

## Parenting in a Political Season Dana Leyrer

**N**ovember 4th is just around the corner. Kids will be watching to see how their parents approach the presidential election. It's a great time to teach some lessons regarding our American citizenship.

### Teach Christian Citizenship

The lessons we need to teach our children regarding the presidential election are constructed on a few basic citizenship principles and one very important biblical principle. Thankfully, you and I are citizens of a country in which our leaders are chosen through the democratic process. Abraham Lincoln called it a nation "of the people, by the people, and for the people." One of the joys of parenting in America is that we have the privilege of teaching our children how to be God-fearing citizens. This is a good time to demonstrate how Christians live as *salt and light* by taking an interest in a national election. That process can include voting; lobbying; campaigning for a favorite candidate; or becoming actively involved in local, state, or national government. Our active participation in the process helps to bring a Christian perspective to the moral values of our society.

Kids are always curious to see how their parents approach a presidential election. They learn how to be good citizens by watching us exercise the rights and privileges guaranteed by the Constitution. At the same time, they can see that our status as American citizens gives us important civic responsibilities. As Christians, we understand these civic duties as a function of godly stewardship. In a democratic form of government, we are all, in a sense, caretakers and stewards of our own government. And we carry out those responsibilities by making informed choices when voting for political leaders. By teaching our children to work for laws that protect

life, property, and moral values, we are also teaching them to become good stewards of the blessings and benefits guaranteed by the Constitution.

There's one caveat. While we certainly want to train our children to work toward good laws and elect strong leaders to enforce those laws, we need to remember that the laws we enact will not turn people's hearts to Jesus. Only God can do that. We will not want to

**The most important lesson to be taught during this political campaign is that God is in control.**

confuse the church's mission with the purpose that God established for government. Civil government protects people from injustice. An election year provides opportunities to discuss the government's role with our children while reviewing the Bible's teachings about topics such as the Ten Commandments.

### Teach History as His-Story

God's almighty hand has directed the rise and fall of nations throughout

the ages. He uses one tyrant to bring judgment on another. The corrupt rulers of Israel were swept away by the Assyrians. Later, Babylon destroyed the Assyrians, Persia crushed Babylon, and Alexander devastated Persia. Romans 13:1 assures us that no authority exists except that which God has established. Earthly rulers and civil governments, then, are God's instruments even when they are unaware of their roles or unwilling to serve in that capacity.

The government that rules over us is a precious gift from God—one that brings a degree of peace to a sin-filled world. Through God's representatives in government, we reap the blessings of law and order. That is true even for people living under a corrupt or abusive government. So, we teach our children to "be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good" (Titus 3:1).

### Making Wise Political Choices

As the election draws closer, the media bombards us with campaign commercials suggesting reasons to vote for a candidate and why not to

*(Continued on page 2.)*

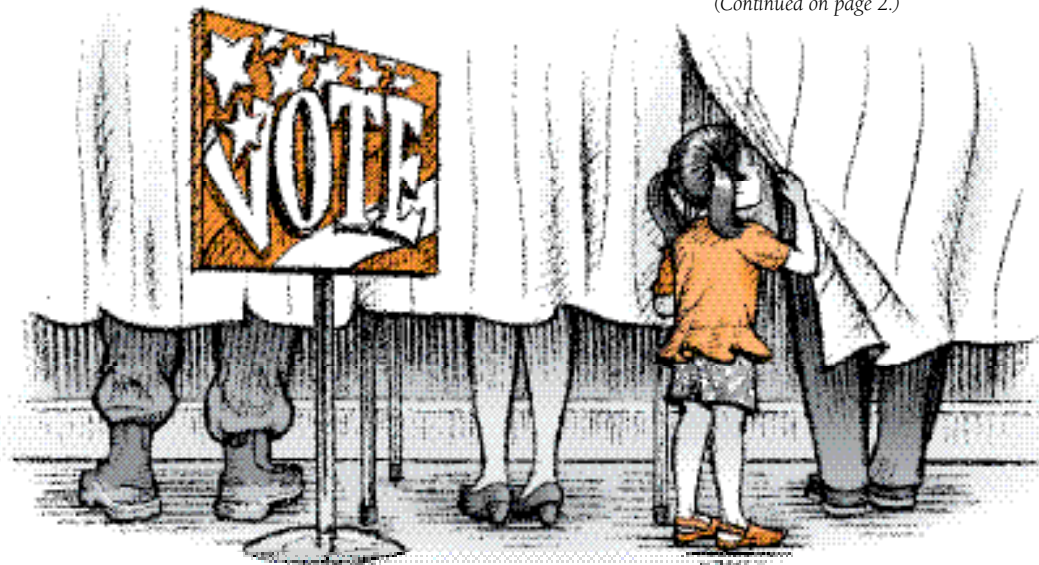


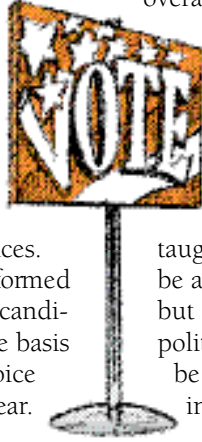
Illustration: Jim Starr

(Parenting in a Political Season . . . cont.)

vote for the other. How are Christians to decide on the best candidate?

To begin, your vote is a matter of Christian freedom. All parents living in a democratic country will want to stress that. The responsibility that accompanies this freedom involves educating ourselves on the qualifications and positions of each candidate. But have you noticed that it's kind of rare to find a political party or candidate who completely agrees with your own views? Still, with prayerful consideration, we can all make informed choices.

For Christians, making an informed choice includes evaluating the candidate or a party's position on the basis of Scripture. Even then the choice may not be overwhelmingly clear.



Candidates are often a frustrating mix of both positive and negative leanings. They too are sinners. Sometimes we are faced with choosing the lesser of two evils. Children need to be reminded that good citizens choose the candidate they believe will best serve the overall needs of society.

At the same time, we will also want to look for an opportunity to teach our children how to respect the opinions of others, even when they make different political choices. This concept is better caught than taught. Parent, be on guard, it may be a secret ballot on November 4th, but the things you say about the political convictions of others will be observed by a curious onlooker in your own household.

When it comes to teaching our children about the political process and the important matter of electing a new president, the most important lesson is that *God is in control*. His will prevails. And as the upcoming presidential election unfolds, we can be confident that he will turn this event to serve the good of his people. That is his promise.

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To add thoughts and continue the discussions about these questions and answers, go to

[www.parentscrosslink.net](http://www.parentscrosslink.net).

**A neighbor says that we are brainwashing our child with regard to his religious training when we send him to Sunday school. Is she right?**

Parents love to choose what is best for their children. Health risks and proper nutrition prevent us from implementing a diet consisting only of candy and soda for our children. Instead, we place fruits and vegetables on their plates because we know that is best. Is religious training any different?

Our Lord instructs parents to "train a child in the way he should go" (Proverbs 22:6) and "Fathers . . . bring [your children] up in the training and instruction of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). Some may see this as brainwashing, but don't we always strive to follow the will of our heavenly Father? The soul of a child is at stake! By sending your son to Sunday school each week, you are presenting the Holy Spirit with yet another opportunity to strengthen his growing faith—a faith in

Christ—one that gives eternal life to your son. Someday your son will thank you.

**How can I teach my four-year-old to show respect for adults?**

Respect covers a broad scope. Teaching a child to respect adults begins with showing respect for the child. Children need more than rules and the harsh demands of authority. They need care, personal attention, guidance, and a sense of well-being and security. Adults that merely demand a child's respect are likely to receive something in return that is far less than sincere. Spending time with your child will show her you care. Search your own heart to make sure that this is not about making her follow your rules. Military organizations demand respect for the sake of maintaining an orderly chain of authority. But a loving Christian home is hardly a military environment. If your own ego seems to be getting involved, or if you are acting out of a fear that you are losing your authority, you are probably on the wrong track. In fact, your own example of demanding your child's respect may then be teaching your child to be self-centered and demanding instead of self-giving. Respecting other people is all about making self less important and others more impor-

tant. There's a big difference between *demanding* that a child respect you and *expecting* a child to be respectful.

Teaching the social symbols of respect can be helpful. For example, one tangible way to show respect for adults is to use titles such as Mr., Mrs., or Miss when addressing adults. But remember, these can also be used in a superficial way, without attaching genuine sincerity to the words. Wise parents will first work toward establishing respectful attitudes in their children before teaching these trappings of respect.

