

LETTERS FROM GRANDPA

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Dearest Grandchild,

Today's letter is about obedience. Let us begin with these thoughts from King David: **“I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye. Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.” (Ps 32:8-9 KJV)**

The point of this passage is that our Heavenly Father knows best and wants to guide us. He prefers to guide us with His eye but can treat us like a horse or a mule if we have no understanding.

David learned this lesson by bitter experience. By his disobedience with Bathsheba, he brought a lasting curse upon his family. A part of the curse involved the fact that the sword would never depart from his house and that his son Absalom would rebel against him and violate his wives in public (2 Sam. 12:10 - 12). Even when we do not understand, it is always best to obey God!

Several years ago I heard a man speak at the Kiamichi Men's Clinic who trained mules. He said that he always tried to offer a “better deal” to the mule he was training. For example, when training a mule to climb up into a trailer he would back the trailer to a circular pen. After putting the mule into the pen he would take a large whip and start beating the mule. After running in circles trying to avoid the whip the mule would eventually seek refuge in the trailer. Then, of course, the whipping would stop. The mule now had a “better deal”. Getting in the trailer was better than running in circles and being beaten. The next time the mule got in the trailer a lot sooner. Finally, the mule was so happy to get into the trailer that the trainer didn't need either the pen or the whip.

The lesson for you, of course, is that God does want to give you a “better deal”. He wants to guide you with his eye, but will use a whip if He has to. Remember! Whom the Lord loves, He chastens (Heb. 12:6).

In 1964 Granny and I were working with the Curtner Ave. Church in San Jose, California. Mary was only 4 at the time and was a part of a pre-school program taught by Jenny Tibbits. Another 4 year old in the class was Mary's friend. Her name was Cathleen Callaway. Cathleen was run over by a car and killed and that tragedy has had a profound and lasting impact upon my role as a father. Cathleen was told by her baby sitter to put on a sweater as it was getting cold. Cathleen refused to do so and began to run away with the baby sitter in hot pursuit. Unfortunately she ran between two parked cars into the path of an oncoming car.

I have repeated this story many times over the years to impress upon our children and grand children the importance of obedience. Anna Bess remembers well this lesson. As a 4 year old she assumed that she had Grandpa wrapped around her finger. When I told her not to leave the room she glanced over her shoulder and did it anyhow. She was shocked that a loving Grandfather would

jerk her up and spank her bottom but that is precisely what happened. Fortunately, I only had to do it once.

On another occasion I was walking with our children to the school bus. The night before a storm had knocked down a high tension wire surging with thousands of volts of electricity. I could see the wire on the ground and the sparks arcing into the wet leaves. Fortunately, our children obeyed when I told them to stop. There are lots of dangerous things on our little farm, and I love you too much to let you get by with disobedience. It could be dangerous!

I'm sure you are familiar with the story of Helen Keller. She was born on June 27, 1880 in Tuscumbia, Alabama. In 1882, at only 19 months, she fell ill with a high fever which left her blind and deaf. In a short while she forgot what few words she had learned as a small child. Thus she had the triple handicap of being blind, deaf, and dumb. At the age of six she later described herself as "less than an animal". She was totally without obedience or discipline. She ate with her hands, and like a wild animal lashed out at anyone who attempted to restrain her.

In March 1887, Annie Sullivan went to Keller's home in Alabama to try and teach little Helen. At first, Helen was curious, but then became defiant. In order to try and control Helen's frequent tantrums, Miss Sullivan needed to discipline her. When her parents stood in the way, Miss Sullivan requested that they be isolated so the family could not interfere. Discipline and obedience are essential to the proper development of any child. In this way little Helen was able to receive the stern measures necessary for her to learn.

The discipline paid off and Helen became one of the best educated and most famous women in the world. At only twelve she published an autobiographical sketch, and in her Junior year at Radcliffe College she wrote the story of her life. This amazing autobiography has been printed in over 50 different languages. She became personal friends with some of the most famous people in the world and was invited to the White House by every president from Grover Cleveland to Lyndon Johnson.

The key to her success, and also to yours, is discipline and obedience. A horse or a mule that will not obey is useless, and so is a person.

In 1999 I was privileged to meet Gaston Santos in Tamuin, Mexico. He is a famous movie star and matador. He also breeds and trains a famous strain of horses known as Lusitanos. The Lusitano is a Portuguese horse breed, closely related to the Spanish Andalusian horse. Warriors in Europe trained for war by fighting bulls on horseback. Here is a brief video of these trained horses in action.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VSUHbXuOIuUv>

But let us return to our original text and God's desire to guide you with His eye. In Greek mythology the centaur was a creature half-human, and half-horse. It had the body of a horse and

the torso, head and arms of a man. The concept of this mythological creature is perhaps associated with the type of trained horse that you just witnessed on the video. It almost seems like the horse is responding the mind of the man who is riding it.

This is the kind of obedience I want to give to Christ. This is also the kind of obedience I hope you will also give to Christ. Here are a few verses from the Bible that speak to this subject:

- **“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Phil 2:5)**
- **“For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.” (Rom 8:5)**
- **“Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” (Rom 8:5)**
- **“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” (Rom 12:2)**
- **“For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.” (1 Cor 2:16)**
- **“Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;” (1 Peter 4:1)**
- **“And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” (Col 3:17)**

It is interesting that the process of training a horse is called “breaking”. A horse that is not “broken” will not obey. A horse that is “broken” can easily be guided, even by a small child.

God loves you more than words can convey. Because God loves you He wants to guide you. He prefers to guide you with His eye, but can do it the hard way if you refuse to be “broken”.

Don’t be like a horse or a mule that does not have any understanding.

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce