two sides to that coin. She was my favorite, but I kept my eye on her and prayed a lot for her and for you. Laura thought we were too strict on you and so she was always trying to get you to push the envelope in the area of independence.

One thing that really bugged me about her was that she was always trying to get you to pursue some guy or another. I questioned her discernment in this matter. She seemed to press you into the pursuit for its sake, without much regard to the character of the male who was to be pursued. Sometimes I would cringe and pray when she would smile and ask you, “do you have any feelings for \_\_\_\_\_?” Sometimes the guy she was talking about wasn’t even a Christian. This disappointed me. Maybe she was just enamored with romance. I had been there before and so I was nervous to see it in her.

Laura was a real person. She was an enigma, certainly not a lukewarm person. You always knew where she was coming from. There were times I didn’t like a lot of where she was coming from and was concerned about the influence she was having on Sarah. There were other times that I was thankful for Laura’s good spiritual influences on Sarah.

I remember a time when Laura attended activities at a church we attended and did a formidable job of grilling the pastor for his staunch Baptist background with the faithless dispensational unbelief that accompanied it.

God threw the mold away after he made Laura. She was a skyrocket, stable and flighty at the same time. A race driver running close to the edge with her neck out the window trying to see what is over the cliff. I prayed for her a lot.

Laura is committed to serving Jesus. I look forward to seeing how her ministry unfolds.

**Love your Family like strangers.**

This may sound strange but it is a two - sided statement. We should love strangers and treat them as we treat our family. We should also treat our family the same way that we treat strangers.

We tend to cut strangers a lot more slack as far as judging and nit picking them. We try to keep the peace with strangers but we war with our families.

It's something to think about.

## MOVIES

What does “**WHAT WOULD JESUS DO**” Mean to you?

**Let’s think about MOVIES:**

“Be not conformed to the world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable, and perfect will of God.” (Romans 12:2)

“Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things”. (Philippians 4:8)

Sometimes when you are bored and are looking for something to do, you and your friends come up with the idea of going to a movie. So you dig through the newspaper and pick something that you think is “not too bad” and tell your parents that you want to go to see that movie. They say, “No, that’s not a good movie to see,” and the war is on. You tell them, “It’s no big deal, it’s not too bad, there’s just a little profanity in it, or there are no really bad nude scenes in it, and there is nothing better playing so why can’t I go see that one?” So you get mad at your parents and ministers because they tell you the truth that you may not want to hear at the time because it gets in the way of your amusement, entertainment and your search for the new.

It’s time you need to start asking a different question. The question is not, “What is the best of the world’s evils I have to choose from,” the real question you need to ask and answer for yourself is, “What is my commitment to being a Christian and being a serious disciple and follower of Jesus in all areas of my life?” Is your commitment to be a Christian just a superficial religious thing or does it really take root in your life and affect **all** of your decisions? Get a life! Don’t go around feeling sorry for yourself and deprived because the world is so evil and it’s hard to find a good movie to see. That’s no surprise. Jesus told us that the world is evil. WWJD? Is more than just a trendy slogan. Jesus wouldn’t go to watch objectionable movies. Why should you? No one at any age should watch PG-13, R and even many of the PG movies with their perverted sex, profanity and violence that even the world calls objectionable. If the world calls it objectionable, why would you as a Christian want to see it? The world justifies objectionable material based on “Maturity” (age). Morality is not a matter of age. If you justify going to an objectionable movie because there is nothing better, you are conforming to the world. If you justify PG 13 movies, you will probably keep on justifying worse and worse stuff. The devil tries to make you think you can just ignore the bad parts as he deceives you and drags you deeper and deeper into worse and worse things. He tries to convince you that bad things are all right and he wants to ruin your appetite for really good stuff. He wants to run and ruin your life.

Be a really mature person; mature according to what God calls mature, not what the world calls mature. God calls mature discerning between good and evil and choosing good (Hebrews 5:14). The world calls mature grown up and able to watch more perversion. The world is backwards from God’s ways; it always has been. Reject the world system as Jesus did. Jesus has many better things for you to do than to waste your time, money, mind and spirit on the trash of the world. Pray for Jesus to show you something really good to do with your time. Pray together

## Movies Page 2

with your friends. Jesus loves you and wants to bless you with a really great good life.

What does “**WHAT WOULD JESUS DO?**” Mean to you?

**Let’s think about MOVIES: Volume II (Looking at G movies and Disney’s demons)**

The first article I wrote on this subject was aimed at PG-13 movies and discussed the ratings that the world gives movies. This included bad language, sex, adult humor, and violence. In this article, I am digging a little deeper. Lets look at G - those movies that the world doesn’t find objectionable. Movies with very few exceptions are not generally produced by Born Again Christians who are trying to make edifying films that build Christian character and Godliness. The world rates G movies as those which they do not find objectionable. So are they good to see? Not always. The world does not consider magic and occultism objectionable. Disney and others have capitalized on this and have a long history of producing “Cute” amusing demonic movies.

