

Building a Family Altar

by Thomas Trask

One of the great joys of being raised in a pastor's home was the privilege of having Christian training by godly parents. One may ask, "How did that influence your life?" First, the Bible was used as a guide for our faith and practice. There are many good books on the market today to assist parents with their responsibilities in the "training of their children." The Word of God must become the cornerstone upon which one builds his or her life.

Second, as a child I was able to observe that there is not a dichotomy between what I was taught and what was being lived out. We call this "teaching by example." It is interesting how quickly a child will learn from one's example. In doing this we pass on a spiritual heritage.

Third, as a result of being raised in a Christian home—where we had a family altar and where I observed the blessings and benefits that grew out of that—when I became a parent it was natural for us to have a family altar in

our home for our four children. Now my grown children have family altars in their homes for their children. So it has reached into the fourth generation.

Fourth, as a pastor I felt it was my responsibility and privilege to help the parents of my congregation to know how



to conduct a family altar. Periodically, I would offer a class to walk parents through the process. I discovered that many parents are desirous of training their children in the ways of

the Lord. However, not having had a spiritual torch passed to them, they needed something concrete. As a church, we then provided deliberate training.

You see, from experience one learns what the Bible has to say about a whole array of principles, such as: what is character,

what is integrity, what is morality, what is immorality, what is right, what is good, and what governs one's behavior. Thus, it enables one to pass on to the next generation a spiritual baton or torch.

It is imperative, in the day in which we live, when the foundations of one's training in faith are being shaken by a society that has no absolutes, that we as parents and as Christians be responsible for the training we

place in the hearts and minds of our children. It must be biblical truths that will bring forth fruit in the lives of those for whom we are responsible.

Questions for Further Study—

1. How was your life influenced for the good or bad by your upbringing?
2. What are you doing now, as a parent or children's leader, to keep from passing on the negative influences? What steps are you taking to pass on godly traits?
3. As a church, what are you doing to train parents to raise their children in the ways of the Lord?
4. List Bible verses that provide keys on how to raise children in a godly way.