



GUIDELINES DAILY COMMENTARY ON LIVING WITH DR. HAROLD J. SALA

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Subject: Family

KILL THE KINGS IN THE CAVE

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Colossians 3:12-14

Five kings in a cave! A rather strange place for royalty. It happened years ago; in fact the event took place about 1400 B.C. "That's ancient history," you might say, and I would agree; yet there is a contemporary application. The five kings were enemies of Israel, and Joshua brought them out and executed them as a visual lesson as to what God would do to the rest of their enemies.

I have suggested that there are five enemies of the Christian family that should be treated as summarily as Joshua did those five long ago. These five enemies come crawling out of the caves of our old nature, and have to be met head-on and executed. Dishonesty is the first, followed by deceit. There are three others: Discourtesy, discouragement, and disbelief.

Someone well described courtesy as a series of personal sacrifices. Not bad...a series of personal sacrifices. Tragic, yet true, is the fact that in many homes-- yes, even Christian homes--courtesy stops at the door. Teens who are the epitome of grace and manners when their teachers or friends are involved, think that little brothers and sisters are not deserving of the same consideration. They call them names--they yell at them. They use sarcasm to cut each other down. And where did they learn it? Without realizing it, they picked up the habit from parents, who by their actions have shown them that a family is a special breed--the kind that is not deserving of common courtesies.

Years ago the Apostle Paul penned a letter to families. You critics may say, "No, he wrote to a church." But forgotten is the fact that a church is merely a group of families. To the families in the church at Colosse Paul wrote these words, "Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity" (Colossians 3:12-14). Paul had to be thinking of families when he wrote those words because he followed them with specific instructions to wives, husbands, and children. And there you have the components of a family. Courtesy is no less than a series of personal sacrifices. Instead of "me first!" it is the other first, and your personal ambitions and desires take second place. The next time you are tempted to set courtesy aside, do not forget that all it takes to learn courtesy is for you to be willing to set your own rights aside just once in a series of personal sacrifices.

There is another enemy of good family relations that should be met and dispatched. It is discouragement. Webster defines it as "that which causes one to lose heart," and it always precedes the collapse of a marriage. One event leads to another and another, and soon you begin to think, "What is the use, anyway?" Actors and actresses are among those who have the greatest percentage of marriage failure in the world. When actor Robert Mitchum celebrated his 30th anniversary a friend asked how he could make it when most of his friends had been married and divorced many times around. Mitchum replied, "Mutual forbearance. We have each continued to believe that the other will do better tomorrow."

Resource reading: Joshua 10:29-43