<b>Movie</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Scripture:</b>
Fantasia	Mickey Mouse as The Sorcerer’s Apprentice	: Mal 3:5; Rev 9:21;21:8;22:15
Peter Pan	Tinker Bell- The magical Fairy (witch)	EX:22:18; Deut 18:10;Gal 5:20
Mulan	Who is the dragon on his shoulder?	Rev:12:7-10
The Wizard of Oz	The Wizard:	Lev:19:31; IIKI:23:24

Disney throws in “Bad” witches that he makes ugly and villains, but the “White” witches he glorifies as doers of good, givers of love and good advice and helpful. These characters are presented as “Angels of Light” (II Cor 11:14) cute, good, and harmless. This is typical of the deceptions of Satan. He tries to make the bad look good. It started in the Garden of Eden when He said: “Ye shall not Surely Die, for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil” (Gen 2:4,5). He still promises the same lie. In this case, saying that it’s ok to feed on movies that are not good for you.

I have had different responses to my first article. Some applauded it, some ignored it, some consider me a spoil sport- stick in the mud who doesn’t want to have fun. Study your Bibles.

## Movies Page 3

### Additional Scriptures to consider about movies and TV.

The following passage from Romans 1:28 -32 describes the ungodly. It is meant to tell us that we are not to judge these people because we, too, are sinners; however, it ends with the statement about those who know what sins are but even knowing this, have pleasure in the sins of others. This applies to those who go to a movie and watch people sinning on the screen of a movie theatre.

“And even as they did not like to retain God in [their] knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; **Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:** Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but **have pleasure in them that do them.**”

We may say we don't do the sinful things that we watch in movies and TV, but because we know these things are sinful, then go watch them anyway, we are consenting to their sins and exposing ourselves to lust after them.

Jesus says in Matthew 5:27-28: “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That **whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.**”

When we watch movies, we are in a way participating in the lives of the people portrayed in the movie. We are having a fellowship with them. Paul says in II Corinthians 6:14-7:1:

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for **what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord (Harmonious agreement) hath Christ with Belial (the Devil)? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel (one who opposes God)? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in [them]; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.**

**Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean [thing]; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”**

## Movies Page 4

**What should we do?** Paul tells us in Ephesians 4:17-24:

“This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth **walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:** Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness (lustfulness), to work all uncleanness with greediness. But ye have not so learned Christ; If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: **That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.**”



## **Old Fashioned**

Princess, I was committed to have my household be Godly and Old Fashioned. Old fashioned does not mean out of date. It means fashioned after old proven ways and old goals. The world says Old Fashioned ways are dumb and useless; but Old Fashioned values are Godly. They give a life of love and peace.

## **Pivotal Years of Loving**

Love is more than a feeling. It takes a lifetime to learn that. We may start by loving others so that we will be loved so they will be impressed with us and be nice to us or flatter us in return. This is just a form of selfishness. It is not love. Learning to love is what life is all about.

We all have a path to walk and along the way, God puts opportunities here and there just to give us opportunities to love. Sometimes we notice them, sometimes we don't. Sometimes when we notice them, we act, sometimes we don't.

### **Baby Years - Being done for**

We grow into loving in stages. In the baby years we are helpless. Everything is done for us. We are total recipients of love. We are lifted up by the love of others. Perhaps like a pair of balances. Our parents are adding their love to the other side of the balance.

### **Childhood Years- Learning to do for Self**

During childhood we begin to learn to take care of ourselves in many ways. We are still provided for by our parents and don't think much about it. We still take their love for granted, but we begin to see that we can contribute something to the other side. We can love our parents and do things for them.

### **Teen Years- Can do for self- Learning to do for others**

Then we reach youth and young adulthood. We can take care of ourselves and we know it. Feelings of independence swell us up with pride and dreams of the future. The teen years are pivotal between being a child who has learned to do for himself or herself and an adult who has learned to do for others. The teen years are years of learning responsibility and love. Learning the difference between selfish love and true love. These are years that something else begins to dawn on us. We see that we can balance the scales. These are the pivotal years of loving. But when true love awakens in our heart, we pass the pivotal point and we see that we can go beyond that. We can lift others up by giving more love than we receive.

### **Adult years- Can do for others- Learning to instruct**

In the Adult years, the person does for others and is learning to pass on wisdom to their children.

### **Older or Senior Adults- Instruct others**

Older Adults have raised children and are in the position of passing on wisdom to Teens and Younger Adults.

## **Pride or Humility?**

To want your children to be more perfect than you are; is it pride, or is it humility? To want to do a better job of raising your children than your parents did, is it born of love, or of regret? Only God knows.

## **Private Times of a Princess**

A Princess has private times when she weighs what she has been taught, when she reaches out and touches the world so see what it is made of. These are exciting times, times of joy and laughter; sometimes these are perilous times, times of tears and great concern.

