

BABY GATES, SMOKE ALARMS, AND OUTLET COVERS

Most are familiar with baby gates—you know those little expandable gates used to hinder a child's movement from one room to another. They are often placed at the top of stairways to keep an infant or toddler from a nasty fall or at the entry way of the kitchen to keep a precious little one from dangerous hazards. Another common household device is a smoke alarm. Mounted to the ceiling, a smoke alarm detects smoke from fires and sounds a shrill rather irritating screech to alert those in the house of danger. These little gadgets have saved many lives as well as countless thousands of dollars of property loss. A third household item found more commonly in houses with curious toddlers are outlet covers. Made from plastic, outlet covers are inserted into electrical outlets to keep children from sticking little fingers or other foreign objects into places they do not belong! It is highly likely that you have one or two of the above items, if not all three, in your own home. Aside from this very obvious parallel, it is also clear that each of these are for safety's sake, especially the safety of your children.

Statistics show that hundreds of children are injured in household related accidents each year, most of which could have been avoided with a little care and forethought. Home injuries are the main reason children three and under visit the emergency room and nearly 70% of the children who die from unintentional injuries at home are four years old and under. Falls from climbing in the house, burns, shocks, strangulation, suffocation, choking, poisoning, drowning, and firearms are major causes of child household injuries. Further studies indicate that about that about 20,000 fatal accidents occur from unintentional injuries at home. Of this number about 2,000 are children. Surprisingly, the home is the number two place for unintentional fatal accidents in the United States! And this phenomenon is not unique to our country; recent survey in Great Britain found that 2.8 million people attended accident and emergency departments in 2005.

On their website, Kids Health provided a list of eight measures that can be taken in the home to help accidents, included in this list were: baby gates, smoke alarms, and outlet covers. Certainly, parents with a keen sense of awareness for their child's safety are ever watchful for little hazards that could turn into serious injury to their children. But what about the spiritual hazards our children face outside the home? Regardless how hard one may try, it is impossible to keep or children from temptation: *"it is impossible but that offenses will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come!"* (Luke 17:1). Satan's influence has pervaded society at large and his loyal army is more than willing to place stones of stumbling before our youth! What are parents to do? Can we but hope that our children will not be overcome and entangled in the perverseness of society? Should we simply pray and leave it to God to direct the in some divinely spiritual way, placing their footsteps in exactly the spot He wants, guarding them from the emissaries of Satan? Are there no measures, no steps or actions that we can take to provide for our children's spiritual safety? Certainly there is, and just like baby gates, smoke alarms, and outlet covers it is a very common item in most homes. If you do not have this item in your home you can find it in just about any general store—Wal-mart has them as does Dollar General. Even your local Kroger carries them on a regular basis. If for some strange reason you cannot find this necessity of spiritual safety in any of these places you could go to any of several thousand websites on the Internet and with ease order one or more for your own home. In fact, you may want one for every room. What is this source of spiritual security? It is the

"...then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel..." (Amos 7:8)

FILLING YOUR CUP OF JOY

Text: _____

I. The _____ of Your Name

Verse 1—

Verse 2—

Verse 3—

II. The _____ of Your Lord

Verse 1—

Verse 2—

Verse 3—

III. The _____ of Your Prayer

Verse 1—

Verse 2—

Verse 3—

IV. The _____ of Your God

Verse 1—

Verse 2—

Verse 3—

MONEY IN THE BANK

A man gave several thousand dollars to help build a church building. Then came the 1929 Stock Market crash. He lost everything. Someone said, "If you had that money you gave to start the church building, you would have had enough to set yourself up in business again." He replied, "I would have lost that money, too, in the crash. As it is, it is the only money I saved. It is now in the bank of heaven, yielding interest which will accumulate until eternity." Hundreds have come to Christ through the church he helped to build.

Bible; God's holy and divine word!

Similar to a baby gate, the Bible provides the knowledge our children need to keep them from falling. It instructs them of right from wrong and warns of or adversary's methods of temptations (I Jon 2:15-17). It also arms them with sufficient artillery to defeat the enemy (II Timothy 3:16-17). The Bible will direct the path of our children (Jeremiah 10:23) and provide light to keep our children on the path of righteousness and avoid the dangerous cliffs of temptation from which many fall never to recover.

