

Influence of the Family On the Church

1 **If the work of reformation be begun and carried forward in each**
2 **family, there will be a living and prosperous church. Things must**
3 **first be set in order at home.** The cause needs those who can work at
4 home, who will study the Bible, and practice its teachings, and who
5 will train up their children in the fear of God. Then let diligent, perse-
6 vering effort be put forth for others, with earnest prayer for the aid of
7 divine grace and power, and great results will follow missionary labor.
8 {RH, November 13, 1883 par. 11}

9 To a great degree the experience of the religious life is shaped by the
10 training received in childhood. Many, **many church difficulties could**
11 **be traced to wrong home management.** {Ms17-1902.8}

12 The **greatest power will be felt in the church where there are well-**
13 **ordered and well-disciplined families.** The children should be edu-
14 cated from their very childhood to love the things of eternal life. This
15 life is but for a moment; it passeth away, and we want a firm hold of
16 the future, immortal life. **When we set up the standard of righteous-**
17 **ness in home religion, angels of God will minister unto those who**
18 **shall be heirs of salvation; and as you go to the house of God to**
19 **worship Him, you bring angels of God into that house.**
20 {Ms79-1886.}

21 The greatest power that is seen is a well-ordered and well-disciplined
22 family; and when brought up in the nurture and admonition of the
23 Lord, this family will tell upon those around them. {Ms 84, 1886, par.
24 14}

25 It is of the highest importance that the training of children be right.
26 How essential that that government is correct which lays the
27 foundation to character and principle. **The foundation of character**
28 **for life and for eternity is laid in childhood through parental**
29 **discipline. Well-instructed, well-ordered, and well-governed**
30 **families are preparing the way for unity and harmony and well-**
31 **disciplined churches. No church can be in a prosperous state long**
32 **at a time composed of members whose training in their childhood**
33 **was sadly deficient and they have not overcome the evil.** If family
34 order and subordination are generally neglected, society feels the
35 neglect, but in a special manner is the religious experience and
36 religious life of these neglected ones molded by their training in

37 childhood. **It is in families at the fireside [that] the great and telling**
38 **work for the church is done.** Indulgent parents foster a spirit of self-
39 love, selfishness, and independence by allowing their children to be
40 their equals and to have their own way, which traits of character are
41 carried into the religious experience. {Ms 2, 1875, par. 18} It is at
42 home by the fireside where parents mold the tempers of their children
43 for good or evil. Here parents should be self-possessed and exercise
44 perfect control over themselves, then may they undertake to control
45 and govern others. Nothing should be done through caprice or passion.
46 **Calm and dispassionate, unmoved by revenge or uninfluenced by**
47 **hatred, parents should rule well their own house, having their**
48 **children in subjection with all gravity.** This cuts off the idea of
49 making children the equal of the parents. The words of Solomon are
50 important. "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he
51 that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." [Proverbs 16:32.] {Ms
52 2, 1875, par. 19}... **Could parents see and feel, as I was made to see**
53 **and feel, the consequence of the neglect of their God-given duty,**
54 **there would not be such pampering and indulgence of children.**
55 My heart yearns for the youth to come to Jesus. And I know the
56 **greatest reason why a large number do not come is because of the**
57 **deficient training they have had in their youth. They have been**
58 **self-indulged and feel that they have command of themselves, and**
59 **can do and act as they please** and are irresponsible to anyone, even
60 to their Creator, for their time and strength and means. {Ms 2, 1875,
61 par. 25} **Submission [and] obedience are lessons which all youth**
62 **should be familiar with, but they are not.** The noblest work of God
63 upon the earth was man formed in the image of his Creator, but there
64 is nothing of worth in the image of the man. It is the mind that makes
65 the man. **The moral excellence of man is attained only as the**
66 **reward of hard labor. First, the unremitting labor of their parents**
67 **on them devolves the responsibility of the formation of correct**
68 **taste, habits, and manners of their children. Their views are to be**
69 **widened, enlarged; the judgment ripened and the intellect**
70 **strengthened to understand the battles of life and how to grapple**
71 **with its problems.** The mind is to be improved. The talent (that) the
72 children possess should be understood by the parents and brought into
73 exercise.... {Ms 2, 1875, par. 26} ... The lax government in households
74 God frowns upon. **The lax discipline in churches is the cause of the**
75 **moral declension we see in the Christian world.** The religion which
76 now prevails is running in the same channel of the lax, deficient
77 government in households. It is an easy, careless religion, **an outward**
78 **show of conformity to the requirements of God, but without heart**