These were times that stretched my Faith in Jesus, times of fervent prayer. When to speak, when not to pry. These are delicate times. I prayed each day for God to show me every step to take, every word to say. My busy brain soon proved too frail an instrument for such responsibility as that of a father.

Sometimes a letter is a better thing to use. I don't know exactly why. Paul talked about that in his epistles. There were many times that I knew that I needed to write you a letter rather than speak directly to you. Writing letters to your children is an important thing to remember to do.

I thank God that He saved me and showed me that he cares for me and for my children. Most of my prayers are about your relationships with people- with men and women alike. I know from my past experiences how I was influenced by the company I kept. I prayed over every person you met from the time you were around 8 years old. I prayed for you and prayed for your friends. After you turned sixteen and friends became suitors, I prayed in more earnest. I'll always be your father. I'll always be your friend. And I'll never stop praying for your relationships, they are so very important.

## Relationships:

“Drink your carrot juice.” Susan said as she held the glass out to you. You gave her one of your “looks” and got ready to go with me to band practice.

As we drove to practice, you said, “Dad, she’s doing it again” and then you told me what happened. You asked, “Dad, please say something to her. I want to eat right – I’m feeling better when I do, but I want to do things **on my own terms**”.

I told you, “Sarah, in relationships – no matter between who, you don’t do thing on your own terms.” Wanting to do things on our own terms is selfishness. No man is an island.

Sometimes it seems easier to come to me about something you don’t want mom to be involved in, or to come to mom about something you don’t want me to be involved in. You do these things because you know that mom or I may disagree with you or disapprove of something that you want to do or not do.

We all try to avoid conflict. Escaping the conflict is weakness in character, fantasy and is evidence of a problem in relating. If you avoid conflict with your earthly father about some issue you disagree on, chances are you are avoiding something the Holy Spirit is showing you to do. Don’t avoid conflict. But don’t try to resolve it in the flesh through debate. Recognize that the first thing to do is to restore the relationship and pray together about the issue. Then leave it in the hands of Jesus to resolve.

Home is the learning ground for relationships. If you justify avoiding me on some issue, you will more than likely do the same with your husband if you marry. That is, unless you recognize the problem you have in the relationship with me.

This applies to all relationships; friends, family, and marriage relationships. All are steps in growth. You don’t skip steps. If we refuse to take the time and humble ourselves to work out relationships with our family, we are not learning our lessons. We will hit the same obstacles in relationships again and again until we learn to go to the person, talk about the problem in a loving manner, pray together, put our agenda aside and let God work out the result. This is serious, important business.

The dragon is out to destroy loving relationships. He comes to set people at odds against each other. That’s what he did with Adam and Eve. Destroyed their relationship with God. Destroyed the trust, destroyed the bond of love. That’s how he works in our lives. The way we relate to others is not really different with different people. It is a reflection of our character, our heart and mind. We are either reflecting the hatred of the Dragon or the Love of God.

A child’s relationship with their earthly Father says a lot about their relationship with their

## **Relationships (page 2)**

Heavenly Father. A Father is an authority, director, friend and lover.

Avoiding the father is a form of rebellion against authority, direction and doubt of love. On the other hand, the father's relationship with the child says a lot about their relationship with their Heavenly Father. The father must not strive with the children. He must love and cultivate a trust and loving relationship with the child. Pray about your relationships and about better ways to relate at home.

## **Roots**

Don't take the meaning of words lightly. You can learn a lot from looking at their seeds and roots. They give a hint of the plant and the fruit they will produce.

For instance Amusement

A-muse is to be influenced by muses (muses- the sister goddesses of classical mythology)

## **Spirit walking**

Walk in the Spirit and you will not fulfill the desires of the flesh.

What is Spirit Walking?

**Children obeying their parents.**

**Wives submitting themselves to their Husbands.**

**Husbands loving their wives as Christ loves the Church, and not being bitter against them.**

**Fathers bringing up their children in the love and admonition to the Lord, and not provoking them to wrath.**

What do these things have to do about walking in the Spirit? They look like a bunch of legalistic rules. But that is not the case. Consider what Paul said in Romans 8:

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: **That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.** For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

When Children obey their parents, they are walking in the spirit of obedience and trust, and in doing so are obeying God.

When wives submit to their husbands even when they think their husbands are wrong, they are walking In the Spirit of submission and in doing so are submitting to God even when they do not understand why He is leading them the way He is leading them.



## **Spirit walking (page 2)**

When husbands love their wives and are not bitter towards them, laying down their lives for them even when they believe they should argue and stand up for their rights as the head of the household, they are walking in the Spirit of Love and Forgiveness and are walking in the Love and Forgiveness of Jesus Christ the head of the Church who Loves us and Forgives us and laid down His life for us when He didn't have to.

When fathers bring up their children in the love and admonition to the Lord and do not provoke them to wrath they are walking in the Spirit of patience and in doing so, are coming into the understanding of the patience Jesus has with us, His children.

