

October 12, 2006

## **Encouragement for Today**

Principle 4

### **“Child Labor, Part 1”**

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[http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/speaker\\_lysa.htm](http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/speaker_lysa.htm)

#### **Key Verse:**

Genesis 3:17-19, “Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken.” (NIV)

#### **Devotion:**

I can remember the Saturday morning routine like it was yesterday. My mom and stepdad believed in instilling a good work ethic in their children. I had to get up, clean the kitchen, blow the leaves from the sidewalk, the driveway, and back deck, and then help my mom with my little sisters. How unfair I thought it was to have to do chores. None of my other friends had to do them. Why did I get a bum deal to be born into a family whose parents made their children work?

Now, fast-forward a few years to my own parenting experience. With seven people in my house, it’s nearly impossible for me alone to keep things cleaned, organized, and in working condition without a little bit of help from the kids. There is also the reality that my children have never struggled watching me work, so I’m surely not going to struggle watching them do a little of it either.

There are no sure things or perfect formulas in parenting, but I believe making your kids work to understand the value of a dollar is key to their future success. I now appreciate my parent’s rules and have implemented them in my own home, and feel certain that one day my kids will do the same.

Based on today’s Key Verse, the reality of man’s sin in the Garden of Eden is that he must work hard for his food for the rest of his life, either by growing crops and raising animals, or earning money to buy food and necessities. Though God’s original plan did not require this, it’s the consequence of sin and part of the reality of life in a fallen world. So how do we make the best out of this less-than-pleasing assignment? We must develop a good work ethic for ourselves and for the future success of our children. It’s tough, but we must demonstrate this two-fold process: First, we must show them that working is necessary to have things. Then, we must show them how to work with excellence.

### **Working is Necessary**

Recently, my teenage son Jackson was telling me how wonderful it will be when he gets to move out and get his own place. I just smiled because this was his way of expressing his dislike of some of our family rules. What a bummer for him to have to do dishes every Monday. Yes, one day he will have a place of his own and won't have to do Monday dishes for the family. Chances are he'll have to do dishes everyday of the week and cook on top of that.

As far as I can see, it's deceiving to hand children everything they want, because it teaches them they will never have to put forth any effort to have their needs met when they get older. So, why do we moms sometimes resist having our kids help around the house? Fear of resistance from the kids perhaps?

### **Work With Excellence**

Assigning chores to your child shouldn't be a struggle over whether or not they should do them, but whether or not they will do them well. This is the foundation for helping them develop a good work ethic. This takes training and training takes time, but the initial investment has had far-reaching dividends in our household.

Read today's application steps to view the method my husband and I used to teach our kids how to do their assigned chores, and do them well. Giving your child the opportunities and skills to complete various tasks on their own will build their confidence. It helps ensure they will grow up to be mature and able-bodied individuals.

### **My Prayer for Today:**

Heavenly Father, I confess that my plate is too full and I need some able-bodied help. Give me the courage I need to delegate chores to those in my home who can do this. Thank You for reminding me that I have been given the task of teaching my kids how to be responsible workers. Give me the integrity I need to demonstrate this myself. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

### **Application Steps:**

When my husband and I decided to assign chores to our kids, we began by listing out the chores, arranging them on an Excel spreadsheet and posting it in our kitchen. Then we tackled the job of training the kids on a job well done for each assigned task. This included using a method similar to the way my husband's restaurant trains their new employees:

1. Tell them – explain the job to them and what your expectations are.
2. Show them – show them the tools for the job and demonstrate their use.
3. Work beside them – work alongside of them, only stepping in to give advice or help as needed.
4. Supervise them – Watch them do the job without stepping in and answer any questions.

5. Inspect them – Praise their work and show them any needed improvements. Hold them accountable for their responsibilities.
6. Thank them – Thank them for a job well done.

**Reflection Points:**

1. Take an inventory of how well you balance your plate of things to do each day. Are you feeling overwhelmed, needing a little extra help?
2. What kind of work ethic do you personally have? It's difficult to train a child to work cheerfully and eagerly for what they have and want if you do not model it yourself.
3. Is there anything holding you back from giving your children responsibilities around the home? Why? Are they justifiable reasons?

**Power Verses:**

Psalm 128:2-3, "You will eat of the fruit of your labor; blessing and prosperity will be yours. Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your sons will be like olive shoots around your table." (NIV)

1 Corinthians 1:1-2, "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ. I praise you for remembering me in everything and for holding on to the teachings, just as I passed them on to you." (NIV)

Colossians 3:23, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men." (NIV)

**Additional Resources:**

*The Bathtub is Overflowing, But I Feel Drained* by Lysa TerKeurst  
[http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources\\_bathtub.htm](http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources_bathtub.htm)

*Cleaning up the Clutter* by Cindie Barnes  
[http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources\\_butMom.htm](http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources_butMom.htm)

*Women Who Do Too Much* by Patricia Sprinkle  
[http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources\\_doTooMuch.htm](http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources_doTooMuch.htm)