

The Unseen Hand of God

My wife, Bonnie, our four children, and I had just moved into a new home in Elkhart, Indiana. My “to do” list was long, and I was busy serving the Lord as a Christian school superintendent. On my list of things to do was to nail shut the spring-loaded trapdoor to a laundry chute. The trapdoor was set in the floor of the bathroom near our children’s bedrooms.

One morning, Bonnie was busy in that bathroom helping our older children get ready for school. Aubrey, our youngest daughter, was crawling on the bathroom floor. Suddenly my wife heard the sound of the trapdoor snapping shut. Aubrey was gone ... and in an instant Bonnie realized what had happened. Aubrey had fallen headfirst down the laundry chute to the concrete-floored basement below. Fearing the worst, Bonnie raced down the stairs.

In his book *The Joy of Fearing God* (WaterBrook, 1997), Jerry Bridges defines God’s providence as “His constant care for and His absolute rule over all His creation, directing all things to their appointed end for His own glory.... and for the good of His people” (92). The familiar Westminster Shorter Catechism states that the chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. We glorify God when we ascribe to Him the worship He alone is worthy to receive and when we display His attributes in our lives for others to see.

God is the Creator, and we are mere creatures. He is the Potter, and we are the clay. We have been designed on purpose for a purpose, and ultimately that purpose is to glorify God in every area of our lives (1 Corinthians 10:31). One of the scriptural principles that helps me as a follower of Christ keep things in proper perspective is to realize that God owns everything and that I am His steward (1 Chronicles 29:10–13). As a steward of God’s possessions, I have been given the charge to hold His possessions in trust for Him. This trust that has been given to me by God includes all the *things* I manage for my Master, but I believe the principle goes much deeper than that. My relationships in life are also a sacred trust.

I have been entrusted by God with the care of my family. I am a steward of the relationships I enjoy with Bonnie and with my four children. Each one belongs to God, and He, in His providence, has entrusted each one to my care. As the leader of my family, I do not take this responsibility lightly. Not only am I responsible for the safety and well-being of each of my children, but ultimately I am responsible to help each one learn to fear the Lord. Bridges defines this filial fear as “the loving fear of a child toward his father” (27), a fear that includes reverence, awe, honor, adoration, obedience, respect, and amazement. Bridges writes that we should live in the realization of the constant presence of the Lord (176).

My wife and I believe that one of the best ways to fulfill our stewardship responsibility for each of our children is to take full advantage of every means available to us to help our children grow into fully prepared, sold-out disciples of Jesus Christ. As disciples of Jesus Christ, they will fulfill the purpose for which they were created—to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. One of the means we have embraced is the Christian school.

One of the problems in our secular society today is that people worship the creation instead of the Creator. Our secular society has pushed God out of our schools. Listen to Bridges on this point: “All the most sophisticated scientific discoveries and inventions proliferating in our day are simply human beings thinking God’s thoughts after Him. So instead of worshipping at the altar of science as our society does, we should turn our minds to God and see Him as the Master Scientist who first programmed all these things into His universe” (130). And our fear of God has a direct impact on our parenting. “God holds us as parents responsible for teaching our children to obey Him” (171); Sunday school and the Christian school exist to “supplement our efforts” (171). Bridges chose a Christian high school for his son because he realizes that he is a steward entrusted with the care of his son—with the ultimate goal that his son would learn the joy of fearing God. Bonnie and I share this commitment.

At a time when our economy is in turmoil and we daily make decisions about how to spend the financial resources God has entrusted to our care, I understand the financial pressures many families are experiencing. As parents we must care for the physical, spiritual, and educational needs of our children. I encourage you to make Christian education as much of a priority as food, shelter, and clothing for your children. In the end, designer clothes, a big house, and eating out will pale in significance when compared with children who walk in truth (3 John 4). Christian education is one of the most effective means available to parents today to assist us with the stewardship responsibility God has entrusted to us.

So for the rest of the story: Bonnie raced downstairs; sure enough, Aubrey had fallen headfirst to the basement below. With tear-filled eyes, Bonnie discovered that the unseen hand of God had moved a basket of laundry directly beneath the chute. Bonnie found Aubrey with her head buried in the basket of clothes and her legs racing wildly above her head. As Bonnie picked her up in her arms, Aubrey smiled at her with an expression that seemed to communicate, “That was fun, Mommy. Let’s do it again!” And, by the way, that night the trapdoor to the laundry chute was nailed shut.


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