## The Beast of Many Disguises

As a child, I pretended to be a knight in pursuit of dragons. I would charge down the street on my bicycle carrying my bamboo lance, my wood sword, and my cape - an old towel flying behind me in the breeze. I loved to read tales of knights and ladies. The brave knight would do battle with evil dragons that were pursuing after damsels in distress. In his quest to save the damsel, the knight had to undergo many ordeals to defeat the dragon. That made for great stories of knights in shining armor.

After I grew up, I had pursued the power of the dragon during my years of atheism, occultism and witchcraft. He had pretended to be my friend but he had driven me to insanity. I fancied myself to be a grand knight of the Grail and tried to fight him off to no avail. I finally found out that it was no game. I was powerless to defeat the dragon.

But the true Knight in shining armor came along. It was Jesus. Jesus saved me and delivered me from the clutches of the dragon.

From the beginning, the dragon was a great deceiver. He influenced people to doubt truth and to believe lies by saying that they were not really lies, just small matters. He started with Eve and then Adam, convincing them that God was out to spoil their fun.

Sadly, most people don't take the dragon seriously. They think he is make-believe. Ironically, many chose to try to make a pet out of him and bring him into their homes to play with their young princes and princesses. You just don't tame a dragon. Adam and Eve found that out in the Garden of Eden.

The dragon is a beast of many disguises. If he came as a red fire breathing dragon clawing at you, you would not be deceived. But he comes as a wolf in sheep's clothing. His purpose is always the same- to deceive. He knows he is bound for the lake of fire and he wants to take as many people with him as he can. His main goal is and has always been to get people to doubt holiness and truth. A look at our culture today will show that these things are not held in high esteem. He wants to take glory from God and take it to himself. He does this through getting people to take glory to themselves and boast of their vain inventions, traditions and imaginations. Romans 1:21-32, Ephesians 4:17-19

The Dragon comes:

In a Fairy Tale

In a little "White Lie"

In a flirting glance

In a sexual movie

In a seductive song

As an angel of independence

## **The Car**

I taught you to drive in parking lots until you got your driver's permit. Then we took to the road.

You've been taking to the road ever since. The car is more than a vehicle for transportation. It is a vehicle for autonomy. It facilitates the independent spirit. Maybe that's why it is called the automobile.

## The Declaration of Independence

3/30/01

In 1776, America signed The Declaration of Independence. Americans have been signing it ever since. The New World spirit is a spirit of autonomy, independence and rebellion. It is so subtle. It must be spiritually discerned and dealt with. The result has been the breakdown of the family. First the extended family was broken down, then the nuclear family. Old World cultures are the last vestiges of family togetherness. Modernism is an evil spirit that must be withstood against with spiritual warfare. It is in every media. It is in books, movies, television, the Internet, advertisement and everyday conversation. It is in every arena, the schools, the churches, and shops on the street. We must fight for our families.

Princess Renee', I have been raising you for a long time now. Perhaps in your mind, my raising you has come to an end, and you are on your own now. You will never be on your own. Those who think they are on their own are the most miserable people on earth. A father always cares for and instructs his child. My care for and instruction of you is no more complete than God's care and instruction of me is. He didn't stop instructing me when I got saved. And just because you have reached adulthood, your instruction has not ended. I will always be your father and will always be your friend.

God knows us well and knows how to give good instructions to His children. I know you well, so I am in a good position to continue to instruct you. I don't have to listen to God's instruction. Neither do you. And you don't have to listen to mine either. Whether or not we listen determines whether we are wise or whether we are fools.

Independence is a dangerous trap. When a person guides their lives based on the perceived benefit to themselves, they become more and more self centered and are not walking in love.

Doing things for others, when the things seem to have no apparent benefit to you, is real love. Love is the most important thing to learn. Love is the benefit we receive from doing the things that do not seem to benefit us.

Love is not saying nice things, nor smiling, nor hugging, nor kissing. If you do not seize the opportunity to love at home, you will not be a loving person when you leave.

Leaving seems to be an escape. It seems to be an escape from the pressures we place on you with our instruction, that sometimes turns to nagging. When you leave, whether to be "On your own" or to be married, you will be the person you have learned to be while living with us.

The fantasy of romance is a deception. Smiles of lovers soon turn into scowls when the honeymoon is over, unless both people are truly considerate, unselfish, truly loving people.

## **The Declaration of Independence page 2**

Family is togetherness, intimacy and Love. This is God's plan and provision for us to be happy. This is what God always intended. The splitting up of the family started in force when young people decided they didn't want to work on their parent's farms so they moved to the city for jobs. Now it has grown to the point that young people move out just for the sake of moving out. They, like the prodigal son, look forward to moving out when there is no reason to move out.

Sadly, sometimes circumstances arise that force families apart. Sometimes young people are forced to have to live on their own because of bad circumstances. But this is not the best.