Like a smoke alarm, if we hide the Word of God in the hearts of our children, when temptation comes, an alarm will sound warning them of imminent danger. "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psalm 119:11). Without divine instruction, however, our children will not be able to recognize the snares that await them in a crooked and perverse world: "Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law; for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet" (Romans 7:7). Grounded in God's word our children will be able to see through the smoke by which Satan has so successfully clouded man's spiritual sight and deceived the masses to both fear and doubt our Lord.

Just as an outlet cover keeps our children out of places they do not need to be, the Bible will help our children to recognize the wicked ways of the world and the corrupt character of the ungodly that populate it that they might flee from the dangers that threaten their souls. "And have now fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Ephesians 5:11). God's Word will instruct our children that they may live by the divine commands to "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil" (I Thessalonians 5:21-22).

We must at all times beware of or "adversary the devil" who "as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (I Peter 5:8). But we must also teach our children and instruct them to be aware as well. Many parents are very particular and extremely careful to "childproof" their homes, unfortunately, few "worldproof" their children. "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" (Deuteronomy 6:6-7).

-Ronnie Scherffius

CONSISTENT CHRISTIANITY

The definition Webster's gives the word *consistent* is "holding to the same principles or practice." It is usually easy to spot an inconsistency. Modern media has made a living around election times pointing out inconsistent candidates or primary officials. Often blaring inconsistencies are laughed to scorn on late night television and other comedy shows. Some statements or actions just blatantly label any people as hypocrites. But there is nothing worse than an inconsistent Christian.

However, to the contrary is the great joy found behind and in consistent Christianity. The benefits are manifold unto the child of God whose life is filled with godly harmony. The soul that practices what he preaches and preaches what he practices, whose day to day and week to week lifestyle remains pure, is one who agrees totally with Paul's inspired description: "*I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me*" (Galatians 2:20).

What description, though, can be given to a practitioner of consistent Christianity?

First, the consistent Christ **prays**. The earliest disciples of Jesus Christ sought His instruction in prayer because they knew its importance (Luke 11:1). Christ, Himself, though, was not one to teach and not act because He was a man given to prayer (Matthew 14:23; 26:36-44; Mark 1:35; Luke 3:21; John 17:6-24). Paul's admonition regarding prayer was to, "*Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you*" (I Thessalonians 5:17-18). He stated this knowing that, "*The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much*" (James 5:16b). The Christians desire to communicate unto the Father signifies the placement of their priority and trust. One would not think of going days at a time without talking to their spouse or children, why then do so with their God? The Divine promise is that if we "*...therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace...we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need*" (Hebrews 4:16). The consistent Christian will be one given to consistent prayer, knowing the good thereof.

Second, the consistent Christ **prepares**. This preparation is inward and involves much dedication and sacrifice. Paul stated that the Christian should, "*Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil*" (I Thessalonians 5:21-22). Doing so allows one to "*...grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ*" (II Peter 3:18) and "*to shew thyself approved unto God*" (II Timothy 2:15). The blessings bestowed upon consistent preparation far outweigh the sacrifice made to do so. For what purpose does one study?

1. To receive understanding (Psalm 119:104).
2. To quench our thirst and hunger (Matthew 5:6).
3. To prepare for judgment (John 12:48).
4. To learn of the prepared mansion (John 14:1-3).
5. To keep from falling away (I Corinthians 10:11f).
6. To learn the way of righteousness (II Timothy 3:16-17).
7. To go on to perfection (Hebrews 6:1-3).
8. To be saved eternally (James 1:21).
9. To know God and Christ (I John 2:1-4) - *items from Paul Sain, Ready Reference for Growing Christians.*

The consistent Christian, then, will be given to consistent preparation, knowing the good thereof.

Third, the consistent Christian **proclaims**. Through this their lives of prayer and preparation come to fruition. The Lord's final commission before leaving this earth involved going and teaching all nations (Matthew 28:19). In many ways, Christ can be proclaimed through a godly manner of living. "*Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven*" (Matthew 5:14-16). However, a vocal proclamation is needed and so very effective in spreading the seed of Christianity, hoping for good soil into which it can fall. On the Pentecost day (Acts 2:14), Peter had to "*lift up his voice*" in order to promote New Testament Christianity and for 3,000 souls to be ushered into the kingdom. Those are the fruits of proclaiming Christianity, and the consistent Christian will be given to a consistent proclamation, knowing the good thereof.

In short, the consistent Christian will be just like Christ, for He prayed, prepared, and proclaimed. Let us be like Him now so we can be like Him than (I John 3:2).