

PROVIDING FOR YOUR FAMILY

“If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.” (1 Tim 5:8)

For several weeks we have been promoting a faith building seminar here in Carl Junction on Oct. 25 - 26. There are many reasons why you should support this meeting, but the emphasis I have been making involves providing for your family.

It is frustrating to realize that there are many problems in the world completely beyond our control. Zimbabwe, for example, is being dominated by a Marxist dictator whose policies have brought poverty and starvation to a once prosperous country. Christians in Southern Sudan are being killed and their children sold into slavery by Muslims from the north. Iran is on the verge of developing a nuclear bomb and has promised to destroy Israel. Hugo Chavez hates America and is spreading his poison throughout Central and South America, etc.

While we may not be able to do much about these things, there is something we can do!
WE CAN STILL HAVE INFLUENCE OVER OUR OWN FAMILY!

Perhaps no story illustrates this truth more beautifully than the one told by the late Dr. Kenneth McFarland of Uncle Ben. Dr. McFarland was the Superintendent of Schools in Coffeyville, Kansas. Each year the High School and Jr. College had joint graduation services at the stadium. It was not unusual for 4,000 - 5,000 people to attend.

The last year Dr. McFarland was there, Nancy Hollingsworth was graduating from Jr. College. Before graduation she came to him with a touching story, and a personal request. Her father, a railroad engineer had been killed. Her mother worked at the ladies' ready-to-wear shop, and somehow kept the family together. One night, however, the mother went to sleep and never woke up. The next morning, Nancy and her two brothers were hysterical. Their only living relative was Uncle Ben. Ben was the town drunk and only worked long enough to go on another binge. Uncle Ben, however, courageously faced up to the Biblical mandate to care for those in his own family. When the Judge asked him why he should be given custody of the children, he replied: “The Master said that a man can be born again. He said that a man can change and stay changed. He can be changed completely. And I believe that he meant *any* man, even a drunken ne'er-do-well like me”.

After 30 days probation, Ben was granted custody. The oldest boy, Jim, became a medical doctor. The second son, was about to graduate from MIT as an engineer. Nancy was planning to attend Pittsburgh State and become a school teacher. Uncle Ben had never taken another drink, and never missed a day's work since turning his life over to Jesus Christ.

Nancy's request, was that Dr. McFarland give special recognition to Uncle Ben. Including High School and Jr. College, this was his sixth graduation to attend, but he never felt worthy of sitting with the parents, or receiving any recognition.

On graduation night, Ben was on the back row, but Dr. McFarland politely asked him to stand and publicly recognized him for the years of selfless service he rendered to his orphaned niece and nephews. How beautiful! How Biblical!

George Barna reports that 70 % of evangelical young people leave their church and denomination when they arrive on the college campus. Add Health Study points out that 76% of young people who never enroll in college also report a decline in church activities when they leave home. Surely, we need to step up the plate like Uncle Ben!

Jesus said: **“Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to.” (Luke 13:24)** Our commitment to Christ is not selfish. It also includes a commitment to family. If we don't do that, the Scriptures teach that we are worse than an unbeliever!

MAY YOUR COMMITMENT TO CHRIST AND YOUR FAMILY START NOW!