



Relationships with the Family

by Abi Potter

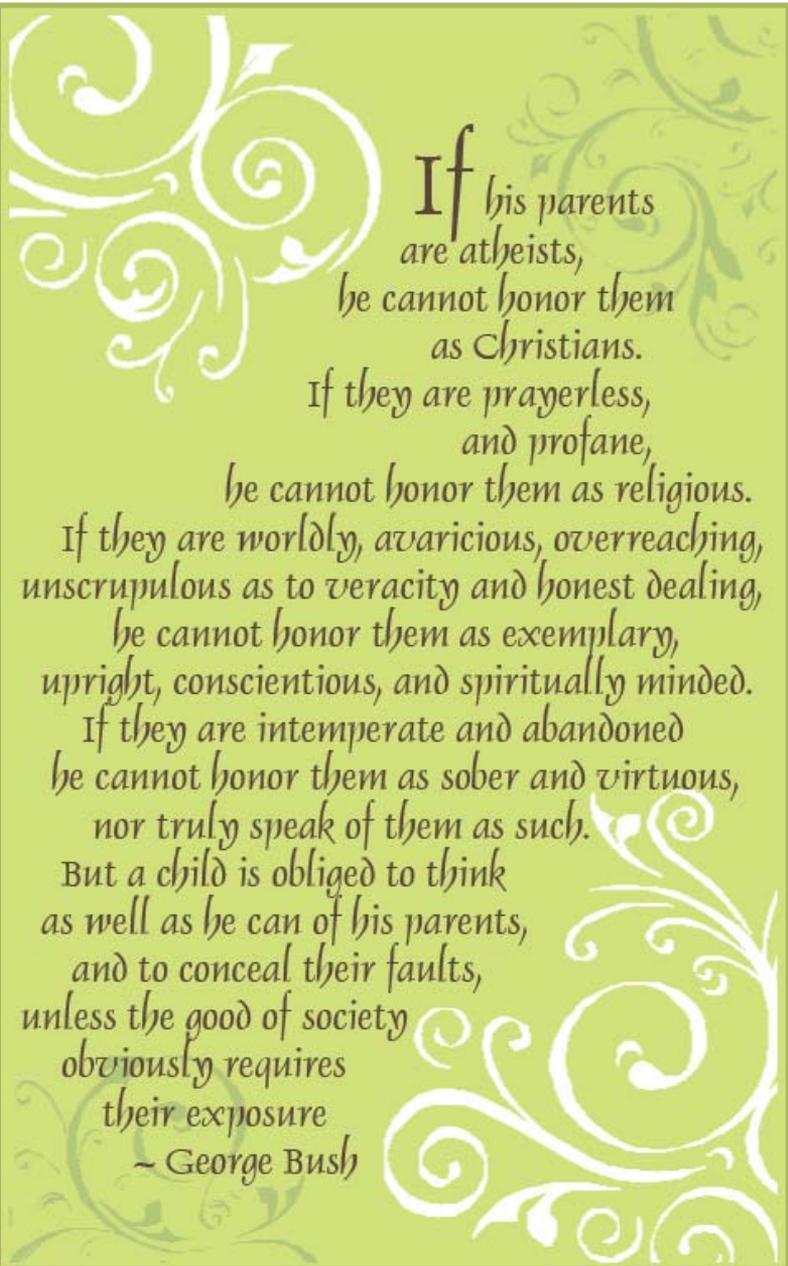
Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.

~ Romans 12:10-11

I. **Parents** — Honor

A. Definition:

B. Five ways to honor your Parents:



If his parents
are atheists,
he cannot honor them
as Christians.

If they are prayerless,
and profane,
he cannot honor them as religious.

If they are worldly, avaricious, overreaching,
unscrupulous as to veracity and honest dealing,
he cannot honor them as exemplary,
upright, conscientious, and spiritually minded.

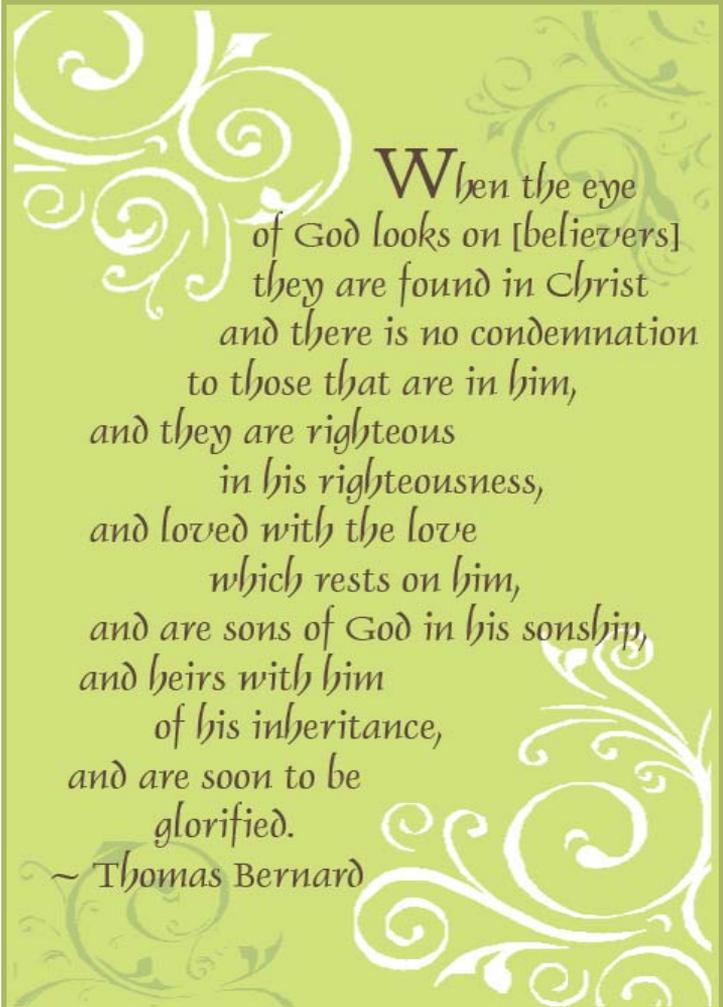
If they are intemperate and abandoned
he cannot honor them as sober and virtuous,
nor truly speak of them as such.

