

remember that a tradition takes time to establish. It doesn't happen with just one occurrence. This means that parents have to be sure that there are — from time to time — certain things that are *consistently* practiced. The most unusual thing that we have learned about traditions is that we, as parents didn't realize that our children considered this or that practice to be a "tradition" *until* it was "missed" one time. It was then that we realized that the consistency of a certain practice was valued as a "tradition" by our children and had become ingrained in their memory as a distinctive and memorable family event.

**Eleventh** — an earthly home includes freedom to be ones self and pursue individual interests. Perhaps *this* one needs qualified just a bit since it overlaps with several others we've already mentioned. Freedom to be ones self can easily *infringe* on many of the attributes we've already discussed if it is taken to an extreme. For example — proper respect shown toward others in the home might be abused if this attribute is misused. There might also be occasions when the over-zealous practice of this attribute by children in the family will necessarily have to be tempered by parental rules and discipline. There might also be times when the "right to privacy" would have to be addressed if this attribute is abused by any member of the family. Freedom to be ones self and pursue individual interests however will be an asset rather than a problem when the *previously mentioned* attributes have *consistently* been a part of an earthly home.

Well, this list could go on for two or three *more* issues but eleven points is probably too many already. The conclusion of the matter is that Christians have a *responsibility* to create and provide a home where God is included and where Biblical standards and practices are constantly exercised. In this day and age, too many Christian homes are ending in divorce. Establishing and maintaining an *earthly* home that provides a healthy vision of an *eternal* home doesn't just happen. It is something that must be "worked on" and taught to children (by example and effort) from the time they are born. It is the *responsibility of the parents* to provide a haven where their children know they are secure and protected from the trials of their everyday life. It is the *responsibility of the parents* to provide a home that is comfortable for their children and a welcoming place for their friends. It is the *responsibility of the parents* to be sure that the phrase "There's No Place Like Home" conjures up thoughts of peace, love and tranquility for the children they are raising. It is the *responsibility of the parents* to see that their children are brought up in the "*nurture and admonition of the Lord.*" It is the *responsibility of the parents* to pray everyday that they will be successful at this most important God given task.

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# DILIGENCE

*"We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure." — Hebrews 6:11*

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## There's No Place Like Home — Part Two

In the previous issue of *Diligence* we considered the thought that when most of us make the statement, "There's No Place Like Home," we assume that it conjures up thoughts of peace, love and tranquility to whomever is the hearer — but that's not *always* the case for an individual who has not had the benefit of a peaceful, loving home environment. We stated that the concept of heaven being a *desirable eternal* home is somewhat of a foreign idea to many individuals. Unfortunately, home is not *always* the kind of environment it *should* be. So in the previous issue, we discussed five attributes that an earthly home should have in order to provide a healthy vision of what an eternal heavenly home might be like.

Before we continue with more of those attributes, let's quickly review the first five that were discussed in more detail in the previous issue.

First — an earthly home includes inhabitants.

Second — an earthly home is a place of constant growth and learning.

Third — an earthly home involves love in all of its forms.

Fourth — an earthly home involves forgiveness.

Fifth — an earthly home has rules and discipline.

So let's continue now with more of those attributes.

**Sixth** — an earthly home includes hospitality. When members of the family have no hesitancy about inviting someone to come to their home, they demonstrate the security they have in the way the home functions. They are confident that those who accept their invitation will be welcomed into a place where they themselves feel comfortable. The understanding of home as a place of refuge and rest is then extended to another person. This security that family members have concerning their earthly home, transfers to being just as comfortable inviting a person to consider their Father's home in heaven as a place of eternal rest. Inhabitants of hospitable homes know that God's home is also open to all who will accept his invitation.

A hospitable home is a home where comfort and an atmosphere of relaxation is an automatic response. Young people can't feel an atmosphere of relaxation when the fear of "messing up something" takes precedence over their willingness to invite friends into their home. Don't misunderstand the point here — children and their guests *must* surely have respect for their home and it's other inhabitants,  
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but not feeling comfortable enough to offer their guests a soda for fear of what might be the consequence if a spill occurs, does not create an inviting environment conducive to a place of comfort and relaxation.

**Seventh** — an earthly home should involve honesty. It may *seem* obvious that honesty would be a part of a home that exists where God is present. But depending on how we deal with family members, it's sometimes tempting to be dishonest in order to avoid unpleasant consequences — or to *pretend* there are no problems when there obviously are. The *ultimate* good that comes from honesty among family members must be the driving force for each person to be honest. This may take a lot of effort on the part of *everyone* when we know each other well enough to know who will be upset if certain truths are presented.