247 who ought to try to bring everything into harmony, it is those who are
248 waiting for the coming of the Son of man. {Ms 13, 1886, par. 10}

249 **God would have our families symbols of the family in heaven. Let**
250 **parents and children bear this in mind every day, relating them-**
251 **selves to one another as members of the family of God.** Then their
252 lives will be of such a character as to give to the world an object-les-
253 son of what families who love God and keep his commandments may
254 be. Christ will be glorified; his peace and grace and love will pervade
255 the family circle like a precious perfume. A beautiful offering, in the
256 child life of Christian missionaries, will be made to God. This will
257 make the heart of Jesus glad, and will be regarded by him as the most
258 precious offering he can receive. {RH November 17, 1896, Art. B, par.
259 10}

260 **The home of every Christian should be a little church, a represen-**
261 **tation of the heavenly home, from which others may learn what a**
262 **family can become in this world through obedience to God's**
263 **Word.** Heaven is much nearer to the earth than many realize. The an-
264 gels of God are ascending and descending the ladder of shining bright-
265 ness that Jacob saw. God is above this ladder, and His glory, flushing
266 the threshold of heaven, is shining upon every round. {Ms 87, 1902,
267 par. 6}

268 **The homes of God's people on this earth should be a representa-**
269 **tion, as far as possible, of the heavenly home, where God has His**
270 **throne.** We are His subjects, His little children, whom He wants to
271 make happy. **Every family circle should seek to carry out the meth-**
272 **ods of God, which are revealed in His Word.** As they endeavor to
273 bring their lives into harmony with the prayer Christ has given them,
274 they will be sanctified through the truth. Then what a blessed repre-
275 sentation they will show to the world. {Ms 34, 1903, par. 19}

276 *All the quotations were drawn from the writings of Ellen G. White. You*
277 *can find more information on raising children in Adventist Home and*
278 *Child Guidance, as well as the more than two hundred articles,*
279 *manuscripts and letters on children. On line you can find more*
280 *information at egwwritings.org and my website discipleheart.com.*
281 *This handout was prepared by Dan Augsburg of faith-based,*
282 *Path2Prayer Ministries. You will find many more resources like this at*
283 *discipleheart.com. Communicate with dan by emailing:*
284 *discipleheart@protonmail.com; writing: Path2Prayer Ministries, PO*
285 *Box 244, Berrien Springs, MI 49103; or calling 269 471 5415.*
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205 it is time that divine resources and remedies were presented, that this
206 state of evil may be healed. **If parents would see a different state of**
207 **things in their families, let them consecrate themselves wholly to**
208 **God, and the Lord will devise ways and means whereby a trans-**
209 **formation may take place in their households.** Let the church
210 awake, let every member take up his individual work, and vindicate
211 the name of the Lord by which he is called. **Let sound faith and**
212 **earnest piety take the place of slothfulness and unbelief. When**
213 **faith lays hold upon Christ, the truth will bring delight to your**
214 **soul, and religion will not be a dull, uninteresting enterprise.** Your
215 social meetings, now tame and spiritless, will be vitalized by the Holy
216 Spirit, and your daily experiences will become rich, as you practice
217 the Christianity you profess. {RH February 21, 1893, par. 9} O that
218 this experience might be understood in all our ranks! **Were children**
219 **and parents converted, and did they but unite in using all their in-**
220 **trusted talents for the Master, and by using them double them,**
221 **what a work might be done. Never was there a time in the history**
222 **of the world when there was a more urgent demand for workers**
223 **than at present.** The seeds of truth are to be sown, and the reapers are
224 to follow after to gather in the sheaves. **If the members of all our**
225 **churches did but have the love of Christ, and the love for souls**
226 **which his indwelling presence would impart, they would be ag-**
227 **gressive workers, and would lay aside their busy activities upon**
228 **unimportant things, and would put out to interest their talents,**
229 **and invest in that which would bring treasure throughout eternal**
230 **ages.** In the service of the Master, they would have increased strength
231 and light. O then, why not study as to how you may reach souls who
232 are out of the ark of safety? Let your work be proportionate to your
233 advantages and privileges, and trade on the talents you have at your
234 command, and you will have a living experience in the things of God.
235 {RH February 21, 1893, par. 10}

