

I WILL SAVE YOUR CHILDREN

by

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The following excerpts are from the book of poetry entitled *Although the Day Is Not Mine to Give, I'll Show You the Morning Sun*, written and illustrated by David Melton (New York: Random House, ©1971 by David Melton). The commentary is provided by Karen Flowers.

*My child,
my child,
your days of childhood
are quickly spent.
As the season passes,
I wonder why
it hurries so. . . .*

*I find myself,
saying to myself,
"If I had it to live again,
somehow I'd grab the moments;"
not considering,
I'm letting others slip away
while I think about it.
Too many things to steal our attention:
The washing machine must be fed,
and the car needs repair again.*

*I hope that
in these years,
I have attended
to more than skinned knees
and cut fingers.
I hope that somewhere,
in the everyday,
that I have not overlooked
the needs of your heart,
and the growth of your spirit.
I hope that somewhere
in the while,
there was enough
worth the while.*

*And if there was not . . .
and if there was not . . .
and if there was not . . .
I don't know now
how I can make it up to you.*

Parenthood for many of us seemed simpler in the early years. In the run of the everyday, when things settled smoothly into familiar routine, we could even be tempted to think we could take it on our own. There were the books we had read, the skills we had developed, the successes that overshadowed the deficiencies. But in the terror of moments when a fever climbed or a child stomped her foot and defiantly

shouted "No!" we knew how much we needed God. Why do we hear God's voice only when there's trouble?

"Remember," His word gently reminds. "I am the Vine. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the Vine. Neither can you bear fruit, unless you remain in Me. Apart from Me you can do nothing."

These words could evoke an image of God chiding a parent for unsaid prayers, skipped devotions, blessings taken for granted. But let the comfort of His words settle over you. "We're in this together, you and I," I hear God saying. "In the good times, we will both be proud and encouraged. And when times are hard, I will give you the strength to go on loving. Your extremity will always be my opportunity."

God's understanding of the challenges of parenting is not a knowledge gleaned from books, or merely the omniscience of an all-wise God. He has been here with us. His is the knowledge of shared experience. Remember, He says, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among you."

His invitation is "Come to me when you are weary and I will give you rest. Rest in the assurance that you need not worry about what you will eat or drink or wear. After these things it's human to seek. But remember, I am the Bread of Life. He who comes to Me will never go hungry. And He who believes in Me will never be thirsty. Seek first My kingdom and My righteousness, for yourself and your children, and all these things will be added unto you."

*Yesterday,
you asked beautiful questions:
Why is the grass green?
How did the little man
get inside the TV?*

*And . . .
What does God look like?*

*Today,
you ask the questions
of a probing mind:
What is the distance to the sun?
Why does the lightening flash?*

*And . . .
Where does God live?*

*Tomorrow,
I know there will be more questions.
Some, I am not eager to hear.
And some I'll be unable to answer:
Why is the sky a polluted gray?
Why are the rivers turning black?
Why are there still wars?*

*And . . .
Is there really a God?*

First there is the eager anticipation of questions, the beginnings of language and intelligent exchange between parent and child. Then there is the annoyance of countless questions from sun-up to bedtime and past. Then there come the challenges of the questions of searching minds. Minds which question the

unquestionable. Minds which challenge our values. Minds which spin out debate faster than we can process. Where are we to find the answers? How can we ever be a match for them? Yet how can we leave their questions for others to answer?

"Do you not know," God has responded, "that I am the Way, the Truth, the Life? No child comes to the Father but by Me. You call Me Teacher and Lord, and rightly so, for that is what I am. Do not worry about what to say or how to say it. Human logic will never suffice. Ask, and words will be given to you. Seek answers, and I will guide you into all truth. Knock, and the doors of wisdom will be opened unto you."

*As I fill your
days of childhood
with Christmas carols and fairytales,
I must also
prepare you for realities.
I must offer you both-
the way the world should be
and the way it is.
Introducing both
may tend to confuse,
but ignoring either
would only cheat you of Life. . . .*

*I shall lead you
for only this short while,
not knowing
whether or not
you are to become
one,
in the formation
of even rows of Mankind;
or if you are to become
one,
and alone;
an individual
to create a new course
for others to follow. . . .*

*In years to come,
I will see in you,
a reflection of myself.
It's a happy thought
when I understand,
and am in control
of my own attitudes.
It's an overpowering
and frightening thought
when I am not. . . .*

*As you prepare
to chart new pathways
of your own,
when we come to the path
that only you can see,
or come to a hill
that only you can climb,*

*I promise not to hold you back.
Instead,
I will encourage you
to go on.*

*There will be
no goodbyes
for us-
no farewells.
For as you leave,
a part of my existence
will go with you,
and I shall not
again, be whole and complete
until you return.*

Watching our children grow up brings together some of life's most rewarding and frightening experiences. But as surely as the leaves come out on the trees in Spring, our children will be drawn into wider and wider circles of exploit and influence. The moment when the pull of individuality and adventure becomes so strong a child breaks free of the forces which bind him close to us and shoots off into his own orbit, represents one of life's most significant change points for both parent and child. It usually comes packaged with a mixed bag of emotions. It's a time when parents take stock. The world into which we must release our children is so much more troubled than the one which supported our beginnings as adults. Have we said enough, done enough to prepare them? What of our experience together as a family? Of course there have been the good times, but what of our own brokenness and the mark it has left on our children?

"Remember," comes God's voice of comfort. "I am the Good Shepherd. I have laid down My life for My sheep. There is no path your child can take but is known to Me. When you cannot be there to influence him, I will make the path to heaven as winsome as green pastures and quiet waters. When you cannot be there to guide him, I will be with him, even through the valleys and the shadows. When he goes astray, gently my rod and staff will bring him back. And with every good gift you would desire for him, I will bless him until his cup overflows, until the day I bring you both to dwell with Me forever.

"I am the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all to Myself. I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End. Before Abraham was, I AM. I will be with you, even unto the end of the world, and I will save your children.

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