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HE RESTRAINED THEM NOT

- by John Iverson

Do you think juvenile delinquency is an evil that is peculiar to our day? If so, then you would do well to read your Bible, particularly such passages as are found in the book of First Samuel.

Eli was judge in Israel and a priest of the living God. When he grew old, instead of his children being a source of joy to that religious leader of olden days, they caused him much heartache and grief. After Eli had heard of the almost unimaginable sins which his sons committed--as recorded in First Samuel 2:22--he said unto them, "Why do ye such things? For I hear of your evil dealings by all this people...it is no good report that I hear. Ye make the Lord's people to transgress" (1 Samuel 2:23,24).

What a tragedy! The sons of this "man of God" were a stumblingblock to the Lord's people! However, the sons (though vile and wicked indeed) were not altogether to blame, for we are told in First Samuel 3:13, "For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not." Eli did not "curb" his children. He apparently just let them have their way. Perhaps he had the idea that "boys will be boys." Yes, but those boys grew up to be men--"vile men"!

This case alone should be enough to convince us parents that placing restrictions upon our children is needful if we expect them to grow up to be useful citizens and individuals whose manner of life will be worthy of "the gospel of Christ."

Fathers and mothers, think on these things!

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

"For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.'" (Hebrews 13:5)

~by David A. Cox

When God created man, He saw that the creation that He had made was "very good" (Genesis 1:31). Man was created differently from the animals. He was created in the image of God and His likeness. However, after the creation was complete, God saw that man was alone, and He made a helper for man. Someone that man could relate to and share with. God made woman for the man. From the man's intimate relationship with the woman, children could be brought into the world, and families would begin. The church stands as a group, a family of people that are together. Why was that important? Because God said, "It is not good that man should be alone" (Genesis 2:18). God does not want one to be alone, and the truth God wants us to know is, we are never alone.

What About Loneliness?

The fact is that sometimes we feel alone. We feel unappreciated, separated, and detached from others. In life, there are many times these feelings may come upon individuals. God created the family relationship and the relationship of Christians in the church to help us overcome these moments. It is a fact in life you may not always have people around you, but your family is there, and the people of God are there. But what about times in life that bring separation from family relationships and the church? Paul could relate to this as we remember from his imprisonment late in his life. Paul said, "no one stood with me, but they all forsook me" (2 Timothy 4:16). How sad that Paul found himself in this situation, but even more disconcerting was that all the individuals around Paul forsook him at this most troublesome

moment. The reaction of Paul is essential to see here. Paul said, "May it not be charged against them. But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me" (2 Timothy 4:16b-17a). Yes, indeed, there will be times when we are left alone, but let us remember Paul's attitude on an occasion when that very thing happened to him.

The Lord Is Always With Us

The psalmist said, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble" (Psalm 46:1). Doesn't this sound like what Paul said when he faced a time and the feelings of all his friends and associates forsaking him? Yes, Paul remembered that God is our refuge, strength, and help in times of trouble. What a blessing for the children of God to have the Lord's presence in our lives.

May we ever be mindful at all times in our life that we are not alone. The Lord is always with us. Remember the help and strength that God provides for us. By doing this, we will have the attitude of Paul when he was faced with an incredible time of trial.

IMMATURITY

- by Frank Himmel

King Ahab had a palace in Jezreel. Next to it was a vineyard owned by Naboth. Ahab wanted that vineyard and offered to buy it, either with cash or in exchange for another vineyard. But Naboth did not want to sell. *"So Ahab came into his house sullen and vexed . . . and he lay down on his bed and turned away his face and ate no food"* (1 Kings 21:4).

Poor Ahab! He did not get what he wanted so he pouted like a spoiled child. We read this account and think how silly for a grown man, a king, to act this way. But before we are too quick to condemn Ahab's childishness, let us take a look at our own.

Have you ever known of brethren who got upset because someone else was called on to do something they wanted to do? Or who placed membership at another church (took their toys and went elsewhere) because some little something did not suit? Or who stayed home because the preacher or elders did not come to visit often enough, or perhaps because of some misunderstanding with another Christian?

Paul said when he became a man he put away childish things (1 Corinthians 13:11). Let us do the same.

GEMS FROM HEAVEN

Albert Dickson

Many of us do not like being caught in embarrassing moments. We try to keep everything clean and orderly so that we will not be caught off guard. We try to prepare ahead and to be aware of our surroundings that we will not be surprised.

Here is the GEM: We must always keep aware of our soul's condition so that we may not be caught off guard at death or if the Lord returns to receive His own. We are keep diligent watch over our heart so that it will not become harden by the deceitfulness of sin. So, we must be ready to receive the truth to help us make the changes in our lives so that we will not be caught naked or without the Christ. His desire is to dine with us and for us to sit with Him on His throne. Therefore, we are encouraged to open the door of our heart to Him and remain faithful to His cause so that we may overcome and be with Him.

'Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me. 'He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

Revelation 3:20-21