236 **A well-regulated family, loving God and his living oracles, will**
237 **have a fresh, living testimony to bear. Their influence will build up**
238 **the church, and will win souls to Christ and the truth.** In giving to
239 the world a well-disciplined family, parents are presenting **one of the**
240 **strongest evidences in favor of the truth.** And the parents whose
241 wise, God-fearing labor has accomplished so much for their own fami-
242 ly, will be able to accomplish a similar work for others. {ST May 4,
243 1888, par. 12}

244 **When we can present to the world a well-disciplined family, then**
245 **we present the greatest proof to the world that we can present to**
246 **show that we are Christians.** Brethren, if ever there were a people

79 **consecration, where are the conflicts of soul, the wrestling with**
80 **God, the self-denial and self-sacrifice. Where is the walking,**
81 **trembling, and fearing lest we shall come short of the recompense**
82 **of reward?** What do we see in the conversions now that answer to the
83 pangs of the new birth? Where is the deep and pungent conviction that
84 is answerable to death of the old life, death of the old man? **Where is**
85 **that desperate struggle with inclination and desire day by day for**
86 **a power that can bind the adversary and make them free?** {Ms 2,
87 1875, par. 28}

88 **One of the greatest influences for good in society is a well-discip-**
89 **lined family. How many lawless households there are. Parents too**
90 **often take their ease, and indulge in pastime and pleasure, instead**
91 **of seeking to repress the evil outgrowth of disposition in their chil-**
92 **dren.** They do not realize that the development of these evil tenden-
93 cies in their children will finally result in the destruction of their own
94 peace. Every father and mother should pray earnestly that Jesus may
95 be revealed to their children as a complete Saviour, and that their char-
96 acters may be fashioned according to the divine pattern. Oh, that our
97 work may be done for time and for eternity! {ST May 13, 1889, par.
98 14}

99 **Children are not to be left to grow as they will.** As the gardener
100 straightens the young trees in an orchard, so they are to be
101 straightened. **Their perversity is to be checked; for if this is not**
102 **done, they will carry it with them into the religious life, and it will**
103 **make them crooked church members.** Parents who think there is no
104 need of restraining their children, who allow them to shape their own
105 character, will see in the future the sad result of this neglect. **They will**
106 **see that their failure to point out and correct defects has made it**
107 **impossible for their children to enter heaven.** {ST December 11,
108 1901, par. 6} From generation to generation the neglect of parents is
109 perpetuated. **The evils uncorrected in a child are seen in the**
110 **children and in the children's children. Parents, the sin you permit**
111 **your child to cherish may result in the ruin of families to the third**
112 **and fourth generation. To allow a child to grow up with evil**
113 **tendencies uncorrected is a wrong which can never be undone.** But
114 to bring children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord is to do
115 a work that will yield fruit unto eternal righteousness. {ST December
116 11, 1901, par. 7}

117 **A well-disciplined family is a great power for good in the world. To**
118 **bring up your children in such a manner as will fit them to stand**
119 **against temptation to evil, so that they will not be corrupted by in-**
120 **iquity, is one of the most important kinds of missionary work.**

121 **Why is it that there is so much corruption among the youth of to-**
122 **day? To a great degree it is because parents neglect their God-giv-**
123 **en work, and sin lies at their door.** Before it shall be too late, I urge
124 you to take up your neglected duties, and arouse to a realization of
125 your responsibilities. You will need the grace of Christ in your work,
126 and he says not only to mothers, but to fathers and children, "Come
127 unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you
128 rest." {ST July 22, 1889, par. 4}

129 You are responsible to God to educate, train, and discipline in right
130 habits and practices, the children that you have brought into the world.
131 **Will you who have neglected your families not now give to the**
132 **world and the church an example of a well-disciplined family,**
133 **where the children are under the control of the father and mother,**
134 **and the father and mother under the control of God? Will you,**
135 **whose ministers of God's churches disobey His word by failing to re-**
136 **quire obedience and order in your households? If you neglect this**
137 **work, you will neglect to set the church in order. It is the neglect of**
138 **home duties that is eclipsing the light, so that it cannot shine forth**
139 **in a correct example in eating, in dressing, in working in right**
140 **lines.** {Ms64-1898.}

