

The Elisabeth Elliot Newsletter

September/October 1983

Ungodly Counsel

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly" (Psalm 1:1, Authorized Version).

At a recent women's convention a young woman told me that her husband had wanted a divorce, but consented to see a Christian counselor before making it final. A member of the team in the counseling center told him that he himself was divorced and very happily remarried. That was all the husband needed. The man to whom he looked for help set the example he was hoping to find. Of course he went ahead and divorced his wife.

The twenty-third chapter of Jeremiah describes what is happening in our country today. The land is full of adulterers. Pastures have dried up. Powers are misused. Prophet and priest alike are godless, doing evil even in the Lord's house. Jeremiah's description of the prophets seems terribly fitting for some of those from whom Christian people are seeking guidance: "The vision they report springs from their own imagination. It is not from the mouth of the Lord... To all who follow the promptings of their own stubborn heart they say, 'No disaster shall befall you.' But which of them has stood in the council of the Lord, seen him and heard his word? Which of them has listened to his word and obeyed?" (Jer 23:16-18, New English Bible)

Here is a good test to apply to any of whom we seek counsel. Has he stood in the council of the Lord? Has he seen Him? Has he heard His word? Has he listened and obeyed? Note the few who have actually paid a price for their obedience (like

Jeremiah who was flogged, imprisoned, dropped into a pit of slime, etc.). These few are the ones to follow.

The chapter goes on to describe prophets who speak lies in God's name, dream dreams, give voice to their own inventions, concoct words of their own, and then say, "This is his very word." They mislead with "wild and reckless falsehoods."

"If a prophet has a dream, let him tell his dream; if he has my word, let him speak my word in truth. What has chaff to do with grain? says the Lord." (vs. 28)

Beware of those who are afraid to quote scripture, who say it's too "simplistic," doesn't apply here, won't work. Beware of the counselor who is "nondirectional." Be cautious when the advice given makes you feel comfortable when you know you're really wrong. "Do not my words scorch like fire? says the Lord. Are they not like a hammer that splinters rock?" (vs. 29)

It wasn't only the awesome prophets of the Old Testament who spoke this way. Think of the words of Jesus. Though often He spoke "comfortable words," words that brought peace and hope, He spoke also those words that seared like fire ("Depart from me, I never knew you"; "Get behind me, Satan") and splintered rock ("You will never get out until you have paid the last farthing"; "Whoever wants to be first must be the willing slave of all").

"The form of words you shall use in speaking amongst yourselves is: 'What answer has the Lord given?' or 'What has the Lord said?'" (Jer 23:35)

This applies, of course, only to those who care what the Lord wants. Those who have already decided to do their own thing need not apply for truly godly counsel.

Teach Your Children to Choose

Lars and I had breakfast with our friend Barb Tompkins in Tucson. She brought along two-year-old Katy, who behaved very well throughout most of the meal. She interrupted at one point, and pestered her mother, who said quietly, "Katy, you are not in charge here. But would you like to be in charge of Baby Flo?" Baby Flo was a tiny doll she had with her.

I plied Barb with questions about how she rears her children (she has two older boys also). She said she had been helped by Paul Meier's book *Happiness Is a Choice*, and had determined to teach her children how to make good choices.

When Katy was about eighteen months old, Barb decided to teach her to stay within the boundaries of their own property, although there was no fence. She set aside a day for this lesson and walked the boundary with the baby, pointing out where she could and could not go, explaining that to step over the line meant a spanking. Barb then sat down in a lawn chair with a book and told Katy she could play. It was not long, of course, before Katy tested the line, then stepped over. In a normal tone of voice Barb called, "Katy, would you come here, please?" That lesson had been learned long before, so Katy came. "Katy, honey, I see you have chosen a spanking," said the mother, and proceeded to give her one. Then she went over the lesson again, explaining why the spanking had been necessary. It was Katy's choice.

Barb teaches her children such maxims as "People are not for hitting, they're for loving" and "When people say they can't it usually means they won't."

It's important, she says, not to label a child *naughty* or *good*, but to point out exactly what he did that was naughty, or what he did that was good. When correction is necessary, Barbara tries always to affirm the child in some way afterwards—"I like the way you picked up your toys this morning."

Barb does not always use spanking for punishment. Sometimes she gives the child "time out,"

which means she is put into a Port-a-Crib for a little while in order to meditate on her disobedience. If the child climbs out she has "chosen" a spanking. Barb thinks it is very important that the "time out" place not be the child's own bed or bedroom. She doesn't want her children to associate those places with punishment.

Katy whined for something, and Barb turned to her and said "Katy, you need to make a request." Katy said, "May I please . . ."

When Katy pulled a pen out of her mother's purse, Barb said, "That is not a choice. But these things are—which would you like to play with?"

I wrote all this in a letter to my daughter Valerie. She was thrilled. She has started using the method on her three little ones, and says it works and that I should put it in my newsletter. So here you have it.

Who Is Lars Gren?

He's my husband. I'm Mrs. Lars Gren, but because I've been writing under the name of Elisabeth Elliot for more than a quarter of a century, he lets me use that name on my books and newsletter. But I want to introduce him. He was born in New York, but went to Norway very soon afterwards and was there until he was ten. Didn't know a word of English when he came back, went right into public school, and got zeros for several months till he learned enough English to pass. Has spent most of his life in Mississippi and Georgia. Was a salesman of many different products, most recently of women's clothing. Traveled as a manufacturers' representative from Washington, D.C., to Dallas, covering all the southeast. Then, in mid-life decided he did not want to spend the rest of his life selling clothing

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and came to Gordon-Conwell Seminary in South Hamilton, Massachusetts. The story of how we met is told in my book *Love Has a Price Tag*. We thought, when we were married, that he'd be a hospital chaplain, for which he had trained, but he began to travel with me on a part-time basis, handling me, the travel arrangements, books, and tapes. In short order it became a full-time job, so that's what we do now, together. It's been a wonderful thing to see his gifts unfold in this way, and for me, the protection and authority of a godly husband have liberated me in a way I did not know during all the years I traveled as a widow. God does have the most unexpected things up His sleeves!