An honest home requires an environment of openness. Family members must be able to discuss any topic and present their *opinion* in regard to that topic without fearing rejection or a reaction of shock from other members. This level of openness not only allows growth and discussion but also provides the ideal arena to field ideas (no matter how outlandish or “off-beat” the topic or opinion might seem to be) and evaluate their worth in an environment where God is important. If an unlikely subject is brought up and immediately met with outright rejection before even the least bit of discussion, the family member who introduced it will either keep similar thoughts to him/herself in the future or find a place that *will* allow an open discussion. The unfortunate outcome of finding openness *outside* of the home is that the participants in *that* discussion often lack the influence of God's Word — so the measure of right and wrong is therefore strictly on a *worldly* standard. Children who are not *fearful* of discussing sensitive issues with their parents give those parents a wonderful opportunity to reason with their children and hopefully influence them to make appropriate *Godly* decisions. Christian parents should never sweep “scary” subjects under the carpet in an effort to pretend they don't exist. Consider this. Since God is ever present, what is so ugly and so bad that we cannot discuss it when God is already aware of our every thought? If we are to have an earthly haven of rest and refuge it must be a place where all are comfortable discussing those things that might not always be pleasant or socially acceptable to all members of the family. Remember — *agreement is not essential to a discussion*. Openness *is* essential for a family to function well. The inhabitants of an *honest* home won't feel the need to hide from each other (even if it may be unpleasant) what God already knows. This is one of the more difficult attributes to put into practice for making a great earthly home.

**Eighth** — an earthly home is a safe place. The society we live in today has far too many homes where abuse is prevalent. Abuse can include everything from physical beatings (not meaning a swat on the “behind” now and then — but that's a discussion for another issue) to parents that are so “wrapped up in themselves” and their *own earthly* goals that they have little or no interest in the affairs or

well being of their children. The unfortunate thing about some of *those* kinds of parents is that they don't see their behavior as being abusive to their children. Many think they are “just busy” or that they are simply planning for their *own future* comfort. Children need nurturing — that takes time, time *dedicated* to those children. It is absolutely critical that parents do not overbook themselves *or* allow their children to be over booked to the point of near exhaustion of the entire family. Parents have a *responsibility* to control the activities of their *own* lives as well as monitor and control the activities of their children. Parents have a *responsibility* to plan their home life in such a way that there is *time* to talk to *and* to listen to their children. It is the *responsibility* of parents to plan their home life in such a way that their *children* have time to talk to *and* to *listen* to their parents. Providing a safe place for children incorporates much more than just their physical safety. It's also training them to know their own limits — something many parents don't even know about themselves — or perhaps just refuse to admit or accept.

**Ninth** — an earthly home includes respect for all of its inhabitants. As parents, we must teach our children to have respect for authority, whether it be for the teacher in the kindergarten classroom or for the officer who stops them for speeding as teenagers because they *didn't* have respect for the law. That respect is a trait children need to begin learning very early in life. Respect is circular in its nature however. A child who is abused by his or her parents (whether physically or through neglect due to lack of sufficient time) will most likely have very little respect for those parents. Demonstrating respect for others in a home may include various aspects. For example, something as simple as turning down the volume of the stereo when the phone rings may be a way to demonstrate respect for another member of the family — or perhaps by holding the door open for a grandparent. These are straightforward and easily defined as acts of respect. But there are those occasions when *parents* might have to make “executive decisions” that *may* not be viewed as “respectful” by their children. For example, teenagers are often heard asking parents to “respect their privacy.” That is most definitely something parents should do — sometimes. However, there might also be those times that love for that child will dictate the need to violate that young persons right to privacy. Parents *do not have the right* to ignore situations that might demand the need for discipline. They must at *all* times remember that it is *their* responsibility and obligation to “bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.” Sometimes that may require discipline and that may cause the child and parent to have different definitions of “respect.” That's when parents must understand that they are the adult and the youngster is not quite there yet and is still in need of training.

**Tenth** — an earthly home will have traditions that develop over time. Whether it be meals together around the kitchen table or certain Holidays that include specific practices that are repeated every year, traditions can become a very personal and pleasant memory for each inhabitant of an earthly home. It's important to