

For Their Sake And Yours

Joe Slater

God holds us individually responsible for our behavior. But do you realize that your actions, good or bad, may well affect not only yourself, but your children, grandchildren, and generations yet unborn?

The Lord warned under the Law of Moses that He would “*visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and upon the children’s children to the third and fourth generation*” (Exodus 34:8). Clearly, God did not hold children responsible for the sins of their parents. His own law prohibited such: “*The fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor shall the children be put to death for their fathers; a person shall be put to death for his own sin*” (Deuteronomy 24:16).

The sad fact remains that children frequently imitate their sinful parents; and sinful parents fail to teach their children, by example or word, to walk in the way of the Lord. This pattern may continue for generations! In addition, wicked behavior by parents may bring undeserved suffering upon innocent children. Think of the poverty, disease, and abuse children endure due to their parents’ immorality, illicit drug use, and other ungodly actions.

Multi-billion-dollar government programs provide, at best, a temporary fix for some of the symptoms of these problems. Real solutions come only from God.

We are blessed with opportunities to bring up our own children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. We must do this for our own sake and for the sake of our children and future generations. Thank God also for opportunities to help good brethren who are caring for children from dysfunctional homes. Their good work may break the downward cycle and save many souls!

Artie Shaw

Artie Shaw (1910-2004) was a popular musician during the “big band” era. In 1940, when the average American earned \$1725 per year, it is estimated that Shaw was earning \$60,000 per week. But Shaw is not as well remembered as other musicians of the same generation. I used to wonder why he was remembered at all, and then I listened to his music. It was incredible. Having heard it, I wondered why he was not better remembered. Recently, I listened to an interview that he gave in the 1970s, and now I have a theory on what caused Artie Shaw’s popularity to dwindle.

Shaw did not need the money. Due to his early success, he had adequate income. He worked for the love of what he did. It upset him that people wanted to hear his early hits over and over. He wanted to do more, to produce new music, to push the limits of his own ability and that of the members of his band. He wanted to get better. The crowds just wanted to hear the familiar tunes again. Artie Shaw did not accommodate that attitude, and his popularity declined.

Are you ready for the moral of the story?

Sorry, we do not have space for it. Instead, I will leave you hanging and end this with a quote from Hebrews. “*About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil. Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, and of instruction about washings, the laying on of hands, the*

resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And this we will do if God permits.” (Hebrews 5:11-6:3, ESV)

--Thayer Salisbury (Toledo, OH)

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Prove It!

Christians must always prove what is acceptable to the Lord (Ephesians 5:10). That isn’t difficult since the Lord gave us His word for a standard.

1. You can prove what you have been taught by comparing it with God’s word. “*Test (prove) all things; hold fast what is good*” (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

2. You can prove whether you are in the faith by examining yourself as compared to the gospel, which is “*the faith once-for-all delivered to the saints*” (Jude 3). “*Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith*” (2 Corinthians 13:15).

3. You can prove that God is a more liberal giver than you are by practicing liberal giving and observing the results. “*He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly; and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully . . . And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work*” (2 Corinthians 9:6-8).

4. You can prove that your love is genuine by following imitating the good example of loving brethren. “*I am testing the sincerity of your love by the diligence of others . . . Therefore show them, and before the churches, the proof of your love and of our boasting on your behalf*” (2 Corinthians 8:8, 24).

5. You can prove that God’s way is best by being transformed instead of conformed to the world. “*Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God*” (Romans 10:2).

--Jack Wilhelm (adapted) via RSVP Newsletter