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MAY 2005 ISSUE
HOMEPAGE

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"Hints, Help and a Whole Lot of Fun"



**From the Editor -
Jamie Dale**



Being Prepared is Not Indicative of a Lack of Faith
By Jamie Dale

I usually like to focus my monthly column on Christian parenting and direct ways to raise our children in Christ. However, with the recent passing of the husband of one of my dearest friends, the article I had originally prepared for this month rang hollow and I felt the Spirit guiding me in another direction. I found myself thinking about the three children that my friend's husband left behind and I found myself worrying about what the future holds for my friend and her kids. Then I realized worrying for them was worthless and I began to pray and asked others to pray for them. While this month's column is a little different that the columns I usually write, I feel it is an important message for all Christian parents to hear.

We like to think that we will always be here for our children; but reality tells us that God may call us home at any moment, at any time. While we all know that the Lord will provide for us and our families in our time of need, it is our responsibility as parents to prepare for the future in case the Lord should call us home early.

Being a Christian parent means many things. It means raising your children to follow in Christ's path, but it also means being responsible parents and providing for our children and protecting them from any unexpected tragedies.

I've actually heard some people say that preparing for the unexpected equates to a lack of faith in the

**Parents' Survival Guide
Featured Article**

Hope for the Hurting Mom
By Joyce Simoneaux

It seems that most articles or teachings about parents and children deal with younger children or teens and how to "train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it." (Proverbs 22:6 KJV.) But what does a mother do when her children are already grown? Suppose her children are already being influenced by a culture of drugs ... rejecting church ... hanging with the wrong crowd ... living with someone outside of marriage? What do you tell the mother who was never disciplined in Christian principles or raised in a Christian family herself? She never learned how to raise her children in this manner. Is it too late?

These days, it seems it is almost the norm for a home to be dysfunctional and all too often abusive. More and more marriages are ending in divorce. More and more children are being raised in single-parent homes. Many single parents remarry without being taught how to choose another spouse according to scriptural principles; and the children are often rejected again by the step-parents. This, unfortunately, results in the children growing up bitter and alienated.

Now the mother surrenders her life to Christ, only to be riddled with guilt for not raising her children in a Christian home. What can she do? Is it too late to have a positive influence on her children?

There is always hope when Jesus is called upon. It is never too late to positively influence your children. Family counseling can bring about healing, but there is no substitute for the power found in God's Word.



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power of God. I must question, what God thinks of such logic. After all, if we are capable, isn't it our responsibility to plan to protect our families in times of crisis and need? That doesn't mean God won't protect and care for us, but shouldn't those of us who are able to, prepare for the future in any way we can?

Yes, the future is uncertain. Yes, the only thing we can count on is the righteousness of the Lord. And it is also true that we must always trust in His works and His plan. However, as we must count on our Heavenly Father, our children also count on us. The Lord counts on us to protect and care for the children he entrusts to us. So while it is true that we must count on the Lord in all things, we must also look ahead to protect the interests of the children we have been blessed with.

In closing, I ask all parents who read this column to review the safeguards that you have in place for your family. A will, a trust, a living will, insurance, whatever it may be; your plans don't have to be elaborate, but you should have plans in place should the unexpected happen. As we count on our Father, our children count on us.

[Read Complete Article...](#)



This Month's Parenting Resource

Since this month's column focused on planning for the unexpected, I thought it best to provide a monthly Internet resource directing parents to a site that could help them do just that.

Crosswalk.com <http://www.crosswalk.com> is a Christian-based website that offers a financial section with advice and tips on financial planning. There is also a business directory at the site where you can look up Christian-based companies offering financial products and insurance.



Featured Article



Robin Hood – Prince of Parents

By Matthew Morgan

No one would have thought that Robin Hood – the legendary bow-wielding, prince-turned-bandit – would have made a good parent. However, he understood archery quite well: using it to rob from the rich and give to the poor, winning archery contests as well as the heart of the beautiful Maid Marian.

According to Psalm 127:4, "Children born to a young man are like sharp arrows in a warrior's hands" (NLT). By understanding some principles of archery, all parents can become master "ARCHER"s.

Attention: For the archer, each arrow gets individual attention. Before modern machinery, archers carefully crafted each arrow by hand, sharpening tips, fashioning shafts, and attaching fletching (feathers) with great skill. Parents are the craftsmen for their children. Each child requires personal attention. Don't allow the television to raise your children – take an active role.

Responsibility: Robin Hood never left his quiver to take care of itself. In agreement with many public service announcements, parents need to ask where their children are going, who they are with, and what the contact phone number is. It's not being nosy; it's caring (though your teenager will probably disagree).

Challenging: Arrows don't fire without pressure; but with too much they will break. A parent must know the correct pressure to apply to their children. That pressure is learned by practice, practice, practice. A parent must find the correct balance between discipline and freedom – in a word: responsibility.

Hearing: Each arrow has a "bend" – a natural curve to the shaft. Hand-crafted arrows all vary in their bends. Each arrow will have a slight spin, lift, drop, or curve. The archer knows the futility in trying to force this bend out of

the arrow; instead he works through the bend. The skilled archer knows his arrow and aims accordingly. Parents need to find the "bend" of their child – his talents and gifts – and help the child explore it.

Environment: The best shot can be pushed off-course by the slightest wind. Parents need to know their children's environment. They need to be involved in school and church activities with their child; they need to take time to know their books, music, movies, games, etc. The best way to do this is simply to observe. If the lyrics of Susie's favorite song are lost in the midst of wailing guitars and crashing drums, look up the song on the internet.

Release: An arrow makes a lousy decoration – it is not particularly spectacular in any way. The purpose of an arrow is to be fired at a target. Parents must release their children if they are to be effective. But take heart; the fletching on each arrow marks its owner. Your children will know who made them and if they get lost, they will come back to you.

Ready ... aim ... fire!

Matthew E. Morgan is a budding stand-up comedian and volunteer youth pastor in central Ohio. He is married to his beautiful wife Martha; they have two cats who serve as their children (read: spoiled rotten). You can contact Matthew via the Letters' page of this magazine.

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