Forgot to say that Lars is tall, ruddy-faced, blond, blue-eyed. Not surprising—his father was Swedish, his mother (who lives in Palm Beach, a widow) is Norwegian. Lars speaks not with the accent of either parent, but pure Georgia cracker. Calls me "Lisbeth," or "dahlin,'" says, "Ah'm'on teach you how to talk."

"Moral education is impossible apart from the habitual vision of greatness."

—Alfred North Whitehead



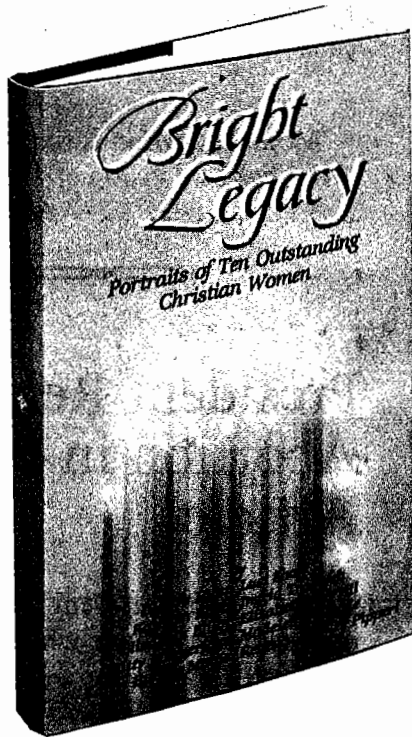
President Reagan Hits Abortion in Magazine Article

Last April President Reagan did what few presidents have done while in office. He wrote a full-length article for a journal of opinion (*The Human Life Review*). "The real question is not when human life begins, but, *What is the value of human life?* [italics his] The abortionist who reassembles the arms and legs of a tiny baby to make sure all its parts have been torn from its mother's body can hardly doubt whether it is a human being. The real question for him and for all of us is whether that tiny human life has a God-given right to be protected by the law—the same right we have."

Prayer Requests

Be Thou my stronghold, whereunto I may always resort; thou hast promised to help me, for thou art my house of defence, and my castle (Psalm 71:2, Prayer Book Version).

- The wife of a seminary student wrote, "Please, for the sakes of people like myself, continue to run the race Christ has set before you in sharing your life and lessons with others." Will you pray that I'll do that? We need to pray for each other, that each will run the race set before him, for each race is different. Remember that we have the same Source and Goal for our faith (Heb 12:1-2).



Bright Legacy

Portraits of ten outstanding Christian women

Elisabeth Elliot, Karen Burton Mains, Gladys Hunt, and several other well-known Christian authors write affectionately about the women they admire, including Amy Carmichael, Catherine Marshall, and Mother Teresa of Calcutta. \$10.95

Other Books

by Elisabeth Elliot

Love Has a Price Tag—Includes an autobiographical sketch and brings into focus the everyday occurrences of life—in the home, at work, with one's children and spouse. \$4.95

Shadow of the Almighty—The life of Jim Elliot, including his personal journals and letters, his love story, and his missionary experience. \$5.95

The Savage My Kinsman—The true story in text and pictures of the author's life with the same Indians who had killed her husband Jim Elliot nearly three years earlier. Includes over thirty-five photos, most of which were taken by the author. \$5.95

Discipline: The Glad Surrender—The subject is personal discipline, based on obedience to a loving and sovereign Master, touching on the discipline of the mind, the feelings, the body, and of one's time, work, and possessions. \$8.95

Tapes

The Jim Elliot Story—Includes Jim's voice telling a witch-doctor story. \$5.00

Series on Christian Discipleship
No. 1 (Disciplines of Mind, Will, Feelings) (2 cassettes) \$9.00

No. 2 Forgiveness, Relinquishment, Acceptance, Guidance (3 cassettes) \$12.00

No. 3 Oblation, Prayer, Clay Pots, Witness (2 cassettes) \$9.00

Travel Schedule September/October 1983

September 11 Roslindale, MA, Roslindale Baptist Church, The Rev. John L. Bayles, 617-327-5262.

September 12 Milleken University, Decatur, IL, Religious Life Series, Peoples Church of God, Dr. William Ellis, 217-877-7224.

September 13 Memphis, TN, First Baptist Church Women's Luncheon, Elizabeth Linder, 901-454-1131.

September 14-15 Knoxville, TN, Cedar Springs Presbyterian Church, Mrs. Donald Hoke, 615-693-6132.

September 17 Calvary Memorial Church, Philadelphia, PA, Mrs. Jane Rebsamen, 215-332-1676.

September 19-20 Wayne, PA, Church of the Savior Women's Seminar, Mrs. Pam Snyder, home—215-964-9810, church—688-6302.

September 27 Medfield MA, United Church Women's lunch, Miss Linda Cain, 617-359-7037.

October 7-9 Sierra Madre, CA Congregational Church Women's Retreat, Mrs. Mary C. Upham, 1102 Bungalow Place, Arcadia, CA 91006, 213-357-3471.

To Receive This Newsletter

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