Many adults know disrespect when they see it. Some, on the other hand, would do well to pray for an extra measure of discernment before labeling a child's attitude as disrespect when it really isn't. A child who resists looking into the eyes of an adult when spoken to may not be disrespectful at all but only shy or uncomfortable about staring into another person's eyes. A child who does not speak when spoken to by an adult may be more confused about what to say than acting out of disrespect.

Adults have the onus of responsibility to try to understand the attitudes that lie behind a child's behavior before rushing to judgment.



# TMing: At What Price?

Ann Ponath

“Woof! Woof!” Our big, black dog, Luci, signaled the mail’s arrival. I hurried to the mailbox. There was a fistful of junk mail and some bills. Occasionally I’m treated by a colorful magazine or a birthday party invitation. Not today. Once every three months I receive a round-robin letter filled with photos and the latest gossip from five great college friends. Today was the day. Having spent most of the morning hunched over my cell phone, the pile of paper in my hand seemed ironic. I’ve been trying to learn how to *text message* (TM) as part of my latest *Parent’s Crosslink* assignment.

Teens love to TM. It seems like every Sunday morning there’s someone cuddled up in our church’s long hallway, conversing with a friend between services. Some young kids and many adults really get into it.

A teacher friend showed me how texting works. We sent messages to each other across her short-legged Kindergarten classroom table. I wasn’t sure if I was having real fun or just virtual fun. This morning I found myself trying it out on my own. (It sort of grows on a person.) I sent a message to my husband and was reassured by the smiley face that told me my message was sent. A caption might have read, “Only four tries. Way to go!”

Proponents of TMing tell me it’s easy to learn and an excellent way to keep in touch with family and friends, especially when making plans or checking to see if a dear traveler got home safely. Unlike voice mail, which may or may not get checked, a text message is instantly there and immediately readable. One grandpa told me that the daily messages from his grandkids are “like having ongoing conversations with the whole family. We really feel a part of their lives just because it is so easy to stay in touch.”

Quick little smiles or secret family codes can mean *I love you*. A brief Scripture text can let loved ones know you are thinking of them. And TMing is relatively inexpensive. Messages received and sent from our six-year-old at home with a baby-sitter made going to a concert easier on both daughter and parents. A quick grocery list sent to my husband at work was effective in getting what I still needed for preparing dinner.

Still, my technophobe brain keeps asking, “TMing, at what price?” I’ve read too much about bullies who use text messages to intimidate their victims. I’ve heard about impersonal, rude, or misunderstood messages. I’ve seen the addicted teenagers and adults glued to their cell phones, even at choral practices, parties, or sporting events in which they are supposed to be actively participating. There’s a special lingo for quick texting that approaches being classified as a foreign language and threatens to destroy decent spelling and proper English. Does anyone know what a complete sentence is anymore?

Cell phones and texting are prohibited in most schools. But if the policy is not enforced, students text right in class, even during tests. Church and Bible time, study time, family time, driving time, and bedtime have also become texting time. What ever happened to etiquette and the personal respect that face-to-face contact requires? I worry about such things.

Are kids really that different today? Are they living real lives or virtual lives? Do they need a constant flow of messages telling them they are doing okay? One teen told me that she doesn’t feel texting brings constant affirmation from peers. “It’s more about a need to feel connected and knowing what’s going on all the time,” she said. One mom suggested that her daughter’s



obsession with texting isn’t much different from the notes she passed to friends between classes when she was in school.

Then there’s the story of my friend who was texting two people at the same time and accidentally sent an embarrassing message to the wrong person. Or how about the five-year-old who sent a sweet *I love you* from her mom’s cell phone to two of her mother’s male friends?

Checking voice mail on the cell phone and land line, following up on several e-mail accounts, and now keeping up on text messages is all getting to be a little much, don’t you think? Call me a neophyte or a Neanderthal, but I, for one, would rather spend my time reading a good book, writing real letters, chatting with my friend across her tiny table, or playing blocks and Barbies with my three-year-old.

Maybe we’ll try texting again next year.

