

# Focusing on the Homefront

September 5, 2017



## Against Violence

When I applied for Conscientious Objector draft status, a friend suggested that I ask a variety of individuals to write and explain their personal knowledge of my sincerity as a non-violent person. After getting letters from several friends, I decided also to ask my nine-year-old brother to write one. His letter, which was never submitted to the draft board, reads as follows:

*Dear Sir,*

*I think I know Billy pretty good since he is my big brother and we have known each other all my life and now I'm 9 years old. He never shot a gun or hurt anything. He is against violence. He doesn't even fight. I don't know why he wants me to write this, but he said he would break me in half if I didn't. So I did.*

*Russ-Bill Sylvester (La Mesa, California)*

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## A Teenager's Prayer

"Dear Father in heaven, I am young and don't understand what it is like to be a parent, but it must be hard. I pray you

will help Mom and Dad to be good parents, strong in the ways you want them to be. I want to look up to them with admiration and feel confident that their instruction is right.

“Help me, dear Lord, to understand my parents. Remind me that when I don’t get my way, it is because they love me and not because they want to be mean or deprive me of a good time.

“When I become stubborn and refuse to listen, help me, God, to accept the fact that they have wisdom and experience since they were once teenagers themselves; whereas I have never been a parent.

“Put in my heart the respect and consideration they deserve for their years of hard work and sacrifice. They raised me as best they could. Let me not repay them with grief or shame. Rather, help me to give them obedience, respect, forgiveness, and love.

“Most of all, God, while I still have my parents here on earth, help me to appreciate them and let them know I do.”

–*The Salina Journal*, 1983

**“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ‘Honor your father and mother,’ which is the first commandment with promise: ‘that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.’ And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.” Ephesians 6:1–4**

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# Lifetime Memories

Pause with your child when others hurry by; walk with your child when others are running.

Smile with your child when others can find only frowns; listen to your child when others appear preoccupied.

Talk with your child when others prefer shouting; praise your child when others can find only fault.

Hug your child when others fail to sense the power of touch; read with your child when others prefer television.

Learn from your child when others have forsaken curiosity; play with your child when others prefer being entertained.

Discipline your child when others fail to establish limits; apologize to your child when others pretend perfection.

Pray with your child when others have lost faith; dream with your child when others have become too cynical.—*Anthony Witham*