Worldly ideas promote independence, not family. Independence is opposed to family, not part of it. The media thrives on promotion of independence and so called freedom. It is not freedom it is a fantasy. True freedom is from God. It brings freedom from sin and freedom to love others.

Dependence is not a negative word. Dependence is needing others. Leaning on Jesus and on others for their strengths and giving our strengths to them. We are to support the weak. We all have weaknesses. We all have strengths. We all have need of each other and we all are needed by each other. That is family - Intimacy, togetherness, help and love.

Sometimes we all want to prove that we can do something, but we need to examine if it really is the best thing to do. We don't have to prove things. We are to be approved by God.

Asserting independence costs a price. Subtle at first, but gradually creating distance measured in more than miles - Distance from family and distance from God.

You said that moving out would make you responsible. Responsibility starts where you are. It's not something that happens when you cut the strings to family and strike out in independence. Responsibility is responding to a need. Responsibility begins in the home, in family. If you neglect responsibility here, you miss out on a blessing.

You work hard in the business world, but that is just a small part of your life. It may be taking a lot of your time, but it is not as important as responsibilities at home with family. Responsibility in the business world gives a sense of pride and self-confidence.

The world promotes independence, promotes mammon, and promotes buying your way through what they call life. It promotes making money so you don't have to do manual,

boring, and distasteful things, like washing dishes, taking out garbage, or sweeping floors.

Responsibility at home gives us a sense of humility and love. That is why responsibility at home is the greater part.

### **The Declaration of Independence page 3**

Responsibility is not something that you learn by becoming independent. It is an act of love. Making your bed, doing your own laundry, cleaning the bathrooms and toilets, emptying the trash, vacuuming the floor, raking leaves, mowing the lawn, helping us in the mundane un-glamorous things build love and show love. This is life, this is love, and this is family. Responsibility is loving others by helping them, it not separating yourself from others to do your own thing. Separation and doing your own thing is selfishness, it is of the world, not of God. Families need each other in an intimate way every day. That is love.

There will be a time for you to leave and move on, but not just for the sake of moving out. God will have a purpose for you and when it comes, we as a family will know.

I always want the best for you because I love you. In the order of family, God has placed me as your father. It doesn't mean that I am better than you, or smarter than you, it is rather that God places fathers as heads of families and gives them direction for their family. That is part of the order of God that instituted in the family. Part of my responsibility, responding to a need, is your education. Introducing you to life. This is a lifelong task. Sometimes I suggest changes to you, sometimes not. Part of my responsibility and anointing as your father is to lay out values for you to examine, lay out the gold, lay out the brass, lay out the wood hay and stubble, and lay out the filth and pray for you asking God to show you the difference. I do this every day.

Filth is usually easy to recognize. The wood, hay and stubble sometimes look like gold. Worldly independence is wood, hay and stubble - fool's gold that burns up leaving ashes and smoke. Learning to love is Gold.

Consider these things. Choose Gold.

## **The Generation Gap**

We usually think about the generation gap as the gap of misunderstanding between teens and their parents. This is a generalization. The real generation gap does not have anything to do with age.

It has to do with the generation that wants to be true to the Word of God and the generation that wants to do their own thing.

This is the generation gap that Jesus talked about. The gap and gulf between the faithful and the faithless.

We must chose a side and battle against the other, remembering that we war not against flesh and blood, but between principalities and powers of spiritual wickedness in high place.

Our weapon is the Sword of the Spirit - The Word of God.

## **The Love of a Father**

The jealous and protective love of a father and his desire to guide and protect his children is born of the Spirit of God

The sadness of a father when his children do not heed good advice is a wound that follows him in his heart from day to day.

The joy of a father when his children walk in the ways of righteousness is indescribable.



## **The Royal Cup**

From the time you were born, I pressed you toward the day that you would take up the sword. A princess is “a woman having sovereign power.” As such, a princess is a child of the King vested with his authority and power. In the case of a Christian, a woman full of the power of the Holy Spirit, unfettered by the world and invincible against Satan and all unholy powers. To become a princess, you will have to pick up the sword and wield it yourself. It is coming time for you to face the dragon and to see that he was a deceiving playmate. You are moving out of the fledgling state of obedience to the walk of wisdom. It is time for you to let the sword of the Word of God pierce you, dividing apart your soul and spirit, and lay open the thoughts and intent of your heart.

You are ready to drink of the cup Jesus offers his followers. Not the magical grail of fantasy and legend, but the cup of the New Testament. The royal cup, the cup of the kingdom. The cup of communion with Jesus. Much deeper than a ritual of bread and the fruit of the vine.

With the cup comes a crown. The crown our king wore, a crown of servanthood and submission, a crown of thorns. Matt 20:23

## **The Unwanted Bible**

When Susan and I got saved, we were excited. We loved Jesus and we raised you in the Word of God. We had been set free from the world but we soon were surprised and shocked to find so much of the world in the church.