*Ann Ponath writes letters and waits for real mail in Stillwater, Minnesota. She is a teacher, organist, and music coordinator at Christ Lutheran Church in North Saint Paul. She and her husband, David, are blessed with four children.*



**What will happen to the personal respect that face-to-face contact requires?**

# Tired Teens

## Sleep Deprivation and What Parents Can Do to Help

Melissa Berg

“I just can’t get Sara out of bed in the morning. This morning the snooze went off four times. She’s been late to school twice this week.”

“I’m tired and in bed by eleven, and I try to make sure Ashley is in bed by then too, but all her friends are still online. She claims she can’t fall asleep before midnight or one anyway.”

Sound familiar? Sleep deprivation can be a serious problem among adolescents. There are a number of things that parents can do to help their teens keep bad sleep habits from defining their lives.

### Some Biological Facts

Why is sleep so vital to an adolescent’s well-being?

During puberty, hormones released in the body change dramatically. This affects the body in many ways, including its ability to regulate sleep. While children and adults are *wired* to get sleepy late in the afternoon and into the evening and to be wakeful first thing in the morning, a teen’s internal clock is reset to go to sleep about two hours later than it was previously set and to wake up two hours later.<sup>1</sup> This clock resetting is referred to as *Delayed Sleep Phase Syndrome*, or *DSPS*.<sup>2</sup> Despite this internal change, teens still need the nine hours of sleep that children



Photo: Shutterstock

need. If they get much less sleep, their bodies can’t complete all the stages of sleep. This leaves their brains unable to consolidate and move information from their holding zones to more permanent files from which it can later be retrieved.<sup>3</sup>

When teens don’t get to bed until eleven or midnight and have to be awake by six or seven, they begin to build up a *sleep debt*, meaning they “owe” their bodies so many hours of sleep. As this cycle continues night after night, the sleep debt continues to grow. A teen getting only seven hours

of sleep a night accumulates about ten hours of sleep debt by the end of the week. Making matters worse, many teens like to sleep in on the weekend to make up for lost hours. But once they’ve gone two hours past their normal wake-up times, their internal sleep clocks are thrown off even more. That’s because the body needs to be awake about 15 hours before fully feeling the need to sleep again. On the night after sleeping in, a teen may not be able to fall asleep until two in the morning or later, and the cycle repeats itself.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>www.stanford.edu/~dement/adolescent.

<sup>2</sup>Interview: Dr. Alexander Scharko.

<sup>3</sup>Emsellem, Dr. Helene A. *Snooze or Lose! 10 “No-War” Ways to Improve Your Teen’s Sleep Habits.*

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

These biological factors explain why teens seem sleepy so much of the time. Their internal clocks simply don't match up with the daily schedules most of them must keep. In fact, adolescent psychiatrist Dr. Alexander Scharko states that "[DSPS] is so common that it could be considered a normal part of adolescence."<sup>5</sup>

### A Parental Concern

DSPS is a biological fact that most adolescents must face. Clearly, there is a parenting aspect to the issue of sleep deprivation and helping kids get through this period in their lives. But it is also a complex problem, involving more issues than one.

As Christian parents, we strive to help our children make God-pleasing choices in every aspect of their lives. By nurturing and caring for the bodies that God has given us, we are being good stewards. We teach our kids to avoid alcohol and drugs. We make sure they are eating a balanced diet. Helping our kids get enough sleep is just as important. Here are a

**If a young person gets much less than nine hours of sleep, his or her body won't have enough time to complete all the stages of sleep.**

few practical tips that you can use to help your adolescent get the proper amount of sleep.

### Tips for the Afternoon and Early Evening

Get the TV out of the teen's bedroom. Dr. Scharko listed this guideline as tips number one, two, and three for parents of struggling teens. It's that important! "This includes video games and anything else linked to a screen."<sup>6</sup> TV programming and video games are designed to hook viewers; late nights in front of the screen negatively impact sleep habits.

Teens can learn to avoid keeping late hours the night before a test or when a project is due.<sup>7</sup> You can assist by helping your teen maintain a calendar containing deadlines, due dates for important projects, work schedules, and extracurricular activities.