But a child is obliged to think
as well as he can of his parents,
and to conceal their faults,
unless the good of society
obviously requires
their exposure

~ George Bush

II. Siblings — Loving Respect

A. The Brother or Sister who is in Christ

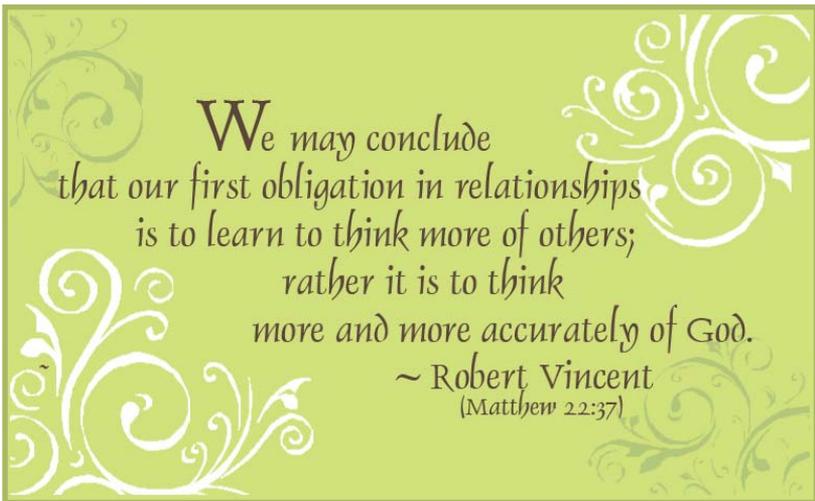


When the eye
of God looks on [believers]
they are found in Christ
and there is no condemnation
to those that are in him,
and they are righteous
in his righteousness,
and loved with the love
which rests on him,
and are sons of God in his sonship,
and heirs with him
of his inheritance,
and are soon to be
glorified.

~ Thomas Bernard

B. The Brother or Sister who is living in disobedience to Christ

C. The Brother or Sister who is outside of Christ





“Aunting”, like parenting and grandparenting, is one of God’s ways to influence the next generation. Unlike parenting, Aunting may be only part-time, but that does not stop it from being full-time fun. Here are some suggestions for Aunting through different stages of life.

Aunting long distance:

“Top of the list, of course, is visiting my nieces and nephews and a close second is praying for them. Visiting made me much more aware of their spiritual needs. . . I send a gift when they’re born. Sometimes it’s been a cute outfit, but I’ve looked for more spiritually-oriented things. For my younger nieces and nephews, having a strong relationship with their parents seems rather important at this stage. Then the trickle-down effect kicks in with my brothers and sisters-in-law telling their kids ‘Aunt Sarah sent this,’ ‘Aunt Sarah is coming for a visit,’ etc.”

~ Sarah Hartwig

Aunting locally:

For young nieces and nephews:

- Keep a toy box. This can be stocked inexpensively with toys found at garage sales, consignment shops, Goodwill, etc. Durable, empty containers (such as an Altoids box or hot chocolate tin) make fun toys. A friend told me she put an old remote control in her toy box and found her young niece putting it up to her ear like a cell phone!
- Collect children's books. Good books can be procured cheaply.
- Keep a few kid games handy (like Candyland or Go Fish).
- Take pictures. Young nieces & nephews will enjoy seeing themselves.
- Keep tape, scrap paper, stickers, etc. on hand.

Fun (and low cost) activities:

- Make cookies / bake together
- Make valentines or Christmas cards together (this is where the tape, paper and stickers come in handy)
- Make Christmas ornaments
- Go to the park
- Work in the yard/plant things together
- Tell stories
- Read books
- Make a fort (see picture on next page)
- Pick blueberries or strawberries



For the truly ambitious. . .

- Have a slumber party! Invite mom, dad and kids over for supper. By the time the parents go home, it is nearly time for the kids to go to bed. The kids get ready for bed and then you read books and tell stories to get them settled down. Have an activity planned for the next morning. After lunch, it is time to take the children back to their home.
- Plan activities with short time frames in mind – fifteen minutes to an hour. Short sprints help keep younger children from getting bored as well as leaving each activity on the best possible note. You must be alert and anticipate when a change of activity is needed in order to stay ahead of little ones.

~ Esther White

Aunting junior highers and teenagers:

- Share Scripture with your nieces and nephews. This helps them associate you and Jesus and opens the door for their asking for spiritual advice one day.
- Try creating a treasure hunt using Scripture references as clues.
- Read Scripture together – like the Christmas story at Christmas time.

“When my nephew was young, I enjoyed picking him up and playing with him. Now he is a teenager and bigger than I am, so instead, we have a special handshake.”

~ Yvonne Guerin

“Aunts should really enjoy the place God has given them in the life of a child. Being an aunt is really special and should be seen as such, particularly for women without children of their own. As an aunt, I can have the unique position of supporting both the child and parent. I have seen it as important to let the kids know that I am on their side and understand their point of view, will listen, etc, yet at the same time backing up the authority in their lives and encouraging them to do what is right... And, of course, I always bring them cool gifts from my far flung travels! Very important!”

~ Ricci Lambrecht

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