

A testimony by Margaret McIntyre

Terry was in the last year of primary school. Like most children of that age he was "a big fish in a little pond", and acted up quite a lot. He was obviously capable of a good academic standard, but he seldom made the effort to achieve it. During the first few months of that year we had a number of confrontations, which result in Terry's father being called to the school.

We explained to him what was going on and encouraged him to actively support us in trying to get Terry to settle down and do the standard of work he was capable of. But even after several sessions with his father there was little change in Terry's attitude.

The root of the problem, we eventually learned, was that Terry's grandfather had been a hard disciplinarian, and his father had determined, "I'm not going to treat my kids the way I was treated." As a result, he had gone to the opposite extreme and virtually opted out of the responsibility of training his children, leaving it all to his wife.

The day came when we felt we must come to grips with the situation, so we arranged a meeting of parents, Terry and myself. After we had discussed the problem in general terms, it came to mind to ask Terry, "Have you ever asked Jesus to come into your life?"
"Yes, I did when I was little."

His parents affirmed this, but it was clear that he needed to make a more mature commitment. Terry expressed his willingness to open his life to Jesus. Then God reminded me, "It's the father's duty and privilege to lead his son in this. Encourage him to do it."

Terry's father ministered to him beautifully, asking forgiveness for neglecting to discipline him when he needed it, and praying with him in a new commitment to living for God. From that time on there was a complete transformation in his attitude and behaviour and Terry completed his final year of primary school with a very good report, achieving a high standard in both academic studies and general attitudes. The following year Terry went on to a state high school. His parents came to see me one day with a problem, "Terry is doing really well in high school in every subject except English. We don't understand why this should be. Would you please pray with us about this?"

Once again Terry, his parents and I met together to pray, asking God to show us where Terry's problem lay. As we prayed the understanding came: English is all about communication. Because Terry's father had not communicated with him through his earlier years, Terry had difficulty with the subject of communication, English. There had been a good degree of healing the previous year after Terry recommitted his life to God, but there was need of further healing now.

Once again his father asked forgiveness, both of God and of Terry, for his negative attitudes which were initiated by a lack of relationship with his son. Then we prayed that God would heal the communication channels between

Terry and his father and others, and that his ability in English at school would also improve.

The following week Terry's class sat an English test. When the results came out, much to his joy and amazement, Terry had gained the highest marks in the class. He had no further difficulties with English. The ability had been there all along, but it had been necessary for God to clear the emotional and spiritual block that affected his ability to communicate before Terry could achieve his full potential at school.

POINTS TO PONDER

Are there changes I could make in my approach to teaching that would make 'knowing God' the primary aim of every lesson?

Can I do more to involve parents in the training of their children, keeping in mind that it is God's plan that fathers should train their children? Eph. 6:4

How important are emotional issues to the learning process?