Parents should also encourage their teens to avoid napping during the day. If taking a nap is absolutely necessary, teens should limit their naps to 30 minutes or less. In this way their night sleep won't be affected.<sup>8</sup>

Regular exercise and eating well are also important in the big scheme of a daily routine. However, neither of these should be done too close to bedtime. Exercise tends to give a burst of energy, and food digestion can interfere with sleep patterns.

### Bedtime

It's important to maintain a strong bedtime routine that allows at least eight hours of sleep. Keep the room quiet, dark, and comfortable, with soft music playing if desired. The regimen requires self-discipline in logging off or shutting off computers, televisions, or cell phones at a specific time each night. The routine can become ritualized, setting out clothes and showering to save a few minutes in the morning. It also helps to set aside a few minutes for quiet relaxation before climbing into bed.

Bedtime is also a great time to study God's Word, either with the Bible or by reading from short devotional material. With the many worries and stresses affecting our teens, what better way

### Common Signs of Sleep Deprivation<sup>11</sup>

- Yawning
- Falling asleep at inappropriate times
- Trouble getting out of bed in the morning
- Taking more than 20 minutes to fall asleep at night
- Frequent headaches
- Sallow skin
- Bags under the eyes
- Irritability, bordering on hostility
- Clumsiness
- Lack of verbal output (doesn't talk very much)
- Doesn't respond to questions
- Sullenness
- Having a low mood or being depressed (occasionally the opposite, giddiness, can be seen)

<sup>11</sup> Emsellem.

to end the day than to "cast all [our] anxiety on him" (1 Peter 5:7).

Set an alarm clock but avoid the snooze button. Sleeping 20 minutes longer without interruption is better than being continually disturbed by a snooze alarm to get a few extra minutes of shallow sleep.<sup>9</sup> In the morning, open the blinds and turn on the lights to help the brain wake up.<sup>10</sup>

Parents can help by setting a good example. Consider adding a few of the tips for teens to your own evening routine.

One final note. Sleep problems are also commonly linked to other disorders. If you are concerned that your teen may be suffering from serious sleep deprivation, please see your physician.

For more tips on helping teens sleep, visit the online resources for Autumn 2008 at [www.parentscrosslink.net](http://www.parentscrosslink.net).

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<sup>5</sup> Interview: Dr. Alexander Scharko.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Emsellem.

<sup>8</sup> [www.mayoclinic.com/health/teens-health/CC00019](http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/teens-health/CC00019).

<sup>9</sup> Emsellem.

<sup>10</sup> [www.stanford.edu/~dement/adolescent](http://www.stanford.edu/~dement/adolescent).

# Viewpoint

## God Is There

Kent Holz

**The man called because he was having discipline problems with his preteen son and daughter. It quickly became clear that the spiritual training of his children was minimal, and attending church was a rare event. He seemed surprised. “I tell them all the time that God is watching over them and that he knows everything that they do.”**

Later, in speaking with his children, I realized that what this father had intended as good news actually frightened his children. The father’s message communicated that God was real, that he was “right there with them,” and that they had better behave or God would punish them. The man was leveraging God’s anger against sin to get his kids to behave and overlooking the gospel’s comfort and its power to motivate our lives. To these teens God was a constant threat, a vulture just waiting to pounce on them.

In Psalm 139 David wrote, “Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there” (verses 7,8). David certainly had times in his

life when he had good reasons to flee from God. He knew there was no mountain so high or ocean so deep that he could run away from God’s presence. In spite of his foolish attempt to flee, David said of God, “You are there.”

What do we want to teach our children about God’s presence? Is God ready to pounce on us when we mess up, or is he a friend, silently walking by our side?

The answer is twofold. When we sin, God knows. All sin is an affront to him. There is no excusing it, blaming it on others, or covering it up. God is aware of all our misdeeds.

Our comfort is that God chooses to be there for us not only to condemn sin but to lift the sinner from the eternal consequences of sin. That is not something any parent can fully offer. We try to protect, guide, and influence our children by being there for them.

But we cannot always be there. God is with them, because that is where he promises to be. He is there.

God is so “there” for us that his Son, Jesus, took on flesh and blood. He was there for us at the cross. He was there at the empty tomb. When he ascended into

heaven, Jesus said, “I am with you always” (Matthew 28:20).

What comfort! Wherever we go, his promise holds true. God is there.

