

# The Elisabeth Elliot Newsletter

September/October 1984

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## The World Must Be Shown

When Jesus was speaking with His disciples before His crucifixion, He gave them His parting gift: peace such as the world can never give. But He went on immediately to say, "Set your troubled hearts at rest and banish your fears. . . . I shall not talk much longer with you, for the Prince of this world approaches. He has no rights over me, but the world must be shown that I love the Father and do exactly as He commands." (Jn 14:27, 30-31, NEB)

A few weeks ago a young mother called to ask for "something that will help me to trust in the Lord." She explained that she has several small children, she herself is thirty years old, and she has cancer. Chemotherapy has done its hideous work of making her totally bald. The prognosis is not good. Could I say to her, "Set your troubled heart at rest. God is going to heal you"? Certainly not. Jesus did not tell His disciples that He would not be killed. How do I know whether God will heal this young woman? I could, however, remind her that He would not for a moment let go of her, that His love enfolded her and her precious children every minute of every day and every night, and that underneath are the Everlasting Arms.

But is that enough? The terrible things in the world seem to make a mockery of the love of God, and the question always arises: *why?*

There are important clues in the words of Jesus. The disciples' worst fears were about to be realized, yet He commanded (yes, *commanded*) them to be at peace. All would be well, all manner of thing would be well—in the end. In a short time, however, the Prince of this world, Satan himself, was to be permitted to have his way. Not

that Satan had any rights over Jesus. Far from it. Nor has he "rights" over any of God's children, including that dear mother. But Satan is permitted to approach. He challenges God, we know from the Book of Job, as to the validity of His children's faith. God allows him to make a test case from time to time. It had to be proved to Satan, in Job's case, that there is such a thing as obedient faith which does not depend on receiving only benefits. Jesus had to show the world that He loved the Father and would, no matter what happened, do exactly what He said. The servant is not greater than his Lord. When we cry "Why, Lord?" we should ask instead, "Why not, Lord? Shall I not follow my Master in suffering as in everything else?"

Does our faith depend on having every prayer answered as we think it should be answered, or does it rest rather on the character of a sovereign Lord? We can't really tell, can we, until we're in real trouble.

I haven't heard more from the young woman. I neglected to ask her address. But I have been praying for her, asking God to enable her to show the world what genuine faith is—the kind of faith that overcomes the world because it trusts and obeys, no matter what the circumstances. The world does not want to be *told*. The world must be *shown*. Isn't that part of the answer to the great question of why Christians suffer?

## Reprove, Correct, Exhort

A woman in West Virginia writes of a pastor who has decided that it is an infringement of people's "rights" to call things sin. Within the Body of Christ, he says, there must be no judging

of one another. Hence he has given the church's approval to a man who deserts his wife and children. The pastor says the man's "gut feelings" may be the voice of God.

Who takes responsibility nowadays to reprove, exhort, and correct Christians who are acting irresponsibly?

Whose business is it to inquire into private lives when it becomes known that Christians are not "walking worthy of the Lord" and thereby are causing others to stumble?

Who will submit to questioning or follow godly counsel?

We shudder to think of being "cross-examined," "judged," called to account for what we say is nobody's business but our own. Am I suggesting some sort of police state in the church, a Big Brother Watch? No. I am asking not for legal action but for Christian love, the kind that cares enough to obey Scripture, to risk its own reputation for kindness, in order to help another carry his load. "We must not be conceited, challenging one another to rivalry, jealous of one another. If a man should do something wrong, my brothers, on a sudden impulse, you who are endowed with the Spirit must set him right again very gently. Look to yourself, each one of you: you may be tempted too. Help one another to carry these heavy loads, for in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." (Gal 6:2-3) (How different that law is from politics which has an eye only for its own success!)

"My brothers, if one of your number should stray from the truth and another succeed in bringing him back, be sure of this: any man who brings a sinner back from his crooked ways will be rescuing his soul from death and cancelling sins." It is important to note that this was written by the same man, in the same epistle, as this: "Who are you to judge your neighbor?" (Jas 4:12; 5:19-20)

Jesus said we are to judge *righteous* judgment. Look at the fruits of a man's life. Take the log out of your own eye before you try to take the splinter out of another's—but when you've removed the log, you must remove the splinter.

"Instruct and admonish [warn, caution against specific faults, reprove mildly, advise, exhort] each other with the utmost wisdom." (Col 3:16)

"If anyone disobeys our instructions given by

letter, mark him well, and have no dealings with him until he is ashamed of himself. I do not mean treat him as an enemy, but give him friendly advice, as one of the family." (2 Thes 3:14-15)

Of men who were "out of control, talking wildly," Paul told Titus to "pull them up sharply," for such men were ruining whole families.