We went to just about every church in Dallas. At least it seemed that way. Susan and I had come out of great darkness into the glorious light. We searched and searched for a church that was really based truth, on the Bible. But we found the Dragon working there too, silently clandestinely promoting his vain traditions. At Christmas, most of the churches we went to honored The Jolly Imposter. We would go to nursing homes with the churches to sing Christmas carols to the elderly. Susan and I were humored and looked at like weird, because we spoke out to the people in the churches against the lie of Santa Claus.

When Jesus saved us and we were Born Again, He made us peculiar people zealous of good works. We were to have no fellowship with works of darkness, but rather were to reprove them. Works of darkness go way beyond the “big” sins like adultery, theft, and murder. Works of darkness are also all un-truth. The whole issue of the spirit of falsehood and the spirit of truth is not a trivial matter. It is foundational. Why should those who were saved from sin continue in lies?

But we taught you that we are the church when two or more of us gather in the name of Jesus. Remember that. We taught you to discern what was being taught in churches and if a Pastor was teaching something that was not in accordance with the Bible, it should be pointed out to him. If he would not receive it then we sought fellowship elsewhere. We always had fellowship as a family and when we were between organizations, we met every Sunday morning in our home. We would sing, study and pray, and ask God to lead us to other believers.

Many called me a legalist, a despiser of grace and freedom. They said I shouldn't criticize the practices of Halloween and Santa Claus. They said I was out of line telling people they shouldn't celebrate these traditions. They were in essence saying that I should not be concerned about truth and holiness. This was the unwanted Bible for many. They believed that truth and lies are part of the law, and we are not part of that any longer. Truth was losing importance in the post-modern age.

Woe to them that call good evil and evil good; that put darkness for light and light for darkness, that put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter. Isaiah 5:20

Be renewed in the Spirit of your mind, Put on the New Man, Put away lying, Speak the truth in Love, Ephesians 4:23-27

## The YOKE

From a daydream

Two Chestnut mares trotted along pulling Sarah in a buckboard. As they rounded a curve in the road, the horse to the left bolted and jerked to the side, pulling the buckboard off the road into the rocks. After bouncing around for a while and almost turning over, Sarah held the reins tight and finally managed to get the rig back on the road.

There was no apparent reason for that horse to bolt, no snakes in the road, no predators in sight. That horse just had a rebellious streak. The other horse was not that way - she was gentle and steady. The gentle horse couldn't be blamed for the incident, but she was dragged through the rubble too, and had a rough time of it.

As Sarah continued the journey to town, she thought about some things that I had been telling her about being unequally yoked. In principle she understood what I was talking about, but she didn't see how it applied to her. Sarah considered herself well behaved, and thought I was too radical.

The incident of the horse pulling off to the side of the road made an impression on her. Then it came to her - The gentle mare was part of the team with the purpose of pulling Sarah in the buckboard to take her where she wanted to go. The headstrong wayward horse pulled the gentle horse aside from her service to her master, Sarah, and caused her a lot of trouble. The gentle horse didn't want to do that, but she was yoked to the rebel so she got dragged along through the rocky ride.

*Maybe Dad is right about my amusements, maybe I just don't see the effect of how I am being thwarted in following the purpose of my master Jesus.*

Sarah was approaching town now. She headed for the general store, pulled to a stop, and went inside to get her supplies.

When she walked in the door, she heard a friend call out to her. "Hi Sarah, what are you doing in town?"

"I came in for some supplies," Sarah replied.

"Well, Sarah, the women at the saloon are performing tonight. There will be a party and a dance after. It will be fun. I'm going. Why don't you come along?"

"All right. What time does it start?"

"Eight O'clock."

## **The YOKE (page 2)**

“I’ll be there. See you tonight.”

Sarah put her supplies in the buckboard and went home.

“Hi, Sarah,” I called out as she drove through the gate. “Did you get everything you needed?”

“Yes, Dad, I met a friend of mine at the store and she invited me to a performance and party at the saloon tonight. I think I will go.”

I looked down at the ground like I always did when I was thinking about what to say. “Sarah, let me tell you a story.”

“She cringed and thought, *Well here it comes!*”

“Dad, I’m not nearly as bad as you were at my age. I’m not doing the bad things most people are doing. Why do you want me to be perfect? You weren’t, and you are not now. What difference does it make? I’m saved.”

to be continued...

## **Watching**

We watched how God worked in your life as we prayed for you and loved you. It was really nothing we did. We were just blessed to have you for this time; to love you and be loved by you. It was a joy to witness the marvelous workings of our faithful heavenly Father as he changed you and changed us from glory to glory, molding us all into the image of Jesus Christ, His Son. Jesus did the work, because he is the author and finisher of our faith. We simply loved you. I prayed a lot for you, and taught you the truth, the Word of God.

All this seems simple enough, but it was warfare; spiritual warfare and I had to pray daily and ask Jesus to keep my flesh out of it so I could raise you to be a true princess, a child of the King.

Do the same for your princes and princesses when they come along.