*Kent Holz is the associate pastor at Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church in Clarksville, Tennessee. He and his wife, Pam, have four children.*



# OUR family MATTERS

## Someday You’ll Understand

Michael Albrecht

Saturday morning. My friends played outside as I sat staring at the piano keys. “Big Rock Candy Mountain” was the first piano piece assigned to me that required the use of both hands. I wished my half-hour practice would end.



“Someday you’ll understand,” said my mom. “Now, let’s hear it again.”

I brushed away the tears and made a new attempt, mangling the song beyond recognition.

The concept of two hands working together in perfect unity seemed impossible. Less than a minute had ticked by.

Ten minutes later she repeated her mantra: “Someday you’ll understand.” The words echoed through the house. I was pretty sure that I would never learn “Big Rock Candy Mountain” or any other song that demanded so much coordination. Why would she torture me so?

On Easter Sunday I had the privilege of playing our church’s baby grand during a glorious Easter service. Many musicians contributed to worship that day—trumpets, a choir, handbells. I wondered how many of their mothers told them that someday they would understand. Listening to the beauty of God’s Word set to music, I finally did.

*Michael Albrecht teaches at Calvary Lutheran School in Thiensville, Wisconsin. He lives in Grafton, Wisconsin, with his wife, Heather, and their four children.*



Benjamin Wessel

# A RULER'S AUTHORITY

God had already chosen David to be the next king of Israel. As a daring and courageous warrior, he was a national hero. The young shepherd-boy-turned-soldier had rallied Israel's army after vanquishing the Philistine champion Goliath, who stood at nine feet plus. No wonder King Saul was jealous of David's popularity.

God had rejected Saul and his royal family because Saul wanted to follow his own path and not obey the Lord. Saul's jealousy was so great that he tried to undermine God's will by hunting down David and the soldiers who followed him and killing them all. So David was on the run, pursued by a jealous king. Still, he continued to honor Saul just because Saul was the king.

One day while Saul and his soldiers were hot on the heels of David and his men, David had the perfect opportunity to kill the one who wanted to kill him. While David was hiding in a cave, Saul came into the cave's entrance with his guard down. David's lieutenants urged him to kill Saul. Instead, David snuck close to the place where the king was standing and cut off a corner of Saul's royal robe. He did this so that he could prove to Saul that he had no evil plans for the king but remained his loyal subject.

First Samuel chapter 26 tells us about a second opportunity David had to kill Saul. This time God caused Saul's army to fall into a deep sleep. David and his men quietly invaded their camp at night. But once again David could not bring himself to kill the man whom God had made his king. God had given Saul the crown and had allowed him to remain in this position of authority for the protection and guidance of his people. David understood that he had no right to rebel against Saul or to even show disrespect to him. In David's own words, "The LORD delivered you into my hands today, but I would not lay a hand on the LORD's anointed" (1 Samuel 26:23). This time, as proof that he intended Saul no harm and perhaps to persuade

Saul to accept God's will, David took a spear and a water jug that were lying near the sleeping king.

This story about David and Saul holds an important lesson for us regarding our attitudes about our political leaders. Although we would probably not refer to our leaders as "the Lord's Anointed," we do recognize that God has placed our national, state, and local leaders into positions of authority for a purpose. Jesus reminded Pontius Pilate, an ungodly ruler and the man who was

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about to execute God's Son, "You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above" (John 19:11). God uses secular leaders, both believers and unbelievers, to protect people and safeguard their basic needs.

For Christians, the real challenge comes when the attitudes, language, and actions of a leader seem to stand in direct opposition to God's will. When a leader demonstrates that he is not a godly person but seems instead to rule with wicked intentions, we might begin to wonder if it would be more appropriate to take matters into our own hands and rebel. This is where we need to take a page from David's story.

God does not give us the right to rebel against even those leaders whose

decisions fail to fall in line with his holy will. He does not even want us to disrespect them. But God does give us the right to look at every leader through the clear lens of his Word.

God wants us to see our leaders as they are, sinners like us. Their decisions and the way they govern will often have a direct impact on us and on our families. Leaders who do not share our beliefs can still benefit us, and their decisions can still bring blessings into our lives. God promises to turn evil thoughts and the wicked notions of any nation's leader to the good of his people, the church (Romans 8:28).