Please don't write and ask me for details as to how individuals or churches ought to put these precepts into practice. I confess I am far from sure. I only know that both Old and New Testaments clearly teach the godly man's responsibility to try to help others be obedient to God. Whatever we can do to make that obedience a delight rather than a chore we ought to do. When real love requires confrontation, we ought to lay down our lives to do it. "Encourage one another so that no one of you is made stubborn by the wiles of sin." (Heb 3:13)

## Letters

From a friend whose son, two and a half, had to have surgery for a cyst (always a worrisome sign). "The cyst was benign! We are so grateful! We set the Lord before us so we will not be shaken for the living of life. Our goal is not to be comfortable and have everything turn out fine but to be godly and make an impact on our dying world and its values. . . . May God continue to refine your life message as 'he keeps you from willful sins as His servant; may they not rule over you.' (Ps 19:13). Barrett [my son] memorized Genesis 4:7, and as he faces temptation he says the verse. He is learning to make wise choices and to be obedient. . . . We have not spared the rod on him but it has really worked. He says 'the rod drives out my foolishness.'"

That letter came on the same day that I was reading Hannah Whitall Smith's *Everyday*

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*Religion*, soon to be reprinted by Revell under the title *The Commonsense Teaching of the Bible*. She quotes George MacDonald. His words illuminate what Barrett's mother wrote.

"Man has a claim on God, a divine claim for any pain, want, disappointment, or misery that will help to make him what he ought to be. He has a claim to be punished, and to be spared not one pang that may urge him toward repentance; yea, he has a claim to be compelled to repent; to be hedged in on every side, to have one after another of the strong, sharptoothed sheep-dogs of the Great Shepherd sent after him, to thwart him in any desire, foil him in any plan, frustrate him of any hope, until he come to see at length that nothing will ease his pain, nothing make life a thing worth having, but the presence of the living God within him; that nothing is good but the will of God; nothing noble enough for the desire of the heart of man but oneness with the eternal. For this God must make him yield his very being, that He himself may enter in and dwell with him."

## Questions and Answers

*Could you mention some things you think are important about raising children?*

First, and of primary importance, remember what God commanded Israel: "You shall take these words of mine to hear and keep them in mind. . . . Teach them to your children, and speak of them indoors and out of doors, when you lie down and when you rise. Write them up on the door posts of your houses." (Dt 11:18-20)

My daughter Valerie began reading the psalms aloud to her son Walter on the day she brought him home from the hospital. We do not know when a child begins to absorb what is important to his parents, but wouldn't it be lovely if his first memory is of hearing the Bible read to him? The priorities set by his father and mother make a huge difference in a child's thinking. "Give us a child until he is seven," says the Catholic Church, "and we will have him for life."

My parents read Scripture aloud to us morning

and evening with the family gathered together, and individually when we were put to bed. They took turns putting us to bed at night when we were small, and always prayed with us when they tucked us in. When we went for walks with our father on Saturday afternoons, he taught us to observe things—birds, flowers, ferns, acorns, brooks, squirrels. He often quoted Scripture to us, imitated the songs of birds, quizzed us on what we saw, helped us look through his binoculars. So—the second suggestion I would make is to teach your children to observe. Television will not help much with this. They must learn to see firsthand.

Third: Give them work to do, even when very small. Show them that everybody in the family has work to do for the good of the family. Besides routine work such as picking up clothes and toys, helping to put away dishes and laundry, picking up sticks in the yard, weeding the garden, etc., try to provide optional jobs which a child may do to earn money also. This can begin by the time he is five or six, and should be clearly distinguished from the other work, lest he begin to expect payment for his routine jobs. It is a good thing for him to learn early what the price of an ice-cream cone, for example, represents in terms of money earned.

Fourth: All time spent with mother or father will be "quality time" if the child knows beyond a shadow of a doubt that he is loved and enjoyed. Hug him, compliment him for kindness shown to a brother or sister, for work well done, for cheerfulness and thoughtfulness. Tell him he

### Prayer Requests

- Pray for young couples who have been recently married. As the hard realities of living together begin to make themselves felt, and as the enemy of souls tries to destroy their unity, pray Paul's prayer for the Romans for them: "May the God who inspires men to endure, and gives them constant encouragement, give you a mind united with one another in your common loyalty to Christ Jesus. And then, as one man, you will sing from the heart the praises of God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom 15:5-6)

looks nice, his room is neat. Let him know that you see him as a gift from God and are grateful for him. This will help him to understand, also, that his parents are God's gift to him, and he can learn to be thankful for the things money can't buy.

*Travel Schedule*  
*September/November 1984*

**September 29** Lexington, Massachusetts, Grace Chapel Singles Group

**October 19** Bolton, Massachusetts, Missionary conference, Trinity Church, Congregational. Mrs. Clara May Dickerson, 617-779-2774

**October 26-28** Amherst, Ohio, Women Anew Conference. Sharon Ingram, 216-984-3100

**October 29** Ft. Wayne, Indiana, Ft. Wayne Bible College. Mr. Robert V. Jones, 219-456-2111

**October 30-31** Edina and Roseville, Minnesota, Grace Church Missions Festival. Woody Phillips 612-926-1884 or 633-6479

**November 1** Same as for October 30-31 Also: chapel at North Central Bible College, Mr. Falley 612-332-3491

**November 9-11** Solvang, California, women's retreat. Marge Peterson, 805-969-4568

**November 16-17** Princeton, New Jersey, Alpha Pregnancy Center. Ken Smith, 609-921-1020

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