

with which I deal with frustrations, my honesty toward daily situations, my respect for authority, the purity of my thought and language. If my own perspective is my relationship with Christ, and if I freely and naturally attribute my behavior to that relationship, then daily Christ-like thought and behavior will be passed on to my children as a way of life.

**Since worship in the presence of God is such an important thing to me, out of that perspective my children will grow to realize what a privilege it is to be allowed to worship.* They will hear, throughout the week, natural references to points learned in the classes and the sermon. They will grow to understand that strength is gained from those corporate gatherings which will sustain them from one meeting to the next.

**As I go through the days, my mind should flow naturally from involvement in whatever I must be doing in the physical world to a communion of thought to God — communion about my work or something else in my heart. Prayer becomes a living tool for me.* Worded prayers, then, will not be stylized forms, but relevant conversation to God which even my children will recognize as being crucial to their daily well-being. To pray about decisions, problems, thankfulness for an unexpected good thing, protection,

and any other daily need or concern — and stopping to talk to God any place, any time, for any cause — will make prayer a natural part of the thinking of a child, and a useful tool in his days.

It is a scientific fact that non-living matter cannot beget life, in the physical world. It is also a spiritual fact — a law — that non-living souls cannot pass life to others. The only way parents can ensure that their children be healthy spiritual people — living souls — is to be spiritually alive and healthy themselves. This leaves no room for a *“form of godliness but denying its power.”* (2 Timothy 3:5)

A living relationship with God has the power to change us from carnal souls to spiritual people who live and think, act and react, as His children, according to divine nature. This is what we must strive to be, in Him, so that we can pass this precious life on to our dearest possessions — our children.

WORLD EVANGELISM TRACTS

Phone: 662-283-1192

Choate@WorldEvangelism.org

www.WorldEvangelism.org

Request a free Bible Correspondence Course

Presented by the Church of Christ

Teaching Our Children to Be Spiritual

Betty Burton Choate



Teaching Our Children to Be Spiritual

Betty Burton Choate

We live in physical bodies in a secular world. In generations past even here in America, most people lived in rural areas, drawing their living from the ground or from other forms of manual labor. From sun up till sun down, the days had to be spent largely in work aimed at sustaining physical life. In the Third World nations, most of life is still spent, day by day, feeding, housing, and clothing the body.

Yet, within each physical body dwells the persistent, resilient spiritual being who is the real person. Throughout life that spiritual being tries to be heard, crying out his needs for spiritual nourishment, creating a sense of dissatisfaction and emptiness in the person who insists on concentrating solely on the demands of the physical body.

Parents, in order to be good parents, must realize that the new being their love has created is a dual being; that the little physical body they hold in their arms is only the house for the real spirit person who dwells inside. Therefore, though the baby cries for physical nourishment, never allowing the needs of that body to be forgotten, it is the responsibility of the parents to nurture and develop the spirit being even more carefully.

The “how” of doing this, and of keeping a balance while living in a physical, secular world, is the challenge. Even in the ideal situation in which the father goes out to earn the living and the mother stays home to nurture the family, all of the physical responsibilities, the community involvements, the children’s school and extracurricular activities — the unending demands of the physical world — may seem to leave very little time for nurturing the spiritual person.

There are specific things that can be done on a regular basis, as unswerving commitments to spiritual development.

- *Be a faithful member of the Lord’s church.
- *Never fail to be present for the assemblies.
- *Pray before meals.
- *Have a time of daily family Bible study.
- *Begin the day with prayer for God’s help.

Many Christians who do all of these things realize, though, that their home still lacks the depth of spiritual tone it needs. How can they change spirituality from a form to a living thing?

Much of the answer lies within our own perspective as parents. We convey far more to our children out of the well of what we are than out of the overt words or actions we choose for them as examples. In Matthew 23:4 Jesus said of the Pharisees of His day, “... *whatever they tell you*

to observe, that observe and do, but do not according to their works; for they say and do not do.” Without realizing it, parents may send conflicting messages to their children regarding spiritual things. Their words may say that God is important, yet their manner of dealing with the spiritual may say that it has no real relevance to daily life.

**Does “faithfulness” consist of little more than “going to church”?*

**Are the children told they “have to go” to the assemblies, yet no other reference is made to them during the week?*

**Are prayers at the beginning of the day and before meals obviously no more than a form of words?*

**Is the daily Bible reading a “conscience form”, a gesture that must be made?*

If we want our children to be truly and deeply spiritual, that must be the perspective out of which we ourselves live.

**I must realize that being a part of the Lord’s family changed my true status from physical to spiritual; and that daily, minute-by-minute, I function out of that relationship with God. It does not determine only what I do at ten o’clock on Sunday, but it determines how I respond to a problem on Monday, the patience*