## **What is your King like?**

What king do you serve? Jesus was not a king like earthly worldly kings. The kings of the world expect to be served and catered to. They highly esteem fancy things, clothes, houses, food, and cars. That is not the kind of king Jesus is, and if you are his disciple, you will not be like that either.

Jesus didn't have any possessions to speak of, didn't have a palace and didn't really even have a place to live, didn't have a fancy chariot ; he sometimes had to borrow a donkey to get around.

Jesus was trying to teach us the difference between the spirit of the world and the Spirit of God. He was showing us what the world was like because of sin, and what people of the world were like. He wants to set us free so that we can have true peace and joy, which don't come from the ways of the world. He wants to give us satisfaction that the world doesn't have and cannot have.

Our King wore a crown of thorns and not a crown of gold. What kind of crown are you seeking?

Jesus came to serve and not to be served. He expects Christians, his followers to have that same spirit. To have that same fruit of finding joy in serving others rather than having them serve us. So if we are always wanting others to do for us and we always try to get out of serving others, we are following the king of the world and are not real Christians. Jesus says that people will be known by the fruit that they bear.

Seek a crown that will not perish. Don't settle for the cheap imitation of the world.

## **When I grow up**

There is a vain tradition that the dragon begins to instill in the minds of children during latter childhood years. It becomes stronger and stronger during youth, building towards the infamous twenty first birthday- the culmination and celebration of the declaration of independence. The tradition says that there are some things that are forbidden to children that become all right when a child grows up. For instance, children are not supposed to drink alcohol, "spirits," and they are not supposed to watch "Adult" movies (sexual movies or movies with foul language). The world says that these things are reserved for the adult to enjoy. The world says that children are too young to handle sexual movies or alcohol, but when they are older, they can "handle" them.

The Bible says that "Wine is a mocker, and strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise." Proverbs 20 It asks "What fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness?" II Corinthians 6.

Truth and holiness are not dependent on age. The truth of God's word does not diminish with age.

Adults must set a good example for children in the things they do and what they watch. They must not be hypocrites.

"Beware lest ye forget the Lord ... ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which are round about you" Deut 6.

"And if it seems evil for you to serve the Lord, choose you this day who you will serve." Joshua 24

## **WWJD**

Has “What would Jesus do?” become only a fashion statement to you? I hope not. The question should permeate all of your life activities, thoughts and plans. There is great blessing in asking Jesus what He would do in every situation.

WWJD? Jesus prayed in every situation. He did nothing until He heard His Father’s voice. He did nothing that his Father did not tell Him to do. That is what Jesus did.

What will you do?



## **YOU MAY KISS THE BRIDE - Is it a cliché?**

A couple stands before a minister and exchanges wedding vows and rings; then after some words and a prayer the minister says –“You may kiss the Bride.” In this day and age, why does he say that? Does he or the witnesses at the wedding think that the couple have never kissed each other (or someone else) before? What do the couple and the witnesses think about what he just said? What does it mean to them? What should it mean to them?

For too many people, the minister's permission for the groom to kiss the bride would be taken lightly and with amusement, for it would be meaningless to most these days. Most, these days, have gone through the rites of “The Dating Game” and have become desensitised to the depth of the meaning of betrothal and marriage.

The dating game is a dangerous ritual based on inflammation of the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. It is of the world and not of God. (1 John 2: 15-17). It is based on self-satisfaction and not on love. The dating game is talked about, laughed about, made light of, and encouraged by parents, teachers and preachers who are ignorant on the subject, having never questioned it. They played the game, they see it on television, in the movies, hear it in the music they listen to and expect that the ritual of dating will inevitably be passed on to the new generation. The purpose of the game is to try to prove to oneself and others that they are attractive and desirable and sometimes hard to get. Many times, the dating game is based on some kind of possessiveness thing or sex object thing and a power/pride thing that you can –turn someone on- that the dating game ritual says that everyone seems to have to prove their worth. It usually is a type of non-physical emotional or spiritual fornication and divorce practice. That is not learning how to build a relationship based on true love and commitment. It is not preparation for marriage but rather preparation for divorce.

Many adults think that dating is cute and believe that they should prepare the children for the dating game by making them feel comfortable with it. Many parents and youth ministries prepare the youth for the dating game by giving them dating game rules such as what not to do on a date and that they should get home on time, rather than explaining the danger of the ritual in any form and showing them alternatives.

Dating does not make for a Godly life. It is driven by lust, causes confusion and frustration and many times it gives occasion to sexual sins. There is no need or room for dating in the life of a Christian. Keeping company with someone of the opposite sex should be taken very seriously and not in a flirty manner of wantonness, lasciviousness and sidelong glances which are works of the flesh and not the fruits of the spirit.