141 **The family circle is the school in which the child receives its first**
142 **and most enduring lessons. Hence parents should be much at**
143 **home. By precept and example, they should teach their children**
144 **the love and the fear of God; teach them to be intelligent, social,**
145 **affectionate, to cultivate habits of industry, economy, and self-de-**
146 **niai.** By giving their children love, sympathy, and encouragement at
147 home, parents may provide for them a safe and welcome retreat from
148 many of the world's temptations. {RH March 21, 1882, par. 5} "No
149 time," says the father, "I have no time to give to the training of my
150 children, no time for social and domestic enjoyments." Then you
151 should not have taken upon yourself the responsibility of a family. By
152 withholding from them the time which is justly theirs, you rob them of
153 the education which they should have at your hands. If you have chil-
154 dren, you have a work to do, in union with the mother, in the forma-
155 tion of their characters. **Those who feel that they have an imperative**
156 **call to labor for the improvement of society, while their own chil-**
157 **dren grow up undisciplined, should inquire if they have not mis-**
158 **taken their duty. Their own household is the first missionary field**
159 **in which parents are required to labor.** Those who leave the home
160 garden to grow up to thorns and briars, while they manifest great inter-
161 est in the cultivation of their neighbor's plot of ground, are disregard-
162 ing the word of God. {RH March 21, 1882, par. 6} I repeat, **it is the**

163 **lack of love and piety, and the neglect of proper discipline at**
164 **home, that creates so much difficulty in schools and colleges.** There
165 is a fearful state of coldness and apathy among professed Christians.
166 They are unfeeling, uncharitable, unforgiving. **These evil traits, first**
167 **indulged at home, exert their baleful influence in all the associa-**
168 **tions of daily life. If the spirit of kindness and courtesy were cher-**
169 **ished by parents and children, it would be seen also in the inter-**
170 **course between teacher and pupil.** Christ should be an honored
171 guest in the family circle, and his presence is no less needed in the
172 class-room. **Would that the converting power of God might soften**
173 **and subdue the hearts of parents and children, teachers and stu-**
174 **dents, and transform them into the likeness of Christ.** {RH March
175 21, 1882, par. 7} Fathers and mothers should carefully and prayerful-
176 ly study the characters of their children. They should seek to repress
177 and restrain those traits that are too prominent, and to encourage oth-
178 ers which may be deficient, thus securing harmonious development.
179 This is no light matter. **The father may not consider it a great sin to**
180 **neglect the training of his children; but thus does God regard it.**
181 **Christian parents need a thorough conversion upon this subject.**
182 Guilt is accumulating upon them, and the consequences of their ac-
183 tions reach down from their own children to children's children. **The**
184 **ill-balanced mind, the hasty temper, the fretfulness, envy, or jeal-**
185 **ousy, bear witness to parental neglect.** These evil traits of character
186 bring great unhappiness to their possessors. How many fail to receive
187 from companions and friends the love which they might have, if they
188 were more amiable. How many create trouble wherever they go, and
189 in whatever they are engaged! {RH March 21, 1882, par. 8}

190 **Well-instructed children and youth can work in many lines for the**
191 **Master, and can even in their early years be a blessing to those**
192 **with whom they come in contact. When children are unconverted,**
193 **careless, reckless, irreligious, they influence their playmates to**
194 **take the same course of godlessness.** Let parents consider this ques-
195 tion, What can be of sufficient importance to demand your time and
196 influence to the neglect of the training of your families, when by lack
197 of training they become the agents of Satan, the enemies of truth and
198 righteousness? They lift up their hearts in pride, and stand in defiance
199 of every effort made to win them to Christ. **What a sad spectacle to**
200 **the world are the numbers of unconverted children that attend**
201 **our churches. The influence of a well-ordered, well-disciplined**
202 **family is far greater for good than is the influence of powerful ser-**
203 **mons from the pulpit.** {RH February 21, 1893, par. 8} This home
204 missionary work, this home field, has been shamefully neglected, and