But what if a leader abuses the authority that God has given him? Or, what if the government's interpretation of freedom becomes so broad that Christians become a small, persecuted minority? Don't we have the right to stand up to our leaders then?

Consider David. He was persecuted . . . nearly to the point of death. His choice was to honor and show respect for his king. God wants us to have the same attitude—to honor and obey those whom God has placed in authority over us, as long as they do not command us to disobey God.

Submitting to those who have been placed in authority over us is not the same thing as agreeing with everything they do. In fact, you may agree with very little that they do. Nevertheless, Christians loyal to God's Word will honor their leaders for the sake of maintaining peace in their society. At the same time, being loyal to God also means standing firm as you confess the truth, regardless of what the government says and regardless of the consequences you may have to face.

*Benjamin Wessel serves as pastor for Woodlawn Evangelical Lutheran Church in West Allis, Wisconsin.*



# Under Construction

Emily Kratz

**A good foundation makes a house stable and secure. Similarly, a strong knowledge of God's Word gives you the proper groundwork to treat others with loving-kindness.**

It is important that a home has proper ventilation so it does not get too hot or too cold. Sometimes, in the heat of the moment, you may want to vent your angry thoughts. Give yourself time to cool off before dealing with a tense situation.

Strong supports are essential when building a sturdy house. In the same way, strong Christian friends can support us as we learn to treat others with kindness and respect.

Many homes have a focal point—something that attracts our attention. God has given each of the people around you special gifts and talents. Make your home stronger by focusing on their redeeming qualities rather than their imperfections.

A well-constructed building has a strong roof. The shingles overlap, allowing rain to run off. In love, we can learn to allow misguided or unkind comments to roll off rather than answering in anger and allowing a quick temper to wash away goodwill.

You may have heard the saying "Measure twice; cut

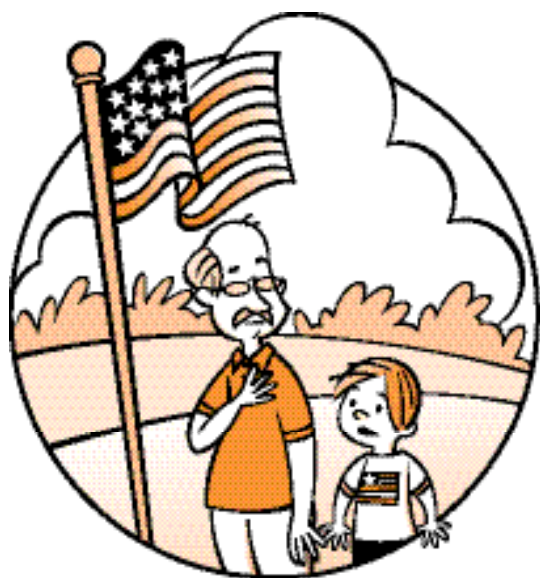
once." Double-check the facts before taking action. Don't act on an item of gossip that later proves to be untrue.

Many housing developments have a neighborhood watch in which members look out for one another. Do everything you can to protect and defend your neighbor's reputation, as well as his or her property.

If we are pleased with the work someone has done on our home, we may refer others to their good work. In the same way, speak highly of those around you, praising God for their talents.

Once a house is built, it needs to be cleaned and maintained in order to stay looking beautiful. Maintain pure and clean thoughts by studying God's Word. Eliminate the negative, and focus on seeing others and what they do in the kindest possible way.

A coat of paint can do amazing things to freshen up a room. It covers imperfections and dirt, brightening up the whole area. A little kindness can do the same thing. Use your words to brighten someone's day.



Cartoon: Ed Koehler

"Grandpa, I thought you said we were going to salute Old Gloria. Where is she?"

## Parents & Crosslink

DEAR READER,

Today's parents learn from each other, sharing ideas and encouraging one another to meet the daily challenges of living in an increasingly godless society. In the context of the gospel, this is a very powerful dynamic. *Parents Crosslink* (PCL) is a response to the demand for an interactive approach to assisting parents with a biblical view of family. Please join our ongoing conversation about Christian parenting at the PCL Web site located at [www.parentscrosslink.net](http://www.parentscrosslink.net).

Kenneth Kremer, PCL Editor

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