## **YOU MAY KISS THE BRIDE. is it a cliché? - Page 2**

The dating game is of the world and not of God and it needs to be examined by both the adults and the youth in the church. The adults first need to step back and look at the dating game for what it really is and not just accept it because it is "The thing to do." They need to examine their attitude about promoting the dating game and ask God to help them walk away from perpetuating this dangerous and destructive practice. The adults, parents and teachers must ask God to help them provide the proper guidance and instruction for the youth in the area of establishing relationships with the opposite sex.

The church as a whole seems to be in a situation of trying to fight the fires of dating and how to minimize or repair the damage. They seem to go only as far as preaching against pre-marital physical sexual sins on some premise of another; most say that fornication is sin but they give reasons such as such as unwanted pregnancies and Aids. Many youth ministers spend a lot of time counselling the youth about their heartbreaks and hardness that results from breaking up, making up, breaking up again, and finding someone new. They are dealing with the results, not with trying to prevent the damage to start with.

What can be done to stop it? Will making the girls dress in long sackcloth dresses as some religious groups do stop it? No!!! While modest dress is certainly to be observed and young men and young women must not purposely dress in a way to be alluring to the opposite sex, there will still be attraction no matter how people dress.

Should the youth be told that they must not have these feelings of attraction? No. God make men and women to be attracted to one another but a woman giving herself to a man and a man giving himself to a woman to any degree whether emotionally or physically is not a game at all and is much more serious a commitment than the ritual of the dating game implies. They should be shown that feelings of attractions are ok, and while they have these feelings they need to learn how to discipline themselves so that they will not establish frivolous romantic relationships that are not based on real love.

What must be done is to explain the dangers of the dating game to the young people and show them the alternative of courtship. At first, most will laugh and call it old - fashioned, but many will see the advantage and be relieved that there is an alternative. Courtship is the Godly alternative. It is the way Godly families and the church can help oversee, protect and guide the youth to make wise decisions for mates and not to waste their youth on the dating game.

The dating game breeds fickleness instead of faithfulness. Marriage is a covenant of Forever Faithfulness. The dating game, like fornication, is unwillingness to enter into Forever Faithfulness covenant. It is only an experiment. Fornication is a great eroder of Faith. God is forever faithful to us. He sent His Son Jesus to testify to that.

### **YOU MAY KISS THE BRIDE. is it a cliché? - Page 3**

Courtship is what dating should be. It's not a game, its real life! Courtship is getting to know a person of the opposite sex to see if they are compatible as marriage partners.

This is not seeing if they are "sexually or psychologically compatible". But is to see if they truly love one another, if they want to be forever faithful to one another and both have Godly goals and will help each other serve God. Courtship should not begin until both man and woman each has a personally close, fulfilled peaceful walk with God and is fully prepared to enter into the married state and the groom to be is financially able to support a bride.

When men and women enter the marriage covenant in a Godly way –“You may kiss the bride" will then be meaningful to them.

## 5 Reflections

### Changes

It's fall again. Seasons have come and gone and the years seem shorter for us all. I love this time of year. As I look around Gussie Field Park, where we spent so many good times together. I see things have changed a lot. The creek bank is no longer natural. It is encased in brick now. The monkey bars and seesaws are gone. Yellow plastic playground equipment has risen in their place.

A green pecan lies on the sidewalk waiting for a squirrel to find it and hide it for colder days. A fledgling sparrow with short tail feathers hops and peeps in the spotted shade. These are new lives that will carry on what has begun. Little children scamper to climb the slide. I wanted you to stay five.

Things change, yet in a way things don't really change at all. Like Solomon, I see that there is nothing new under the sun.

### Heirlooms

Looking around the park I see an old graveyard and I am reminded of driving down a country road a decade or so ago. As I rode along, I noticed an old graveyard with all kinds of monuments, some of which were half sunken in the ground. As I looked, I pondered what legacy I would leave behind. An epitaph of good words spoken at my funeral, or a nice inscription on a tombstone would not be a legacy. A legacy would be the rare treasures that I have obtained during my life on earth; things I have spent my life on, things that I will give my life to defend, heirlooms that I will guard to the death to pass on to others.

What could these things be? A collector's item shotgun, an antique sewing machine, a collection of precious gems, or a box of gold coins? Certainly these would be considered heirlooms, but not the kind I had in mind. The heirlooms I want to pass on are the things that I hold most dear; saving Faith in Jesus Christ, Godly family values, a zeal for truth, hatred of worldliness, and a Love for praising Jesus in music. I hope I have passed these on in some small way. These are the heirlooms that I pray you too will treasure and want to pass them down to your children. Sometimes these treasures come with a high price, the cost of popularity or worldly wealth.

I'm finding it hard to bring this book to a conclusion. I want to see the end of the story, to see how the life of the princess unfolds before I end this book. But the real book of life goes on. It is eternal. And the Princess Papers will really never end.

Sarah, you are twenty-one. An arrow in the wind. God has blessed me so abundantly through you. I could never have expected more from you than you have given. I appreciate you so much. I am so pleased with the daughter you have become. You are a princess.

I love you.

Dad